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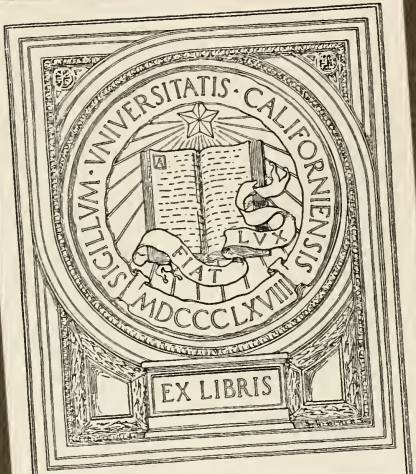
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NO. 4. TALES OF THE REVOLUTION.

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Super *Crane*
JASPER CROWE.

BY

JOHN H. MANCUR,

II

UNIV. OF
AUTHOR OF

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NOTICE.

The favour with which "Christine," and "The Deserter," have been received by the Public, induces the Author to persevere in his original design of issuing a series of narratives illustrative of the REVOLUTION. Each number will complete a narration; though for the convenience of those who may be desirous of binding the series, the pages will be numbered consecutively, and a general title-page furnished with the concluding number

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JASPER CROWE.

CHAPTER I.

CAPTAIN JABLONSKY, a Pole by birth, commanded a company in the Hessian regiment of Anspach, quartered with several others in the town of Trenton, on the Delaware. He was a dashing, showy officer, a year, or more, on the juvenile side of thirty; like the generality of his countrymen, an excellent linguist—brave, handsome, and somewhat reckless.

At the period when our narrative opens—early on Christmas-night, of the year of Grace, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-six, and of Independence, the primal year—the weather was cold, and chilly, with alternating fits of damp thaw more trying than intensity of frost. The troops cantoned in Trenton rejoiced to find themselves located in a warm, sheltered town, capacious enough to house the entire brigade without driving away the inhabitants, or—what was of more importance to the stronger party—without inconvenience to, or crowding, the mighty men-of-war who overrun the province.

The captain was invited to sup with Count Knipsatch, an officer in the same service. Wrapping himself in his military cloak, he left his quarters (after dark) with intent to fulfill the invitation, but had not proceeded far ere he was challenged by a sentry. He had mistaken the route, and found himself on the northern skirt of the town, instead of the river-side. A boy happened to stand within the passage of a house, with the door ajar, in his hand, listening with eager, childish curiosity, to the unintelligible dialect which passed between the officer and sentinel. Jablonsky, to the lad's exceeding terror, made him prisoner.

"Do you know the house of Jasper Crowe?" demanded the captain in very good English, which he spoke with facility.

"What Crowe?" asked the trembling captive, "do you mean old Crowe, the miser?"

Jablonsky was ignorant whether it were the miser's, or some other Crowe, at which his friend was quartered; nor indeed did he much care. He had left his warm chamber to spend the evening away from his quarters; and if the miser's house should serve his turn, and afford amusement—all well and good—it would save the trouble of going farther: so he offered the boy his liberty, and a few copper coins, on condition of being shown the way.

They passed the market-place, where the Hessian artillery was deposited, under protection from the weather, and turned down a street on the left-hand. The roar of water was now audible; pleasant to the ear on a warm, summer night, but dismal in the extreme, in winter, to a stranger uncertain of the way, uncertain of lodging, or entertainment.

"Is what you call—old Crowe the miser—rich?" asked the captain, growing weary of the cold, dark street.

"Yes, sir!" replied the boy.

"And plenty of good Christmas-store in the house?"

"No, sir," answered the urchin: "he keeps it so long, that he's obliged to throw it away. Uncle borrowed two score of eggs, and they were all rotten. Old Crowe wanted the same number of good ones back, and Uncle wouldn't do it—so they went to law——"

"—— Has Old Crowe any children?" demanded Jablonsky, to whom the prospect was gloomy, and who began to waver in his desire of beating up the miser's quarters, and to entertain a desire of returning to the guard-house for a guide to Knipsatch's location.

"There's Mary Crowe," said the lad; "he has no other children; and I have not seen her for many days."

The prospect of seeing Mary Crowe was rather enticing, as by farther replies, which he drew from the boy, he learned that she was accounted, in the neighbourhood, a beauty, and that her age did not exceed seventeen.

Meanwhile the noise of rushing waters grew louder; it proceeded from the Assanpink creek, whose stream, after turning a mill, discharges itself into the Delaware, forming a boundary—on the east—to the town of Trenton. Jablonsky now knew his position, as the bridge over the creek was guarded by sentinels from his own company. The boy turned sharply to the right, down a retired street which ran parallel with the Delaware, the murmur of whose rapids, breaking over rocks, near the opposite shore, came feebly to the ear.

"That's the house, sir," cried the young guide, pointing to an ancient stone edifice; and running off home, he left the captain to make the most of the information.

Jablonsky could trace, through the gloom, the outlines of a large homestead, occupying two sides of a square, or quadrangle: the gable end of one fronted the street. A piazza, or covered gallery—or to use the old Dutch term, *stoupe*, extended along the walls of both angles of the building, with a flight of steps into the area, which was laid out as a garden. Behind ran the broad river, at the distance of a rod or two; the old house standing on an elevation not many feet above the surface of the stream.

There appeared several avenues through which admittance was gained. One approach led up to the *stoupe*, another under-

neath it, a door in the basement of the gable-front promised a third; but unfortunately for our captain, the outer garden gate was locked.

"Now for it!" cried Jablonsky, "Knipslatch or no Knipslatch!—Mary Crowe or no Mary Crowe—supper, or—the devil!"

And siezing, with both hands, the gate, he shook it so violently, that—miser's gate as it was—it parted from the old rusted hinges. The noise of this procedure brought forth, from beneath the piazza, an old woman, exclaiming—

"*Tausend teufeln! wer ist da?*"

Recognizing the voice of Diana Groots, camp-suttler to Knipslatch's regiment, and an especial good cook, he knew the house to be his friend's quarters, and replying to the beldame's invectives in her native language, bade her hold her tongue, bring a light, and lead him to the count's apartment.

Jablonsky found every thing prepared for his reception. A blazing fire on the hearth, a table on which stood several kinds of wines and liquors, a row of large-bowled pipes, or meerschaums, a vacant chair, and a trio of military companions waited on by a regimental servant. All these appliances to hilarity—in the absence of Mary Crowe, with whose charms he had been teasing his imagination—were very consolatory.

Of the guests, by whom he was cordially received, the chief in rank shall have first description. Major Count Knipslatch, of the Rahl-regiment of Hessians, was an impoverished German nobleman. His person, like his fortunes, evinced premature decay; though numbering scarcely fifty years, his hair was blanched, his frame attenuated; fingers long and bony. Of his face, the strongest peculiarity was a pair of large prominent grey eyes, gleaming at times rather wildly, which, in addition to thin, white locks which from his temples (instead of, as locks ought to do, hanging smoothly down the cheek), stiffened and projected, as though under electric influence, and gave our count an odd, eccentric, even affrighted aspect. Next him, nearer the fire, sat Captain Fagel, whose features were intelligent, but cold and self-centered; a striking contrast to the frolicsome, mischievous (though not malicious)-looking face of his opposite companion, Ensign Schulz.

Jablonsky took his seat at the table, opposite Knipslatch, and remarking the melancholy gaze of the latter, rallied him on his temperament. Why not (he asked) have in Mary Crowe, the young beauty? Surely she would drive away every trace of sorrow.

"Mary Crowe!" echoed Capt. Fagel, with a start, "who is she?"

"Oh! oh!" uttered Jablonsky, with significant tone and gesture, "then I am free to the claret and cognac, but this little peach-blossom, Mary Crowe, you keep snug to yourselves! The secret is well preserved for three of you; but it is strange you have not quarrelled, and made the jewel known."

"Jewel! jewel! nonsense," rejoined Fagel, "we have no hidden jewel here, unless our scientific, visionary friend has discovered the philosopher's stone."

"Our host's name is Crowe," observed Knipslatch, with a quiet, hesitating tone, which convinced Jablonsky that the maiden's existence was unknown to his friends; "but surely he has no daughter or niece; indeed, there is no woman in the house."

"Why, what's Diana Groots?" cried Ensign Schulz.

"Ah! Dian," observed Knipslatch, with a melancholy smile, "she was christened as one of the softer sex, and is one, I suppose; but let her alone, we ought not to disparage any one who can dish up a good mess in these barbarous wilds."

"Disparage her!" echoed Jablonsky, "none here would do that, though I thought just now she would have broken my head for making free with the gate. It's odd you have never seen Mary Crowe. I'll describe her. She's seventeen years old, rather short, but with a beautifully proportioned figure, nimble and rather mischievous, as light bodies often are. Complexion and colour of the hair I know not, for in truth, gentlemen, I have not seen her, and my informant ran away too quick for me to learn."

The grave, deliberate shake of the head with which Knipslatch accompanied his confession of ignorance of Mary Crowe, set every one laughing.

"Franz, have *you* seen such a being?" demanded Fagel, addressing the soldier, who sat smoking in one corner, at a respectful distance from his superiors.

"No lady in the house, mein herr, but Frau Groots," replied the man, who, on hearing the question, started up, removed the pipe from his mouth, placed his hand to his forehead, uttered what he had to say with precision, and then reversing the aforementioned operations, sat down again.

"The girl is no doubt hidden in the house," remarked Fagel. "The old fellow knows that none of us can speak his cursed tongue; but with you here, Jablonsky, we'll give him an alert. Confound the rascal! Franz, go you and lead up the old man, and after you have brought him in, return, lock up all the outer doors, and fetch a lantern."

The man put down his pipe and departed.

"And now we have an interpreter," said Knipslatch, "Herr Crowe shall give me a sufficient reason why he cannot substitute a piece of glass, in the broken casement, for the old worsted stocking. I cannot understand the customs of these Americans. The stocking is convenient in summer, to let in air."

"Never mind the stocking," cried Jablonsky, interrupting him, "you shall join us in the search after Mary Crowe."

CHAPTER II.

FRANZ presently returned, leading by the arm, an old man, who appeared to have been brought much against his will, and whose looks betrayed alarm and agitation. In the clutches of these tyrants of the hour, Jasper Crowe might deserve our pity, but in other respects, he was far from being entitled to it. He had been left, by his father, possession of a fair fortune, and—though an old-fashioned—one of the largest, and best, houses in Trenton. His fortune, by extreme parsimony, had increased three-fold, but the stately stone edifice—one of the most interesting specimens of the earlier Dutch style, of the more substantial kind—he had suffered to fall partially into dilapidation. The garden and grounds were one overgrown nest of weeds and rubbish; a row of poplars, on the margin of the Delaware, which once lent both shade and picturesque effect to the homestead, and which threw their long shadows on the rippling wave, had successively disappeared beneath the strokes of the axe, merely to save the expense of carting fuel from more distant woods and enclosures. The house now stood bare and lonely; within, the plastered walls and ceilings, crumbled daily, momentarily—like the sand of an hour-glass recording Time's passage—without, the wooden *stoupe*, or gallery, for lack of paint, was changed to the colour of sandstone; for want of repair, was rickety and perilous. Soon as his daughter was of an age to undertake household affairs (her mother had been dead many years) Jasper Crowe sold his female slave, made his daughter perform (with occasional aid) all the menial labour, and congratulated himself, that there was one mouth the less to provide for. Mary with attractions, personal and mental—such as were reported to the chance ear of Jablonsky—excited the sympathy and consideration of neighbours, and had she been gifted with a lesser share of filial obedience, or weaker notions of duty, would have accepted one of many offers to quit the desolate house, and harsh servitude, for a pleasant home, and congenial society. But other reasons apart, she knew that if she forsook her father, he would take no one in her stead; and she feared that in his loneliness, he might fall sick, and languish without help, or perchance become the prey of robber or assassin.

