ON an afternoon late in September, 1775, two ships might have been seen to the eastward of the Bermudas. The sea was calm, and of a deep blue which almost corresponded with the color of the sky, so that as one looked along the horizon, it was difficult, if not impossible, to tell where the sea ended and the sky began. Only at one point was the monotony of the scene relieved,—where the waves formed a line of foam breaking over the outer reef, behind which in the distance might be seen the low rolling hills, covered with waving cedars, which form the Bermuda Islands.

The vessels above spoken of were of the ordinary build of English merchantmen. They neared the outer reef, but seemed not to wish to go inside of it, but sailed to and fro as if waiting for something, always keeping, however, within sight of the shore. Not long after a white flag was raised on one of the higher hills, which was immediately answered by the vessels running up their own flags, thereby displaying colors then almost unknown upon the seas. In a few minutes a small dingey slipped out from the lee of the shore and made toward the vessels, which lay to, awaiting its coming. After a short stay the dingey returned. Its visit did not seem to have had much effect upon the tactics of the two vessels, for they still continued to sail aimlessly to and fro until sundown, when, as twilight approached, they turned their prows toward the islands, and, guided evidently by the hand of some one familiar with the ground, threaded their way through the intricate windings of the channel leading to Castle Harbor. They did not enter the harbor, but instead of turning to the northward into the harbor, they continued almost due westward along the southern shore of the small islets which form the southern boundary of the harbor. After a short sail they drew into a protected indentation on the south shore of one of the islands, and there dropped anchor. Their position was fairly protected by the island on the north and by the outer reef on the south, while they were entirely screened from view by the island under whose lee they had anchored.

Whatever was their purpose it did not make itself manifest, as they remained perfectly quiet riding at anchor, while the quiet waves rippled up against their sides. As evening advanced the moon rose up slowly, making all the waters shimmer in its silvery light. Right down the path of light along the waters came three rowboats, which drew up alongside of one of the vessels. Then all was bustle and stir on board for a short time, while barrel after barrel was hoisted from the small boats into the ship, and then carefully stowed away in her hold. Having unloaded their cargoes the small boats departed, only to return again in a few hours; and so they continued to come and go throughout that night and the next two following. During the daytime all remained quiet, and the strange vessels remained apparently unnoticed in their sheltered position.

On the morning of the fourth day both vessels spread all their sails to the wind and sailed proudly out to sea, as if, having obtained what they wished, they no longer thought of any concealment. Once out at sea they turned to the northeast, and before the sun had reached its full height had disappeared beneath the horizon.

About a week later both vessels sailed up Narragansett Bay to Providence, where their cargoes were unloaded and sent to the Continental troops then encamped around Boston, for the barrels contained powder.

In this way the powder was obtained which gained the first decisive victory for the cause of American independence, and caused the British to evacuate Boston. Who it was who ventured to take the powder from the king's own magazine in Bermuda, remains a mystery to this day; for in spite of the sum of money put aside by Congress for the payment of the powder, no one ever appeared to claim the sum.

A Mysterious Story.

IN the year 1805, as a poor mason was returning one evening from his daily labors, he was met in an obscure street in Paris by a well-