Deprived of all claim to our sympathy, by his conduct, neither did his appearance—even in the grasp of Franz, in the hands of mercenary spoilers, who sold their blood to one country to enable it to perpetuate the servitude of another—create prepossession in his favour. There was a lurking cunning in the expression of the face, together with an affectation of extremity of fear, which the occasion did not warrant—for he knew not the object of the summons—which excluded every lingering sentiment of respect from the breasts of his military inquisitors.

At the command of Knipslatch, he was led to the bottom of the table.

"Herr Crowe!" uttered the count, in a solemn tone of adjuration.

"Heaven preserve you, sir!" exclaimed Jasper, forgetting that his language would not be understood by the party to whom it was addressed. "I could not help it. I am a poor man—a very poor man. Let the woman say what she will, I had no potatoes in the house, nor had I money to buy any."

Jablonsky burst into a fit of laughter, in which the others joined, after listening to an interpretation. There had been—as was made known to the Pole—a mighty quarrel that morning, in the kitchen, between Diana Groots and Jasper. Diana found means to make the old miser understand that she must, and would, have a supply of potatoes for the officer's table; a demand which Jasper, with all the dumb eloquence he was master of, endeavoured to convince her, he was unable to meet. To save his head, as well as end the dispute (for the chaste Dian was as nimble with her hands as with her tongue), he forsook the field of battle, and sought refuge in his chamber. The mess was consequently served without vegetables—for our Hessians were not fond of buying, if by any means they could avoid it; perhaps they had been taught that laying out money among the rebels was strengthening the enemy.

Fagel, who was apprehensive that Knipslatch would put Jablonsky on any scent but the right one, immediately proposed that the latter should endeavour to wrest the old man's secret from him. Jablonsky willingly undertook the task.

"Mr. Jasper Crowe," began the captain in a serious tone, "I am sorry to find you are a most consummate rogue."

The old man started, and changed colour, on hearing himself addressed in his own language; but recovering self-possession, replied with a deep show of humility, and affected earnestness, that what he had spoken was the truth—he was a needy man.

"And you would have me believe," continued the Pole, "that you have no secret storehouse, where what is required for the table of my friends might be found in plenty, if we knew where to look for it?"

On his honour (the old man affirmed with solemnity) everything he had was at the service of the gentleman, and he had nothing concealed!

"And you are too poor to replace the broken casements, by which my friend is pinched with cold, even while he lays in bed?"

Look at the house, inside and out, rejoined the culprit, the garden, the dilapidated walls, and rotten fences; all must convince the honourable gentleman, (if he mistrusted words) how indigent were his circumstances!

"Now, on the contrary, I believe," replied Jablonsky, "that

if we tried, we should find a store of potatoes; and in the search we should discover the hiding place of——your daughter, Mary Crowe!"

This severe, unexpected stroke staggered Jasper so completely, that he fell back several paces; changing from pale to red by turns, and staring stupidly, the while, at the imperturbable countenance of Jablonsky. The latter kept his eye intently fixed on the miser, determined to afford no respite.

"You do not answer," said he.

"I—I—I could borrow a few bushel from a neighbour, maybe," observed the old man, in a hesitating voice, as though he were not quite certain that he could accomplish what he hinted.

"Damn the bushels," uttered Jablonsky quickly, "you shall borrow a whip, and Franz shall use it."

"If there's a storekeeper in Trenton who will credit me for the glass," cried Jasper, affecting the utmost despair, "I could put it in with my own hands."

"Not while they shake so, you guilt-conscious rascal," cried Jablonsky, rather at a loss for an epithet in English. "So you will not say where we can find your daughter?"

The miser, whilst answering aside from the main question, was all the while cudgelling his brains how to parry the attack; and now that the question was put in a direct shape, replied, with apparent candour, that the gentleman must be much mistaken in supposing that he had any reason, or desire, to conceal where his daughter was staying: since the commencement of the troubles which agitated the province, she had taken refuge with a kinswoman, in Philadelphia.

"Do not deal too harshly by the old man," remarked Knips-latch, who judged by the trembling of Jasper, and the stern voice of his inquisitor, that they were at issue. "Point out the enormity of which he is guilty, in the miserably shabby style in which he conducts his house. Nothing fit for a gentleman to eat, not a room fit for a gentleman to sleep in! Tell him, in the name of us all, that if he will reinstate this little damsel at the head of his establishment, we will freely forgive him the past, for sake of the prospect of future comfort."

"You miserable skinflint! hear what I say," cried Jablonsky, addressing the miser, "if in fifteen minutes from the present, Mary Crowe, with her own hands—for I know she is concealed in the house, or close by—puts on the table a broiled bone of mutton, all your past offences shall be overlooked."

"Good Heavens, sir!" exclaimed Jasper, with clasped hands, "what can I do or say, to convince you that my daughter is in Philadelphia?"

"Help us in searching the house," replied Jablonsky, rising, "and in good time, here comes Franz with a couple of lanterns."

Having explained to his friends, that he could draw no confession from the culprit, but that he was nevertheless satisfied,

from the replies, and more particularly from the manner of Jasper Crowe, that his daughter was much nearer Trenton than he affirmed her to be, he proposed instituting a rigid search.

"I entirely agree in the propriety of it," said Knipslatch, "for should I meet the damsel unawares at night, I might mistake her for a ghost or spectre. Our family, for eleven generations, have been gifted, or cursed, with the sight of visions."

"But Mary Crowe, if you should be fortunate enough to meet her, is a warm reality, not a vision," cried Schulz.

"I would rather not meet anything *unexpected*," remarked the Count, in a tone which insinuated more than met the ear.

It was agreed that exploration should commence from the basement upward. Jasper was consigned to the more particular charge of Franz, although he was under the general surveillance of all. The cellars, and kitchen, were what is termed underground; the former exhibited a sad array of empty and broken flour-barrels, with a few—and but a few—well plenished. A miserable stock (under straw) of partially dried apples, withered cabbages, grisly and forlorn, suspended by strings from the roof, typical of a wretch's fate, but no Mary Crowe! In the chimney-corner of the vast, stone-paved kitchen, sat Dian, of dubious sex, chattering to herself. The adjoining closets, and offices, every nook and corner, "buttress and coigne of vantage," were searched for the lost Mary, in vain. The oracle in the chimney-corner was next applied to, but no response, either enigmatical, or otherwise, was elicited which threw any light on the search. There were strange noises, it is true; strange shadows oft flitted across the eye, in the sombre realm over which Dian presided; but huge rats which sought change of scene from their holes, on the banks of broad Delaware, in an occasional "passage-at-arms" with a pair of fierce cats, which Jasper did *not* keep, but gave a sort of permission to occupy the "hunting grounds" in the basement of Crowe Hall, fully, in the opinion of the sage Groots, accounted for every variety of noise, or vision, she heard, or beheld.

The floor above—the principal floor—opening on the piazza, was next explored. The ordinary mess-room, which they had just quitted, needed no inquisition; the adjoining apartment (the count's sleeping chamber) would have been likewise passed, as gratuitous waste of time, by the noble occupant, had not his companions remonstrated. Their own rooms were to undergo inspection; why should he claim exemption for his quarters? A man, too, whose family, and probably himself, saw visions in the night time!

There was, however, no vision of Mary Crowe—at least to the inquisitors; and they were fain, after a few more insinuations (for they loved to play on the peculiar fancies of the Count), to give up search in his apartment. Ere they quitted it, Knipslatch taking Jasper by the ear, lugged him to the broken casements, pointed out the apertures, and read a lecture which, unfortunate-

ly, was unintelligible, as Jablonsky had no patience to interpret it. Two other rooms, on the same floor, occupied by Fagel and Schulz, were successively explored, with similar result; from whence the party ascended above. After investigating several unoccupied chambers, with closets, they came, at the end of one angle of the building, to the apartment of Jasper Crowe, who was the only one sleeping on that floor; for Diana would not mount beyond her peculiar region, and Franz, as an out-post to prevent surprise, slept in a closet near the hall door.

The miser's room underwent thorough scrutiny; there might be, it was surmised, concealed closets, or pantries. Some old-fashioned, staring portraits were displaced, but disclosed naught behind save the hard wall. As Fagel closed a cupboard door, whose interior he had inspected, he accidentally caught the eye of the miser, whose face exhibited a remarkable change.

There is, then, a mystery in that cupboard, thought the Hessian! He made known his suspicion, and the circumstance which gave birth to it. The cupboard, which was very spacious, was again inspected minutely.

"Ah!" cried Jablonsky, from the interior, "I see the villainy!"

From beneath a heap of old clothes, he turned out a lot of apples, eggs, a bottle of wine, the cork undrawn, and a cooked fowl, of which only one leg had been eaten. This secret depository of provender was, then, the cause of Jasper's agitation.

"Here is ingratitude and shameful inhospitality," cried Knips-latch; "the man who pleads such dire poverty, that he cannot furnish his guests with potatoes, can afford, in secret, to feast in this style! Herr Crowe! Herr Crowe! you do not deserve to have gentlemen quartered upon you!"

Spite of the imputation, it is more than probable, that Mr. Jasper Crowe would have been content to bear any degree of moral degradation, in the eyes of his visitors, on condition of their taking umbrage, and taking themselves away. In fact, he appeared more cheerful after the discovery of his secret larder than before; and accompanied the guests to the floor above, with a step of alacrity which rather surprised his conductor, Franz.

The region into which they now ascended, was one vast loft covering the extent of both angles of the building. The floor was of rough planking, the rafters overhead unceiled, but the roof sloping from the centre, carried off the rain, and the walls at each extremity were lathed and coated with plaster, to protect the interior from the weather, as also were the side-walls, which, owing to the slope of the roof, rose scarcely three feet from the floor. The furniture of this garret reminded the Hessians of the cellar and its contents, of which, indeed, it was a counterpart, or to particularize a slight variety, we may remark sundry ropes of onions, of which none were observable in the lower regions.

"Our search is ended," said the Count, with a melancholy gaze around the drear waste; "let us descend; I am quite ready for what Diana may have prepared."

"Stay! stay!" cried Fagel, who was excessively displeased that the exploration proved bootless. A libertine in his own country, a lawless profligate in the land he was overrunning, the hope of discovering, in his own quarters, such a damsel as fame reported Mary Crowe, was exciting, in the extreme, to his vitiated imagination.

"Stay! gentlemen," he continued, "a dove-cot on the roof would hold such a bird as we seek. Who knows what may be above?"

And he glanced keenly at Jasper, to observe the effect of his remark; but the miser bore the glance unflinching. A ladder was at hand, and our inquisitive adventurer ascending, stood with head and shoulders above the outer roof.

"What saw you?" asked Jablonsky, with a smile, when Fagel descended.

"Nothing but the American camp-fires on the hills beyond the river," was the reply.

"Then let's away, gentlemen," cried the Pole, marshalling his friends down stairs. "Fagel's trap has admitted a most spiteful zephyr. I feel its icy wing ever and anon brushing the tip of my ear. O! for a draught of Rudesheim! and then—"

Ich gehe, rauhe winde wehn;
Willst du mit mir ins hutchen gehn?"

His companions seizing the chorus, clattered down to the mess-room after their leader.

CHAPTER III.

THE Hessians were forced to acknowledge their host honorably acquitted; there was not a shadow of evidence to sustain the very grave charge—in their estimation—of secreting a more than ordinarily pretty girl from unhallowed gaze. Jasper was therefore allowed to escape, for the present, on condition of dividing with Franz—in fee for his trouble—the bottle of wine, and fowl, discovered in the closet.

Supper passed off in the mess-room—in comparative silence, for the discussion of either dinner, or the evening-meal, is ever a serious affair with Germans. Jablonsky, whose volatile temperament could not long brook, either the habitual melancholy of the count, or the sullen moodiness of Fagel, (disappointed of his prey) offered a hand at the compounding of a huge bowl of "bishop"—a warm lucious beverage, in which red wine, and spice, form the most essential condiments; after drinking which—he declared—Knipslach would be in condition to behold visions, as palpably as any of his ancestry, or even—if he were so inclined—to raise

his ancestors from the dark world to which their spirits had flitted; Fagel be sent to bed, to dream that he was no longer disappointed, and friend Schulz should be so thoroughly "informed" with mystic influence, that merely donning his nightcap, would confer the gift of seeing, even in such a hag as Diana Groots, the charms of the famed goddess (her namesake) of the heathen world. In fine—concluded the Pole—he would, that night, outdo himself, and transport his friends to the third heaven. 'Talk of conjurors and wizards! the only true necromancy lay in the knowledge of combining ingredients, in such rare proportions, as created a potent compound, whose mystic spell wafted the souls of men to a serener world; imparted to their speech, a facility, and eloquence, which struck the ignorant novice with awe and wonder.

"Franz," added the speaker, turning to the orderly, "bring me the bottles, the phials, the spice-jars—and what you have not, obtain from head-quarters."

Fortunately, without aid from the *cuisine* of Colonel Rahl, (commandant of Trenton) the bowl was prepared without omission of a single, essential ingredient. Its flavour, and fragrance, was applauded even by the dreamy, speculative Knipsatch.

"Confess now," said Jablonsky, "it must have been under the influence of sprites which lurk beneath the surface of that dark fluid, over which the blue vapour wreaths so fantastically, that your ancestors beheld their visions. "Why should I confess against firm belief?" demanded the count; "deride it as you may, but I do assure you, that I have both seen, and heard that, which I pray, I may never see, or hear, again. 'The influence which haunts me, may be friendly—I believe it is—for I never meet with accident, or casualty, but I remember its having been preceded by some extraordinary appearance or token."

"But how happens it," asked Fagel, with a sly glance at the Pole, which he took care should not be perceived by Knipsatch, "that you never profit by these tokens—indeed, never recall them till after the disaster has occurred?"

"I have often asked myself that question," replied the count with an air of deep seriousness, "and I can only account for it by my extreme terror, which disgusts the influence, and repels it, ere full revelation has been made. My ancestors were firmer-minded, and were stouter of heart, and by listening to the dread oracle, profited. But I! craven that I am! flee from it—shudder at its approach—disgust and vex it. And behold! I am wasted both in bodily strength, and fortune. Our house is fast sinking since its destinies have been committed to a degenerate scion!"

As the count, with a deep sigh, concluded his lament, he resorted, by way of consolation, to his snuff-box. It was a handsome gold-box, with armorial bearings on the lid. Glancing for a moment at the insignia, he shook his head despondingly.

"See," continued he, pointing to the effigies, "on that canton, five spots, or marks! They represent, as nearly as can be depicted, by the imperfect symbols of heraldry, the impression of blood-stained fingers on a cuirass. 'Tis now five centuries since my great ancestor, lay wounded on the field of battle, his head reclining against a tree. He was, till that day, only of knightly rank, but his sovereign passing near the spot, grateful for services rendered in the fray, placed his open hand on the warrior's breast, saying, 'Thanks! sir Baron! thanks for this day's work.' The king's fingers being gory, left their bloody impress on the armour, which my ancestor, from that time, assumed in his escutcheon, as a distinct charge.—Alas! with me, the glory of our race will expire."

"Then I presume," remarked Captain Fagel, "if this guardian angel, or demon, be consistent in its conduct, your ancestor—who was so remarkably fortunate—showed more courage than his descendant, on its visits."

Neither Jablonsky, nor Schulz, could determine—judging only by the tone in which this was uttered—whether it were spoken sneeringly, or in earnest.

"There runs in our family, a tradition—in compliance with the unbelief of the present age, I will use no stronger term—" observed Knipslauch, who was too deeply absorbed to remark the sneer, if one were intended—"that on the night previous to the battle, he beheld the spirit approach, and awaited in deep, respectful silence, the token. The spirit held aloof a baron's bald-ric. "Seek it," uttered the spectre, "beyond the wood of Unterwalden," and disappeared. Next day, my ancestor was posted with the thicket of that name, on his flank; he recalled the words of the oracle, and with his troops penetrated through the wood. The warning was prophetic: he fell in with, and routed an ambuscade, which was lying in wait—till the general engagement of both armies should commence—in order to fall on his rear. He was wounded in the *melee*, but lived to enjoy the honours conferred by the grateful monarch."

"And why, faint-hearted man, should *you* despair!" asked Jablonsky, "are you not in the high-road to future honours—are you not—like your ancestor, in the field where honour may be won? Here sit we on Christmas-night, around this jovial bowl—but ere many weeks are past—nay days—one of us," and the Pole glanced at Knipslauch, "may be listening to his good Genius how to turn the flank of Washington, and his rebel-crew, and restore the withered laurels and honours, of an ancient family."

"'Tis too late!" almost shrieked the count "too late! He came last night—I averted my head, and fled from the spot, but I saw his spiteful, angry glance. He warns of approaching danger, or points the way to fortune, to those who dare stand and listen, but the coward who flies, he threatens. I fear my doom is fixed."

Fagel, who had been listening attentively, sometimes smiling inwardly, sometimes in deep cogitation, suddenly exclaimed—"Count! you are but a coward!—a poltron!"

"I fear no man—least of all—you!" replied Knipslatch, rising in anger.

"Nay—but will you prove it, Herr von Knipslatch?"

"Now—or at any time," answered the German noble; "Jablonsky arrange this matter for me, though I think we ought to preserve Christmas-night sacred from brawl, or bloodshed."

"To-morrow, Captain Fagel, to-morrow, we will satisfy you," responded Jablonsky, "sit down, count. And now that a truce is concluded, I would fain ask our young friend, Herr Schulz, why his eyes have been so intensely fixed on our mystic cauldron?"

"Why, in sober truth—if I must confess my folly," replied Schulz, "the count's awful revelations have set my imagination astray. My disturbed brain cannot fancy that bowl of blue liquid other than one of my native lakes 'midst the mountains; the smoke which curls from its surface is like the mist at sunrise. The longer I gaze, its shelving sides seem to grow steeper and steeper—"

"Not a shadow of doubt on that point," said Jablonsky, interrupting him, "whilst four awful guifs continually exhaust it."

"But what chiefly riveted my eyes," continued Schulz, "was the expectation I could not rid myself of, of seeing some sprite lift up its head above the surface of the lake."

"Count," said Fagel, who had been waiting an opportunity of speaking, "when I asked, if you were willing to prove your courage, I did not mean on myself, or any mortal—and as I justly gave offence, I ask your forgiveness."

A murmur of approbation broke from both Jablonsky and Schulz; and Knipslatch, rising, extended his hand to Fagel, the quarrel was consequently at an end. "Where I would task your courage," continued the captain, "is in confronting beings of the other world. Would you not gladly recover the opportunity of seeing again this awful influence from which you fled? Of listening to his omens of future fortune?"

"The being never comes twice on the same errand," said Knipslatch, "I doubt not, its visit was friendly till I angered it."

"Not without propitiation, *will* it come again—not in anywise at your call, for it is offended," continued Fagel, in tone of increased solemnity, "but you shall yet see once more, this dread being, for I have the power to raise it!"

The seriousness with which this was uttered, struck awe, if not terror, in Fagel's companions. The count looked at him with a disturbed, anxious eye.

"Have you courage, Herr Von Knipslatch, to undergo the ordeal? demanded the captain.

Jablonsky, and Schulz both smiled incredulously at this ques-

tion, but the count answered seriously—as though he never for a moment doubted the good faith of the questioner—that he had been ever (to his misfortune) afraid of listening face to face, and he knew not that he could summon more courage on the present occasion.

Fagel declared that he had no personal motive in pressing him; his object solely regarded the count's interest. He descanted on the antiquity and former importance of Knipsatch's family; and urged with much earnestness, that as—according to his own confession—the decay of the family was entirely owing to the unmanly fears of its present chief, he should make an effort (ere too late) to retrieve its honor. What was more likely—he asked, than that the visit of last night was to point a path to fortune? In January, they would probably cross the Delaware, which must bring on an action, if Washington had any troops left, in camp, to make fight with. Who could deny, that between Trenton and Philadelphia, there hung a laurel-wreath to encircle the coronet of Knipsatch, and that the Genius came with intent to marshal the way?

Fagel perceived that he had made an impression; the pale face, and eye, of the count beamed with wild ardor.

“But whence this strange power you possess, Captain Fagel?” asked Knipsatch, “I never before heard of it. You are the last man I should have suspected of practising mysterious arts! You who have ever derided what you have been pleased to term “fancies”!”

“Aye—truly have I,” replied the captain, “whilst I deemed them only idle fancies, I discouraged the idea, and tried to laugh down your belief. But I now see distinctly, from your confession of this evening, that the fortune of your house—perhaps your life—hangs on the chance of hearing what your visitant had to impart.”

Knipsatch urged that it was more than likely, that the influence would disobey the summons, or if forced to obey, would mislead, out of of sheer spite, at the compulsion.

But Fagel, who as the reader will perceive, had brought his novice to the point of believing—not only that he spoke with good faith, but that he possessed the power he claimed—found but little trouble in removing the count's suspicions of the spectre's hostility. To strengthen confidence, he related a strange history of his childhood, how, and by whom, he had been taught to practise the summoning of the mystic beings who live under, above, and on the earth, invisible to the human eye. On what occasion he had made trial of his powers—the unhappy result to a kinsman, which had decided him to bury for ever, in his own breast, the fearful knowledge—and only departed, in the count's favor, from a fixed resolve, through desire of reinstating in their former splendor, an ancient and honored family.

So earnestly, seriously, and with deep impassioned utterance

did Fagel deliver his sentiments, that—not merely Knipslatch, who believing in the existence of his family-familiar, exerted but little stretch of faith in crediting the power of the other to summon it, but even Jablonsky, and Schulz, were dumb-founded. How far successive potations from the blue lake which simmered before their eyes, mystified the understanding, we cannot undertake to determine, but neither could bring himself wholly to a belief of Fagel's trickery. Whether he himself credited his own power to compel the attendance of sprites, the sequel of our narrative must determine.

After much musing, and pondering, Knipslatch arose, and seizing the captain's hand, declared his readiness, and desire, of submitting to the oracle. At this instant, a loud crack, astounded the party.

"What's that?" exclaimed Schulz, in sudden tremor, letting the glass fall from his hand.

"Why, Franz," cried Jablonsky, turning to the corner where the veteran sat, "if you frighten Ensign Schulz after this fashion, you must make friends with Diana below."

It appeared the incident which so much alarmed Schulz, was the veteran's dropping his pipe at the moment that he heard his master, the count, make the compact.

Fagel intimated, that as Knipslatch was willing, he should commence initiatory proceedings in the upper floor, a few minutes before midnight.

"Alone? shall I be alone?" asked the count.

"We will remain with you, till the line of protection is complete," replied Fagel, "but before the spirit approaches, we must retire, but will stay within reach of your voice. We may talk, if you prove faint-hearted, but we must not be seen."

"This is a strange affair, Captain Fagel," remarked Jablonsky, "most strange that the secret should have been so long buried in your breast. But come! gentlemen—ere Schulz's mountain-lake grows cool, let us bathe our spirits in its dew. I am chilled."

The glasses were replenished, and the party renewed their libations.

CHAPTER IV.

LEAVING Jablonsky, and his friends, around their bowl of nectar, we must take up with one, with whom the readers of "Alda Grey" are familiar—François Girard, the former barber of Trenton, now fulfilling the perilous duties of spy, in the employment of General Washington. Since the occupation of New Jersey by the British, and Hessians, they had committed ravages of a description which remind the student of history of the cruel warfare waged against the Albigeuses, and at a later period, by Louis the

Fourteenth against the Huguenots. The British commander, and his brother, Lord Howe, his Majesty's commissioners, on erecting the King's standard at New Brunswick, issued a proclamation, on the thirtieth of November, promising safety and protection, both in person and property, to every inhabitant of the province (notwithstanding he might have carried arms against his lawful sovereign) upon taking an oath of allegiance. So desperate appeared the patriot-cause, near the close of the year, that a considerable number, even of that party which had supported Congress with their sword, joined the Tories in receiving the oath administered by the king's officers, and went home, rejoicing in the written protections which they carried in their pockets. But during December, the conquerors spreading through the province, left scarcely a solitary farmhouse unvisited. The entire district groaned under the scourge of murder, robbery, and rapine. Defenceless females, in lone neighbourhoods, fled to the woods to shelter them from insult, but were tracked, and dragged from thence by the ruthless spoilers, guided by fires kindled by the half-frozen fugitives. These facts, which are preserved by affidavit, and formal testimony, in the records of Congress, we would fain—at this late period—bury in oblivion, but as our object is—even in the form which these narratives assume—to throw light on the character and working, of the great struggle, we cannot wholly suppress them. In excuse for British and Hessian officers, gentlemen we may presume, by birth and education, it may be stated, that infinite pains were taken, both in England and Germany, to instil into the minds of the troops, ere they sailed from their own shores, that they were employed to put down a crew of ungrateful, rebellious colonists—who without cause had flown in the face of their sovereign-ruler, and offered him every insult, and who merited, by their conduct, whatever treatment they might meet with.

Apart from all considerations of humanity, how inconsistent, and impolitic, was the conduct of the British! On the one hand, the Royal Commissioners were inviting in the smoothest, most conciliating tone, all classes to partake the proffered amnesty, on the other, their cantoned troops were ravaging the property of those who had submitted. When a Jersey farmer, or townsman, whose house was being plundered or his family insulted—exhibited his written protection, it was “damned” by the British who could read it, was laughed at by the Hessians, who could not.

As December drew toward a close, one universal feeling of indignation, and disgust, reigned through the province. The militia-man, who had abandoned Washington in his retreat, and refused to turn out to his aid, inspired by wrongs which cried for redress, from his own hearth, from the bosom of his family, repolished his arms, mustered in secret with his fellow-men, and awaited, with impatience the signal of havock! to sweep from the land the scourge which infested it.

Meanwhile (and we solicit the reader's patience for so long withholding him from an introduction to our old acquaintance, Girard) let us glance at the condition and prospects of the British army.

In the good old times—of the last century—when the art of warfare was conducted with closer reference to precept, and precedent, than in the present era of innovation, the term “winter-quarters” was interpreted to mean, nearly total suspension of hostilities, coupled with a pleasant sojourn for four, five, or even six months in a well sheltered town, or neighbourhood, with leisure for billiards, quarrelling and flirtations. These pastimes continued—with the occasional interlude of a turn-out, in small detachments, merely for collection of forage—till the spring was far advanced, and our gallant captain, or major, remorselessly forsaking the heart which he had flattered or deluded, marched his platoon, or battalion, into the field. As with regimental officer, so with commander-in-chief. The latter (if wintering in large European city, or capital) having lost—not his heart—but half his fortune, in play, lured into the ambuscades of whist, picquet, or ombre, by the fascinating wiles of some bright-eyed (yet needy, finessing) duchess, or marchioness, was glad—when the season opened—to escape from the toils, and seek, in the occasion of a new victory, to restore his shattered finances.

After Sir William Howe had overrun the province with a disposable force, of from eight to ten thousand men, part, the flower of the British army, part Hessians, (whose name, foreign language, and habits alone, struck a terror into the country) his career was stopped by the Delaware, and his march to Philadelphia impeded. On the heights which sloped to the opposite bank, lay General Washington with about one thousand regular troops, and at his command—though not always in camp—perhaps fifteen, or two thousand, Pennsylvania militia. How interesting were the secret thoughts of Sir William recorded on beholding his adversary's camp!

Washington's small force, and the river, were the only obstacles to Howe taking possession of Philadelphia, not thirty miles distant. But how cross—the American commander had seized every boat? But did Sir William, when he quitted New York, expect the contrary—did he imagine Washington would leave behind, the means of being overtaken? The British general was in possession of New Brunswick, on the Raritan-river, a navigable water passage open to New York, and his Majesty's fleet. Between New Brunswick, and the Delaware, by land, is but forty miles, and the route, the regular highway, stage road between Philadelphia and New York. We are certain that in the present century, an enterprising general so circumstanced—whatever the place of his birth, the country he served—with the purse-strings of a powerful and wealthy nation in his hands, an army, a fleet, immense stores—everything which a commander

could desire—would have found means to transport boats, a distance of forty miles, over a well-travelled highway. That it was feasible, is very evident from the well-grounded fears of Washington (expressed to Congress in his dispatches,) that the plan was being put in execution. In crossing, the patriots, might have attempted—as in duty bound—to oppose a landing, but the powerful play of a large park of artillery, covering the passage, undertaken, at the same time, at different fords, and the weight of columns three times outnumbering the foe, must have rendered defence vain.

“Let well alone”—was probably Sir William’s motto. He had neglected to provide boats, and it was now too late to remedy the fault, as ice already began to float down the stream, and would daily become a more formidable obstacle. But when the surface froze solidly, the ice would stand in lieu of boat, or craft. The Tories, and his spies, did not fail informing him, that the term of service, even of the poor remaining thousand regulars, would expire by the first of January, and the men being worn out with suffering, were determined to leave the defence of their country to the Pennsylvania militia, and—to chance. As matters stood, why even let the rebel force, crumble to pieces of itself!

Such we may reasonably conclude were Sir William’s views, and reasoning, and that having taken a peep, through his telescope, at the patriot-camp, pocketed the glass, and giving orders to canton the troops, returned to the delights of the faro-table in New York, and the fascinations of his mistress on Long-Island.

His illustrious co-adjutor, and second in command, the Earl Cornwallis, seemed equally desirous of seeking temporary repose from the fatigues of war. With six thousand choice troops, (including the Guards, the Royal Highlanders, the Queen’s light-dragoons, and other crack corps,) he pursued Washington through New Jersey for nineteen consecutive days, from the twentieth of November, to the eighth day of the ensuing month, and during that period, had driven the retreating army the distance of ninety miles, from Closter-landing on the North river, to Trenton on the Delaware! The fugitives (at first) numbered three thousand (daily diminishing by desertion); they had lost tents, artillery, and baggage, and flight could be readily tracked over the snow, by the blood which oozed from the wounded feet of the shoeless rebels. After this wonderful exploit, he also, like the commander-in-chief, acted on the motto of “let well alone.” At his request, Sir William granted the Earl permission to spend the winter in Europe, that he might, as we presume, display his laurelled brow at court.

And yet, spite of the dilatory manner in which the war was conducted by the British commander—the many advantages lost, as for instance, whilst Cornwallis was forcing Washington to retreat, if Howe had pushed a division from New York, through Amboy and New Brunswick, he would have caught the Ameri-

cans in the rear, between two fires, and they must have surrendered—an omission which was both at the period, and since, repeated theme of comment—yet spite of these and similar drawbacks, both Howe and Cornwallis, were, incontestably, able generals. The fine movements by which Howe surprised his adversaries, and gained the victory both at Long-Island and at Chad's ford, entitle him, as a soldier, to the highest praise. There must have been fault somewhere; but our scope will not allow us to pursue the argument further, and we return—much perhaps to the romance-reader's relief—to our more immediate subject.

The position of Washington, and consequently, of the cause for which he fought, was critical. In a few days, he felt that he should be left without an army; yet he felt also, that the time was arrived when he could count on the aid of the New Jersey militia. "I flatter myself," he wrote to Congress, "that the many injuries they have received, will induce some to give their aid. If what they have suffered does not arouse their resentment, they must not possess the common feelings of humanity. To oppression, ravage, and deprivation of property, they have had the more mortifying circumstance of insult added; after being stripped of all they had, without the least compensation, protections have been granted them for the free enjoyment of their effects."

Flushed with the hope of co-operation from Jersey, he resolved, as the final week's engagement of his army commenced, to strike one blow for his country, while he had the power.

To steal from village to village, from cantonment to cantonment, was the work of the fearless Girard. He found the troops widely scattered, careless, and unsuspecting of surprise. Chiefly from his report, the American commander resolved to make an attack on Trenton, where were quartered the three regiments of Hessians, and a troop of British light-horse.

Christmas-night, when it was, with good reason, imagined, that the mercenaries would be drowned in festivity, most exposed to the effects of a sudden surprise, was selected. Whilst the Americans were preparing to cross the Delaware, Girard was instructed to elude the vigilance of the sentinels, and enter the town, lying there *perdu* till the approach of the army; or should aught unusual, or adverse to the success of the expedition, occur in the Hessians' quarters, to make timely report.

Girard, as we have elsewhere described, was a tall, comely fellow, of thirty or more years, capable of undergoing almost any amount of fatigue or privation; generous and obliging to a fault, reckless of life in protecting and serving his friends. Careless of the ends for which most men strive, he appeared to love danger for its own sake, or for mere excitement, and glided over the surface of existence with a happy, harmless buoyancy of mind. Bred a barber, he had followed the calling on both sides the Atlantic, till his restless disposition led him into a more active

and perilous career. His ostensible pursuit (of late) was express-rider to his Excellency, carrying letters to and from Congress; his secret avocation was procuring intelligence of the enemy's designs and movements. Though serving the patriotic cause, it may be doubted whether he did not risk the doom which menaces the person of a spy, more through love of adventure, and disinclination to settled pursuit, than for the sake of his adopted country.

On Christmas-night, then, to return to the course of events, Girard, by wading up to his knees in the chilling stream, succeeded in eluding the out-picket, and found himself, to his exceeding gratification, once more in Trenton. Why he should be so much gratified by the visit, was in consequence of a passion which overmastered even the roving disposition of the express-rider. He was in love, and with that smart little body, whose cruel destiny every one so much pitied—Mary Crowe. Unknown to her father, she had granted many an audience to the Frenchman in the deserted loft of the old house, to which the adventurous lover clambered, in the first instance, by means of the shaft, or support, of the piazza. From the roof of the latter, it was easy to gain the roof of the main building, from whence—the trap-door being left without bolt or fastening—he slid quietly, by means of a short cord (which he carried, for the occasion, in his pocket), to the floor of the garret, and the presence of Mary Crowe.

When an individual undergoes secret and extraordinary labour, to effect entry into a house, it may be judged that he has good reasons for not entering quietly by the usual approach. The miser loved his daughter, even while subjecting her to menial offices so far beneath her birth and station. Girard was obviously a very objectionable suitor; if fault be found with Mary for listening to his addresses, it may be pleaded, in extenuation, that the loneliness of her situation—excluding her from cheerful, unrestrained intercourse with persons of her own station—and more especially of her own sex, from whom she would have acquired knowledge of the world—exposed her more readily to be captivated by the dashing, off-hand attentions of a man like Girard, who, in addition to other accomplishments (spite of a limited education), “the gods had made poetical.” His broken English, broken verses, snatches of song, impromptu effusions, and at rare intervals, when the old man was far away, the light jingle of guitar-strings, were irresistible.

In face of the whiskered Hessians, and the provost-marshal's cord, Trenton, with all its perils, had a fascination for Girard. Conceive, then, his vexation, on learning from a townsman and neighbour of Jasper Crowe—one who, well affected to the patriot cause, he knew would not betray him—that Mary Crowe had disappeared, gone, as it was said, to Philadelphia, or at least, across the Delaware, to avoid the troubles with which her native town was threatened. It was, he could not help confessing, both

natural and praise-worthy in old Jasper, to send his daughter where she would be safe from insult; and his own affection for the maiden extorted approval of the proceeding; yet (he could not help it) he was disappointed, grievously disappointed; Trenton had lost its charms.

Spite of vexation, he did not forget the duties of his post. He made visits to several parties well affected to congress, by whom he was faithfully informed of every event which had occurred. As matters stood, everything promised success to the attack; any military operation on the part of Washington was not dreamed of, as it was believed his force was crumbling away, and that he was totally unable to take the field; and he, moreover, lay behind a broad river, now almost impassable, on account of the drifting ice. Being Christmas-night, both officers and men were indulging themselves after the fashion of their country, though the commandant, Colonel Rahl, who was a vigilant officer, did not neglect proper precautions at the out-posts, and the interior of the town was also patrolled.

It happened, unfortunately, that the spy, whilst crossing from the northern to the southern quarter of Trenton, dreaming of Mary Crowe, and forgetful of matters nearer home, came unexpectedly to the market-place, where were ranged the field pieces attached to the Hessian brigade. He was challenged, as customary, by the sentinel on duty, and being thrown off his guard by the unexpectedness of the rencontre, instead of submitting himself to the soldier's inspection, who being a foreigner, ignorant of the language, would have speedily dismissed him, in full confidence of his being a townsman, took to his heels, and fled down a side street. The report of the sentry's firelock convinced our express-rider of his error; but it was now too late to change his tactics. Alive to the peril, he was cautious of flying to the outskirts, lest he should fall upon the guard; yet to remain in the town, after the alarm was given, was equally dangerous. If he could but reach the banks of the Delaware, he was sure, he thought, of extrication by the same path through which he gained ingress.

The discharge of the firelock caused a drum to beat at the guard-house. It was about as dangerous a predicament as François Girard had ever fallen into. To flee from the town was in vain; it was environed by sentinels: the Delaware was then the only resort, and thither he fled, determined, if no better chance presented, to trust himself on one of the drifting islands of ice, rather than fall into the hands of the enemy. As he ran, he could hear the sounds of pursuit. His route to the river-brink led him, by chance rather than design, near the dwelling of Jasper Crowe. The view of the miser's dwelling changed the current of his thoughts. Why should he trust his limbs to the chilly waters, when less hazardous refuge were at hand? He called to mind the miser's old garret; he might, if he reached it unperceived,

lay a while amongst the rubbish till pursuit was over, and then descend by the way he entered. A further inducement to this course was the reflection, that as affairs stood in Trenton, he was, according to instructions, to tarry in it till warned of the army's approach; whereas, should the alacrity of his pursuers oblige him to trust to the ice, he would, even if life were preserved, be carried away from the scene of impending action.

As he neared the garden path, he was still debating which course to pursue—whether scale his old trysting-place, or strike through the meadow to the water's edge, when the open gate (which Jablonsky had not replaced) decided the question. He ran into the yard, up the steps of the piazza, clomb the shaft which supported the covering, crawled up the shingle-roof of the house, and behold! the trap-door was wide open. What could this mean? Neither himself, nor Mary, he was certain, were ever guilty of the negligence of leaving it open; so careful had he been in every matter which related to the stolen visits, that he had removed the fastening from the trap, lest Jasper, by chance, should bar the lover's approach. As he pondered over the strange event, hesitating whether he should descend—more especially as he had no cord wherewith to lower himself, without noise, till his feet touched the floor, as he had practised heretofore—several patrols came to the garden-gate. Cautiously, and noiselessly, he stretched himself, at full length, along the roof, and had the satisfaction of hearing them pass through the garden, at the rear of the house, and thence toward the Delaware. Now must he risk a jump, which might alarm old Jasper, whose bed-room was in the floor beneath the loft, or choose the alternative of lying, without cover, in the freezing air, till he was himself stiffened and inanimate! "Look before you leap," is an old proverb; perhaps Girard had forgotten the wise saw, but instinct prompted the practice. With head peering over the aperture, he cautiously looked down on the region below; it lay in darkness, but the head of a ladder was visible, within reach. Was old Jasper fond of gazing at the stars; or had Mary, ere she quitted home, received the visits of another lover? He could not believe Mary unfaithful, yet his feelings were strongly roused, and he descended, step by step, with the soft, cautious tread remarked in the predatory approach of the feline tribe.

CHAPTER V.

WHEN Girard reached the bottom of the ladder, he found the gloomy garret, as of yore, untenanted save by articles of lumber and store. On listening, he heard a confused sound as of people talking on the lower floor. Who were the visitors of Jasper

Crowe? surely no one ever came by invitation? We would observe, that Girard's attachment to Mary Crowe had, for special reasons, been kept a profound secret; to preserve it inviolate, he had cautiously refrained from making inquiries of his friends in the town concerning Jasper and his family, lest it should awaken suspicion; which will account for his being entirely ignorant, that the old house was burthened with foreigners, or he might have been more chary of selecting it for his refuge. Perhaps—he surmised—robbers had penetrated by the same way as himself, and were now carousing, or dividing spoil. He ventured, however, to strike a light, and by aid of his lantern, proceeded to explore the old quarters. The only trace of depredators was the ladder uplifted against the open trap. As he gazed, he became conscious of some change, or alteration, in the garret, though in what respect he could not determine. A laugh from below recalled attention to more urgent matters. He went to the head of the stairs and listened. There was no mistaking the German dialect. Hessians were then quartered in old Jasper's domicile!

"Hah! dat is one good joke," said Girard, indulging in a quiet laugh; "How I do pity de poor German bodies who be obligated to live in dis house!"

The Hessians, like their countrymen elsewhere, were keeping up the festivity of the season, which was fortunate—there was the less danger of their discovering his retreat. But then, old Crowe's sleeping-chamber was beneath—and, walk as cautiously as he might, there was considerable risk. If the miser heard him, he would assuredly alarm the Hessians, and then—but why anticipate evil? A quiet half-hour passed in the garret—and the baffled patroles, now seeking through the streets, for the stranger who had evaded the sentry's challenge, would give up profitless pursuits, and our released adventurer might descend in safety.

"Ah! vat is dis—a mi-racle?" exclaimed the Frenchman, holding aloft his lantern.

The object which excited Girard's astonishment was a fresh coat of plaster on the walls.

"Dey did want a new jacket, sure enough," muttered the Frenchman; "but it cost de monie—and de old man's pockets are like vun deep vell—he do put in, but he cannot draw out."

Here was food for meditation! The new coat of plaster was as great a mystery as the standing ladder, and open trap. Upon what compulsion had Jasper Crowe gone to the gratuitous expense of repairing walls, in a part of the house, untenanted? The Frenchman could scarcely believe the evidence of his own eyes. On closer inspection, he found, that each side of the garret, where the sloping roof approached very near the floor, had been simply whitewashed, but at the gable-end, immediately over the miser's bed-chamber, the wall—which was not pierced for a window—was entirely freshcoated with plaster.

"De old man must have found vun grand money-bag," mur-

mured Girard, as he felt the wall with his knuckle; "but he be vun grand fool after all."

While inspecting the renovation, his thoughts recurring again and again, with breathless wonderment, to the extraordinary outlay—wondering the while whether the old man had not gone crazed through having the Hessians quartered upon him—he heard footsteps. Life was dear, though courage stood high; while his hand sought a pistol, he turned to confront the intruder. Did his sense of hearing play truant? He stood alone in the long garret! With noiseless tread, and shaded lantern, he crept to the hidden half of the loft, which occupied a space over the other angle of the building. Opening the lantern suddenly, to scare the concealed visitor, he found only himself, and his long shadow.

"Dis d—d place be haunted!" said the Frenchman, with a slight tremor, for although nearly insensible to the perils of flood and field, he was not proof against superstitious fears.

His acute ear again detected the sounds of footsteps at that end of the loft which he had just quitted. One moment bent on discovering the mystery, the next, much inclined to beat a retreat, he glided back to his former station.

The sound of voices was now as distinctly audible, as before, were the tread of feet. Whence came they? From above or beneath? The charm was only partially broken by his hearing distinctly the following ejaculation, in the voice of Jasper Crowe:—

"It is all gone, I tell thee, child—the wretch drank it all."

"Well! Father," replied a voice, whose tones caused a palpitation in the heart of the listener—"we have had a narrow escape, and ought to be thankful."

"Thankful!" screamed the old man; "By G—d, Mary, what have I to be thankful for? The rascally German carrion! when he saw how dissatisfied I was—he smashed the empty bottle before my eyes."

This dialogue between Jasper and his daughter, coming from he knew not where, caused the Frenchman, after farther minute inspection, to make discovery, that the miser had with wonderful ingenuity (of course not without help of an artificer) walled off a narrow slip from the loft; and that to avoid detection, the whole had been whitewashed, to be in keeping with the new lath-and-plaster. Still listening—he learned from the old man's imprecations on Franz for having eaten his fowl, and drank the wine; and also from the attempts of Mary to assuage her father's anger—a tolerable notion of what occurred during the evening.

The only avenue to this stronghold in which were stored considerable treasure, and provision, was by a secret door in Jasper's closet—the very closet from which Jablonsky produced the hidden viands.

Fortunate, indeed, as Mary more than once repeated, that Fagel and his companions had mistaken the cause of her father's

emotion when the closet was undergoing search : still more fortunate, that the viands had been deposited there, as their discovery misled the sharp-witted soldiers, and induced them to give up farther investigation in that dangerous quarter. Yet spite of the narrow escape, the old man could not help harping upon the loss he sustained, and what was above all, a sore thought, the catastrophe of the broken bottle.

In order to rest himself, and, at the same time, listen without inconvenience, the Frenchman took seat on the floor, with his ear applied to the wall.

"All dis is vera strange," thought Girard, "vera strange ! I be one fool to be frightened by de old man, and de young lass. If de general hear, he would say—"François Girard, you be no longer fit for my officer ! De little lass, to fright one tall fellow with four pistols in de pocket, and de lantern ! Bah ! but I will have de grand revenge."

After farther colloquy between Jasper and Mary, by which the Frenchman learned the names of the Hessians, as well as the circumstance of their visit to the loft—which fully accounted for the position of the ladder—the miser declared he must look after Franz, and the female devil in the kitchen. He wished his daughter, good night ; and his footsteps were heard descending the secret staircase.

"Now den—here we be," said the Frenchman to himself ; "Mary and I, once more alone in de old room."

But the wall between, prevented farther comparison with old times. How make the maiden hear without alarming her—to an extent, perhaps, which might cause her, in terror, to make known her hiding-place to the foreigners ! This consideration, for awhile, withheld him from speaking : he heard her light foot-step moving rapidly over the floor, and opined that she was about retiring to rest.

"Mary !" said our Frenchman, in a whisper, putting his lips to the plaster.

There was no reply.

"Mary !" repeated the lover, in rather louder strains.

Still no reply.

"De note must be high and shrill," muttered Girard, adding in as loud, and high tone, as he dare venture ; "Mary !"

"Come in, father—I'm not asleep," said the maiden.

"I can't," cried Girard.

"Why frighten me ?" said Mary laughing, "it is quite bad enough to live in this dreadful hole."

"If dis cursed vall vere down," said Girard in his ordinary tone, "I would ask Mary Crowe why she frighten me ?"

"Mercy ! who spoke then ?" cried the maiden. Her words were accompanied by a noise, as though she started from her couch.

"Father ! father ! is it you ?"

The Frenchman heard her walk—as he supposed—toward the door of the prison chamber.

“It is me—François Girard,” cried our lover, alarmed lest her father should be summoned.

“Where? where?” exclaimed Mary, in a tone which betrayed fright and astonishment.

“Put your rear to de vall, and I vill tell,” rejoined the Frenchman.

“You wicked wretch! God forgive me—how you have scared me,” cried Mary, panting with alarm; “how came you in the house? You will be killed.”

“Dat is vat de bullet, which de sentinel shot, vispered in mine ear, as it flew along;” replied Girard, “but I did turn de corner and laugh. Mary, dis is Christmas-night.”

“Yes,” said the maiden sharply, “and there have been rare doings, what with you, and the Germans, and it won’t end, till Mr. Girard comes by something he will not like.”

“Spoke like de oracle, Mary;” remarked her lover, “de festival has scarce begun. I vas one little hour too late, to see de game of blind man’s buff.”

“You will not be too late for mischief, I can tell you, Mr. Girard.”

“Mary! Ven dey did look under de old gentelmon’s bed, it vas cold, vera cold—ven dey went near de closet, it vas varm, varm—ven de door of de closet vas opened, and Yab-lonskee did go in, it vas hot; it did burn de hole bodie very much.”

“You wretch!” exclaimed Mary, “you have been listening to our secrets.”

“Mary—der be plenty of vine de oder side. I vill not break de bottel.”

“You shan’t have the chance, Mr. Girard. But tell me—how came you in?”

“After de old fashion, Mary;” replied the Frenchman; “de ladder was in de scuttel, and de trap was open—and I did fancy—O! horré-ble things.”

“What were they like, Mr. Girard?”

“Dey vere like vun pretty maiden talking to de brave gallant—and de man vas *not* me.”

“Are you not very cold, François?”

“Are you not vera warm, Mary?”

“I ought to be,” replied the maiden; “for there are three feather-beds heaped under me.”

“Den lie down, and I vill sing you to sleep with a vera fine Christmas carol: I have de guitar wid me.”

“The guitar,” exclaimed Mary, “the guitar! For heaven’s sake, Mr. Girard—if you love me—I mean, if you love yourself—be not so foolhardy. Do comfort me, by going away while your life is your own.”

“Ah! never mind, Mary, de guitar vas only a foolish idea of mine head.”

"I wish I could reach that head with father's cane," uttered the girl.

"It is vera near," rejoined the Frenchman; "der! ver I do make de noise, der rests de head against de cold vall. Now, if I had de guitar, I would sing von *jolie chanson*."

To tease her, he began humming a doggrel verse :

"O, friends, give ear unto de lay,
I'll tell you how I pass de day
Wid Mary Crowe.

But his punishment was at hand, nearer than he dreamed of. As he had foolishly indicated the exact spot where rested his head, Mary, with cane, or other instrument, struck the slender wall, a smart blow, the vibration of which was felt by her lover more severely, than she perhaps intended.

"Dat is vun bad way of beating time to de music, Mary," cried Girard, "but I will try anoder song :

O! Christmas-night he come at last,
While Mary Crowe—"

But the threatened effusion was suddenly cut short.

Girard, though indulging his wild humour, was too wary to forget the peril. Whilst one ear was employed in listening to the replies of Mary Crowe, and measuring the cadence of his own stanzas, the other was vigilant to detect the slightest occasion for alarm, in the realms below. It was the sudden opening of the door of the apartment where the Hessians were assembled, and the confluence of their voices, which caused the Frenchman to cease abruptly.

"I wish de promise, Mary."

"What is it, Mr. Girard, that I am to promise?" asked the girl.

"Dat you do hear all dat be said and done, and you speak no word, or cry."

"I promise," rejoined Mary, "but you alarm me; do you hear anything?"

"Good-night! de deyvils be at foot of de stairs, and I must go hide. Ven dey be gone to bed, I vill come again."

Without waiting to hear more, Girard went straight to a group of empty barrels, and getting into the largest, drew over the top, a small hamper. Although this movement was effected with the utmost celerity, yet it was the result of forethought; he had previously, in his mind, selected the barrel as place of refuge, should circumstances require it.

Scarcely ensconced, he heard footsteps on the stairs; ignorant of the quarter in which the Hessians selected their dormitories, he surmised that they were departing to their several sleeping-chambers on the floor beneath the garret, and as they had doubtless drank freely, would very soon fall asleep, and afford the opportunity of another confabulation with Mary Crowe.

It was, however, rather a trying moment, when he heard them ascend to the garret; he blamed himself for not seizing the lost opportunity of making a good retreat, when it was in his power.

"Dey must be going to have anoder peep at de stars," he murmured in soliloquy. "I was vera wrong not to get de first peep by the ladder. *N'importe! N'importe!* it was de fate of Marc Anthony to lose all through de fair lass, and François Girard be not von jot de viser. But vat vill become of de poor General if I fall—de grand nation may be lost by mine folly."

Posterity will not give so large a measure of credit to François Girard, as he gave himself, in imagining that the fortunes of the nascent republic depended upon his lying undiscovered in the barrel. Highly as individuals serving in the same capacity as Girard, value the importance of their services; momentous to the interests of a state as their intelligence oft proves; yet our adventurous Frenchman, looking only on one side of the picture, did not take into consideration, that "de poor general," always made some provision against the loss, or non-return, of scouting parties, or individuals.

The invaders of the gallant's solitary domain were Knipslatch and his friends. Potations deep had somewhat staggered them all, their step was unsteady, their features (with the exception of Knipslatch's) flushed. But the count's face was one of unvarying paleness; drinking did not redden it; late hours, or wild mirth, did not change its pallid hue: it was what the French term a *tête mort*. His earnest, and oft-times, fearful gaze at Fagel, was in strange contrast with the collected, self-possessed expression of the latter. An object of scrutiny not only to the count, but to Jablonsky and Schulz, who were (both of them) mystified and bewildered by his manner, which defied penetration, and left them in glorious uncertainty whether he were in jest, or earnest, he demeaned himself with the solemnity of one about to perform a feat, to which he was indeed equal, but which severely tasked courage, and faculties, to accomplish.

"Do you require to construct a horoscope, or cast my nativity?" asked Knipslatch, as he gazed around the desert-loft.

"To a poor mortal who undertakes to predict the destiny of his fellow-man," replied Fagel, "such course may be necessary, for whence otherwise should he obtain knowledge, but from sources beyond his limited ken? But I pretend to nothing of the kind, my dear count, I have no more rightful pretension to predict future events, than the old hag below. But I can summon those who have the power—and there my art ceases!"

"But you spoke of protection," remarked Knipslatch, who it was observable, was becoming more agitated, as the hour of trial approached; "a line of protection! What did you intend, or mean?"

"To protect you from the possible effects of my own act.—I have but two charms. One to summon the being whom

my patient desires to behold ; the other to ensure him from unhappy consequences, should he incur the anger of the being invoked."

"But excuse me one moment, gentlemen," continued the adept ; "I must look on the face of the heavens."

Fagel ascended the ladder, and after several moments' survey, came down.

"You will stand thus," said he, leading Knipsatch to the centre of the garret, and placing his face in a particular direction.

"Why so, my good Fagel?" asked the count, rather nervously, laying his hand on the captain's arm.

"Well! if you must be informed," replied the Hessian, as a faint smile spread over his countenance ; "it is necessary that you stand due north and south, your face being northward. My object in going aloft was to ascertain the position of the polar-star."

Taking from his pocket a piece of red chalk, he commenced drawing round the noviciate a circle, but paused when he had described a small segment—muttered several unintelligible words, and then recommenced. After this mode, with six intermissions, the circle was completed.

"As far as you may be endangered by the summons," uttered Fagel with cold solemnity of voice and manner ; "so far, are you now protected. Have you aught more to say ere I impress the influence?"

"Promise me—and do you join in the promise, Herren, Jablonsky, and Schulz," said the tremulous count ; "that you keep within hearing. If you will not, I feel I shall have no courage for the essay."

"We will all remain on the landing of the floor beneath," replied Fagel, in a tone of quiet rebuke ; "we may not be seen, but the slightest word which you utter, will be heard by your friends."

"Then I am prepared," exclaimed Knipsatch ; "and may the issue of the interview be as prosperous to me, as it has been of yore, to my forefathers."

Fagel motioned Jablonsky, and Schulz, to stand at the head of the stairs, that they might be prepared to descend. Soon as they had taken the station pointed out, the adept placed himself on the outer edge of the circle, with his back to the count, his face being in the exact line of the patient's. After declaiming several moments, in some unknown dialect, he paused, and turned toward a distant part of the long garret. To the astonishment of Jablonsky and Schulz, and the extreme terror of Knipsatch, whose knees trembled, and whose hands shook, there proceeded from the quarter whence Fagel gazed, several sounds, or words, resembling the tones of the human voice.

"It is our signal to descend, Count," exclaimed Fagel, with lofty sublimity of utterance, "be quick-witted, and courageous, and stir not beyond the circle ; we'll listen for your call."

It is more than probable, but for the reiteration, not to venture beyond the circle, such was the awe and terror of the count, that he would have fled down stairs, with his friends.

The trio, taking with them their lanterns, descended, leaving poor Knipsatch in darkness. Gazing in each others' faces, they waited, after reaching the landing—one, two, three, perhaps four seconds—Fagel preserving the appearance of as much awe as his companions. Suddenly, a confused heavy tread was heard; there was a noise of falling, or rolling, bodies; a loud prolonged cry from Knipsatch; a vivid flash of light, which they all beheld; a loud crash; and all was again silence and darkness.

"Man or demon," cried Jablonsky, darting a furious glance at Fagel, "we will summon *thee* to a reckoning."

Lantern in hand, Jablonsky rushed up stairs followed by Schulz—Fagel lagging slowly behind in evident trepidation. On gaining the loft, the count was seen lying with his face on the floor, across his shoulders was flung the ladder; several barrels were upset, and had rolled from their station.

"How is this, Captain Fagel?" exclaimed Jablonsky, pointing to the body of the count, "is this your boasted protection? If there be justice, it shall be meted to whom it is due."

With assistance of Schulz, Knipsatch was carried down stairs to his apartment, and placed on his bed. He remained insensible, but the pulse still beat, and he gradually gave other indications of life.

CHAPTER VI.

As we stood lately on the banks of the Delaware, at McKonkey's ferry, we endeavoured to transport ourselves, in imagination, to the period of the great struggle, of which we write. The eddy current searching each corner, and nook of its banks, glided as swiftly then as now; but how different, in complexion and character, from the present, peaceful, healthy pursuits of commerce and agriculture, which it daily witnesses, to the scenes of martial strife, and predatory rapine, then enacted on its shores.

In the evening of Christmas-day, soon as it grew dark, there was extraordinary bustle in the American camp. Head-quarters, at the village of Newtown, was thronged with officers of the patriot-army, with messengers, and express-riders, coming and departing. In the meadows behind the ferry, the soldiers were paraded in military array—the artillery stood ready for embarkation, and the craft prepared to carry over the troops, and the cannon, were launched on the current.

The commander-in-chief was in consultation with his generals,

at his quarters, in the village. Greene and Sullivan, and Reed the adjutant-general; Colonels Hamilton, and Baylor of the staff, and Harrison, the zealous, and indefatigable secretary, were among the number who surrounded their chief.

Throughout the month of December—gloomy both in season and prospects—the officers in communication with his Excellency, could not fail noticing, that his aspect—always grave and thoughtful—appeared at that time pensive and solemn in the extreme. In addition to the discouragement arising from so many untoward events, which marked the close of the campaign, his mind was farther depressed in being obliged, by the force of circumstances, to brood over ill-fortune without chance of remedying it. But now the case was altered; the sense of security in which the foe indulged, pointed the way to action. Though care still furrowed the brow, the eye beamed with the fire of enthusiasm, calm yet deep.

After issuing final instructions, and taking separate leave of each officer, he rode out, with his suite, to direct personally, the embarkation. And tedious was the passage beyond calculation! It had been estimated, in council, that both artillery, and men, would be safely landed on the opposite bank, by midnight; but the slowly moving ice was wedged so closely, and gave passage to the craft so reluctantly, that it was three o'clock, in the morning, before all the artillery was disembarked. By four o'clock, the troops took up their line of march.

After midnight, commenced a storm of snow, and sleet, which added much to the difficulty of the passage; and, indeed, the delay was so great, that the general began to despair of surprising the town. The march through the heavy snow under foot, and beneath the fall of sharp, arrowy sleet, which almost blinded the troops, he well knew—though the distance was but nine miles—would occupy, at least, four hours; and that he should not reach Trenton before day fairly broke. But this reflection he wisely kept within his own breast; he was certain there was now no possibility of making a retreat without being discovered, and harrassed, on repassing the river, and he determined to push on at all events, and at every hazard.

The army, which consisted of two thousand four hundred men, with twenty pieces of artillery, was formed into two divisions; one under General Sullivan, to march by the lower, or river-road, over the bridge at mouth of Jacob's creek; the left division, under General Greene, and his Excellency in person, to take the upper, or Pennington-road. As the divisions had nearly the same distance to march, and would (barring accident) arrive at the same time, he gave orders, that immediately on forcing the outguards, his troops were to push directly into town, that they might charge the enemy before they had time to form. It was arranged, that Generals Ewing, and Cadwallader, with the Jersey and Pennsylvania militia, occupying stations below the ford of

Trenton, should, during the night, cross the river, southward of the town, and make attack on that side; or if arriving too late, to join in the assault, prevent the escape of the enemy.

It was about eight o'clock, when the advanced guard of General Greene's division arrived in the vicinity of Trenton. So deeply anxious was Washington in the issue of the expedition—so momentous the effects either of failure, or success—that on this occasion, the commander-in-chief, with his aids, accompanied the march of the out-guards. It was of the highest importance, that the enemy should not suffer alarm: previous to attack, and this charge his Excellency took on himself personally.

The snow, and sleet, which during the night proved so disastrous, was now of service in obscuring the approach. At a juncture, when the sharpest look-out was preserved by the advancing party, an individual suddenly threw himself in the middle of the road. He was instantly surrounded, and his person secured, that he might neither escape, nor give alarm.

"De safety of Congress" cried Girard.

"Release your prisoner," said the subaltern in command of the guards, "he is a friend."

"Well, Mr. Girard, cried Washington riding up, "time presses. In a word, how stands it in Trenton?"

The spy replied briefly, that the Hessians were sleeping after their carouse—and the troop of British light-horse were in the some predicament.

"But the guards—and pickets?" exclaimed Washington hastily; "is good watch preserved at the out-posts?"

Girard answered, that as far as his scouting went, though the troops had been indulged, yet discipline was maintained, and the out-guards regularly relieved.

"Where shall we find their picket?" demanded his Excellency.

Perhaps two hundred yards hence—maybe a greater distance—was the reply. The certainty of being taken, or shot, prevented the scout ascertaining the spot with more exactitude. He did not fear the danger—he added—it was the dread of being unable to serve his Excellency, which made him keep aloof.

"Hand him a fire-lock, and let him fall in," said the general.

The march recommenced. At a short distance in advance, at an angle of the road, stood a cottage; the owner was at the door, chopping wood.

On seeing the guard approach, the man attempted to retreat within doors, but was secured, ere he could effect his purpose.

"Where is the Hessian sentinel?" asked the general.

The cottager, through fear, or other cause, made no reply.

"Speak—and quickly, my good fellow," cried Colonel Baylor, "this is General Washington."

"God bless your Excellency," said the man finding speech, "the sentinel is under that large oak—he is sore driven by the storm"

A push was immediately made to surprise the Hessian, ere he could give alarm, but unfortunately, he espied his foes in time to retreat, after discharging his fire-lock.

There was now no resource but in a rapid movement to penetrate the town. The picket, to which the fugitive sentinel was attached, made no stand, as their number was but small, but they nevertheless behaved very well, keeping up a constant retreating fire from behind houses.

Soon as his Excellency came within view of the interior of the town, and saw that the main body of the enemy was forming in the streets, he ordered his artillery-men to advance with three light pieces.

The firing now heard in another quarter, proclaiming the arrival, and engagement, of Sullivan's division, cheered and encouraged the troops under Washington. His artillery in advancing were met by a heavy galling fire which struck down many a brave soldier, but being supported by light troops under the command of his Excellency, who marched at their head, the cannon were brought to bear, and speedily swept from the streets, the half-formed Hessian ranks. The enemy's cannon was seized after a short and severe resistance—and they fled on all sides. The British light-horse, and many of the German infantry, escaped by a bridge over the Assanpink creek, (which forms a boundary to the town, eastward,) and as the Pennsylvania, and New Jersey, militia, were unable to cross the Delaware, and invest the cantonment on that side, they made good their retreat to Bordentown.

The main corps of the Hessians being hard pressed, attempted to file off by a road on their right, (near the banks of the Assanpink,) leading to Princeton, but his Excellency perceiving their intention, threw a body of troops in their way, which immediately checked the design. Finding themselves surrounded—retreat cut off—that they must inevitably be cut to pieces, if they made farther resistance, the drum sounded a parley, and after a short conference, they agreed to lay down their arms.

“Where is Colonel Rahl?” demanded the commander-in-chief.

“Your Excellency will receive his surrender in a few minutes,” replied Baylor, “but I fear he is wounded beyond recovery.”

Even while he spoke, the Hessian commandant was borne by a file of his own sergeants. He had scarce strength, as his sword—in token of surrender—was handed to Washington, to exchange salutation with his conqueror. He had demeaned himself bravely, in the vain attempt to form and rally his troops under the sweeping fire of the American artillery, and was carried off to quarters, bearing with him the sympathy, and respect, of his enemies.

“This is a proud day, gentlemen, both for the army and for

Congress," exclaimed his Excellency, glancing around on his victorious troops, "but our task is not complete, till we secure what we have won."

As it was supposed—with much probability—that many of the Hessians were concealed in the houses to which they had fled, either for shelter, or to escape capture, a strict search commenced which resulted in a great increase of prisoners, both officers and privates.

Six brass field-pieces—about a thousand stand of arms, and the same number of prisoners, were the results of the surprise at Trenton. But to estimate the importance of this lucky hit by the number of captives taken, or arms secured, was far underrating its advantages. In the low ebb to which the military affairs of the Republic were reduced, the successful issue of the enterprise was calculated to inspire, with renewed courage, the wavering spirits of the nation—to give it more thorough confidence in Congress and the army, and to stimulate it to fresh exertions for the common weal.

The merit of the enterprise lay in the plan and conception, and the perseverance with which it was completed; in the transport of the army across a river blockaded with floating ice—in marching soldiers, destitute of shoes and other essential clothing, through a pitiless, relentless storm, in the depth of winter, rather than in the actual conflict. The engagement, from the commencement, was entirely in favour of the assailants, who out-numbered the foe, and had the advantage of taking them by surprise.

General Ewing was to have crossed, before daylight, at Trenton-ferry, and taken possession of the bridge over the Assanpink creek; but the quantity of ice was so great, that although he did everything in his power to effect it, he could not accomplish the passage. The same difficulty also hindered General Cadwalader, with the Pennsylvania militia, from crossing at Bristol-ford. If either, or both, of these officers had succeeded, the surprise would have been more complete, the number of captives, and arms, taken, much larger.

CHAPTER VII.

IN connecting the severed links of our narrative, it is necessary that we return to our acquaintance at Jasper Crowe's old mansion.

When the count was borne senseless to his bed, the most assiduous attention was rendered both by Jablonsky and Schulz. The presence of a surgeon was needful, and it was debated whether the regimental functionary should be sent for; but the

extraordinary, and unaccountable manner in which Knipslatch came by his mishap—the impossibility of explaining what had accrued by human agency—rendered his friends extremely averse not only to summoning the surgeon, but even calling in the aid of Franz, or Diana Groots.

His pulse vibrated, and his breath dimmed the surface of a mirror which—in their deep concern for his fate—they applied to the mouth of the sufferer. That he was alive was evident—that he would be soon restored to a state of consciousness, and relieve them from the consequences of a most disagreeable dilemma, was their confident hope.

The behaviour of Fagel was almost as extraordinary as the event which his agency originated. All former confidence, and self-possession, seemed to have deserted him. Unwillingly—with fear and trembling—he had followed into the loft, to ascertain the fate of the count. He was too much overcome with emotion, to assist in the patient's removal; and now sat by the bed-side, a concerned, though helpless, spectator of the condition into which he had brought his victim.

When Knipslatch at length opened his eyes, and beheld by whom he was surrounded, he turned a reproachful gaze on Fagel.

“I predicted this result,” he uttered with difficulty, “and I dreaded it.”

“What result my dear count,” said Jablonsky, taking his hand, “what was it that you beheld?”

Knipslatch shook his head, intimating by gesture, that he was yet too weak to hold discourse.

Ardent spirits, mixed with water, were administered with happy effect. He gradually recovered from the double effect of the severe nervous shock, and the blow struck by the falling ladder.

The account he was enabled to give was as follows: His friends had scarcely left him in darkness, when he beheld, by the faint glimmer of the stars, and the indirect rays of the lanterns on the landing below, the awful influence which Fagel had summoned, rise through the floor to a colossal height. In its progress, the lumber with which the garret was encumbered, was whirled about on all sides. The direful being, which for so many centuries either favoured, or tormented, the family, deigned not to confer with its present degenerate representative. To testify its anger, a sudden flash of lightning was flung in the eyes of the bewildered nobleman—and, with a horrid screech, the spectre flew through the roof!

“I saw the flash,” said Jablonsky, “my eye could not be deceived.”

“Nor my ears,” added Schulz; “it was an awful noise—and God help me! I hope the season is very distant when I shall pass such another evening.”

“How happened it, Captain Fagel,” asked Knipslatch, rising,

from his pillow, "did you omit what you ought to have performed?"

"No! no! Herr von Knipslatch," replied Fagel, "the omission would have been a virtue. I have practised deception"

"How? how, sir?" demanded the count, "what I saw was real."

"Who will accompany me to the loft?" asked Fagel, looking alternately at Schulz and Jablonsky, "if I cannot satisfy my fears, I will at least reveal all I know."

Schulz looked exceedingly blank at this proposal, but Jablonsky being determined to fathom to the bottom, the mystery, both of the apparent supernatural event, and his fellow-officer's suspicious behaviour, agreed to accompany him. Whatever were the nature of Fagel's agency, it was impossible for the Pole to believe otherwise than that the Hessian was now as terror-stricken as Knipslatch had shown himself previous to the ceremony. He suffered Jablonsky to lead the way. On arriving at the loft, he gazed around with an expression in which fear and astonishment, strove for mastery.

"See! the trap has fallen, or been shut. Who, or what could have done that?" asked the captain.

"Aye! you may well ask that question," replied Jablonsky, "and who rolled these barrels? Now none *ought* to be able to afford an explanation so well as yourself!"

"On my word of honour, Captain Jablonsky," cried Fagel, laying his hand on the Pole's shoulder; the latter felt his hand tremble; "I am guiltless of necromancy. My only crime was practising on the count's fears to an improper extent. I was maddened that we could not discover the girl we supposed hidden in the house, and was ripe for any mischief which presented. Our friend's foolish fancies gave too ready occasion. I am truly sorry for what has happened."

"You astound me, Fagel," said Jablonsky, changing colour, "both Schulz, and myself, believed you were fooling, till the result convinced us there was more than mere trickery. Do you affirm, Captain Fagel, that the voice we heard, before we left this spot, was not a response to your call?"

"It was my own voice counterfeited, so as to appear coming from a distant part," replied Fagel, "there is no magic in that."

"Maybe," observed the Pole, "I have heard of such deception. But the flash of light—the rolling barrels—the falling ladder. Had you an accomplice?"

"Of these matters, Captain Jablonsky," exclaimed the Hessian, with much emotion, "I am entirely innocent. I know not how to account for them, and though a foolhardy man, almost believe that an evil sprite obeyed my rash summons."

"'Tis strange," observed Jablonsky, pondering, "for credit you, or not, I do not see how you could find the opportunity of

concerting with an accomplice. But aid me to replace the ladder, and I will take a glance above."

The Pole mounted, lifted the trap, and looked over the sides of the sloping roof. The snow, and sleet, fell thick and fast, and he soon descended.

"It must have been a good genius after all," said Jablonsky, trying to put a smiling face on the event, "for seeing that a storm was coming on, he took care to close the trap. I do not see that he has left any vestige behind; not even a bad odour; so let's away, and console poor Knips Hatch."

"Do you break it to him!" whispered Fagel, as they descended the stairs, together.

Both the count, and Schulz, were on the stretch of expectation, when their friends reappeared.

"Why, Count, you look quite a different man," cried Jablonsky, gaily, "from what you appeared fifteen minutes ago; and our friend, Fagel, has made a confession which will no doubt set your mind quite at ease."

Thereupon, the Pole related what they had seen, and what Fagel had confessed.

The relation had certainly an extraordinary effect upon the count. His face changed to an expression of deep and sullen anger; and his strength seemed perfectly restored. He arose from bed, arranged his disordered apparel, and confronting the Hessian, told him in a few words, that there was but one mode of wiping off the disgrace and ridicule, which had been flung on himself, and his family; and he would have satisfaction before daybreak.

"I have too often shown my courage, Major Knips Hatch, for even you to dispute it," said Fagel, calmly, "but I would prefer not meeting you. I have done you wrong, and regret it—accept my acknowledgments and apology."

"I cannot, if I would," replied the count, after a moment's consideration, "the affair must go farther, or I shall become—when the whole story gets wind—the ridicule and laughing-stock of the army."

"No! no!" said Schulz, interposing, "as the captain apologizes, what more can he do, or what more can be expected?"

"As far as regards him," rejoined Knips Hatch, "the argument applies. But you know my feelings; you know to what secret cause I attribute the misfortunes which have befallen me. There shall be, Captain Fagel, for my insulted honour, a deeper feeling than ridicule excited in the breasts of those who hear the story, and the comments passed on it. Captain Jablonsky, I must again tax your friendship."

"Herr von Knips Hatch," exclaimed Fagel, gravely, "I am only adding to my wrong in meeting you hostilely. I pray you to think of some other mode. The occasion does not justify my acting."

“That I can remedy, Captain Fagel,” cried Knipslatch, striking the other a blow, with the open hand, across his mouth.

“There is now indeed, I am afraid, no help for it,” rejoined the Hessian, “Herr Schulz will, I hope, arrange everything with Captain Jablonsky, and I shall be found in my own quarters.”

Saying this, Fagel quitted the chamber; and Schulz presently followed. When Jablonsky, and Knipslatch, were left alone, the latter asked the Pole to tell him, candidly, whether he had acted right in forcing a meeting.

Jablonsky replied that looking only to the consequences which affected himself, and the service to which they were both attached, he would say the count did wrong; but considering the peculiar feelings, and situation of his friend, and sympathizing with him, he could not affirm, but what he should have acted the same way himself.

“That is spoken like an honest man and a gentleman,” exclaimed Knipslatch, shaking the other warmly by the hand; “you are indeed my friend.”

CHAPTER VIII.

AFTER preliminaries were arranged by the seconds, they took their principals to the intended scene of action—the long garret on the upper floor. To fight out of doors, in midst of the chilly storm, was impracticable; to postpone the event was contrary to the wish of Knipslatch, and even of Fagel, since he found it impossible to decline the meeting. It was agreed, as the regimental surgeon was quartered in the vicinity, to defer sending for him till occasion should require his services.

The old loft brought associations to each party, powerful enough to divert the mind even from the intended rencontre. Knipslatch was confirmed, by the extraordinary occurrence in hereditary superstition, though no man was more sensibly alive to ridicule, of which he felt he should have his full share, when the mystification practised by Fagel got wind. Believing in the existence of a familiar, which haunted his race, he found it difficult to reconcile its appearance with Fagel's confession of deception. It could only be solved on the supposition, that the Hessian had, like a child in an armoury, unwittingly played with weapons of which he knew not the power, or the use.

Fagel himself stood in almost similar predicament, with respect to his faith; he had summoned the evil one in joke, and behold! he had appeared. Of nearly the same complexion were the thoughts of Jablonsky and Schulz; something supernatural had intervened, though whether through the agency of Fagel's invocations, or at Knipslatch's silent appeal, they could not determine.

Jablonsky, the most sceptical of the party, could not in any wise reduce the phenomena to the probabilities of natural experience.

Possessed with these feelings, the momentous occasion which brought the parties together, was rendered more grave and serious. The lightness, or nonchalance, which ordinarily characterises, or which is assumed, by the military character, under circumstances such as attended the quarrel of Knipslatch and Fagel, was subdued to a solemn gravity.

At the instance of Fagel, one more attempt was made to compromise the matter, but Jablonsky and his principal both declared, that friendship could not possibly be renewed till shots had been exchanged. Without further delay, the distance was then measured, and the combatants placed. Knipslatch stood near the wall which divided the loft from the miser's private apartment; Fagel was placed opposite, at an interval of fifteen paces.

The weapons chosen were pistols. Preference would have been given to either the broad, or small sword, but the infirm state of Knipslatch's health, in addition to the severe shock his frame had experienced, dictated the more equable substitute of fire-arms.

"Is your friend prepared?" cried Jablonsky.

Schulz answered in the affirmative.

"Then let it be understood, as we have agreed," rejoined the Pole, "that both parties fire at the instant that I drop the scarf."

The Pole stood midway between the combatants, though far beyond the line of fire. Schulz was on the other side. The eyes of the principals were fixed on Jablonsky: he held aloft the red scarf for a second; it then fell from his hand, and both pistols were discharged together.

Neither party fell, but the double report was followed by a most terrific crash, which to ordinary ears might resemble the smashing of glass and crockery-ware, united with the screams of a female voice; but to the astounded officers, whose minds were already beset with superstitious fears, the sudden *avalanche* of sound bade them prepare to behold the spectre which before frightened Knipslatch.

"My hour is come, Jablonsky—shield me—I cannot bear the sight!" exclaimed the Count, dropping on his knees, and placing both hands before his eyes.

Fagel looked aghast; the pistol fell from his hand, and he stood on the spot where he fired, cowed and stricken with terror.

"When will this end, gentlemen?" he exclaimed. "I pray you, let us cease our quarrels, and seek relief from this hellish spell." The seconds were almost as much amazed and petrified as their principals.

Meanwhile the screams continued, intermingled with an occasional clatter of dislodged, or falling, pieces of glass.

"The spirit still threatens," uttered the terrified Count, without daring to open his eyes.

"Murder! thieves! robbery! help!" shouted a male voice.

"Come, rouse yourself, my friend," cried Jablonsky, laughing, and seizing Knipslatch by the arm; "up, man, and cast away terror! This is not your devil, but an American fiend, who speaks English with the accent of a native. He was born here, I do assure you."

"Do not jest with my infirmity, Captain Jablonsky," said the Count, rising and looking fearfully about.

"Gentlemen," remarked Jablonsky, "I suspect we have been fooled, or fooling ourselves; but stay—Schulz, your friend is wounded."

"No, no!" exclaimed Fagel, "the skin of the arm torn; nothing more, I do assure you."

The wound, on inspection, proved as slight as he intimated.

Returning to the former subject, Jablonsky translated the words uttered by the unknown, and suggested that they should break down the wall, as he suspected it would turn out that their host, Herr Crowe, had some secret closet or store behind.

"Here is the aperture made by Fagel's bullet," cried Schulz, pointing to a hole in the plaster.

"I am thankful it took that, rather than another direction," observed the Hessian.

Knipslatch, who had partially recovered from his terror, suggested, that before the wall was cast down, they had better summon the garrison; he certainly heard a whispering; perhaps Captain Fagel could yet explain the whole manœuvre.

Fagel asserted his innocence, and proposed that Jablonsky should adopt the Count's hint.

Thus appealed to, Jablonsky applied his mouth to the aperture, and demanded that whoever were behind, should make himself known.

There was no reply or signal.

"Summon the garrison again," cried Schulz.

Jablonsky repeated the summons, with addition, that if no answer were made, he would force an entry.

The Pole detected, or fancied, he heard a slight whispering, and a hasty negative in reply: but the summons was unheeded.

"Now I will try the third time," cried Jablonsky, and then we'll vary our pleasant Christmas pastimes, by an assault."

The third summons met with the same fate as the second and first.

"Depend upon it, Count," said Jablonsky, as Schulz brought up an axe, "we shall discover your familiar."

The first blow shattered the plaster, laid bare and broke the lathes. It was accompanied by loud shrieking within. Half-a-dozen vigorous blows made a breach wide and high enough to afford ingress to the fortress.

On entering, they discovered a chamber, piled from floor to ceiling, with boxes, beds, and miscellaneous articles of every

description. In one corner, half-dressed, in the state in which he had rushed up stairs, on hearing the report of fire-arms, stood Jasper Crowe, pale and trembling, yet with resolute eye, and pistols in hand, keeping guard over a leather trunk. Near him crouched a young maiden, with apparel disordered, and hair falling wildly over her shoulders, the very picture of terror and despair.

The display, on every side, of rich furniture and provisions—hams, in rows, without number; wine, in casks and bottles—drove from the minds of the Hessians every trace of superstition.

“What has he in the trunk he stands guard over so firmly?” cried Schulz.

“Here is our prize, and a fair one she proves,” exclaimed Fagel, gazing at the dansel.

“We have a strong curiosity, Herr Crowe, after all the trouble we have undergone,” said Jablonsky, advancing, “to have a peep at the interior of the trunk. Is there more cold fowl and wine hidden?”

“Stand off, men! stand off!” cried Jasper in a shrill, tremulous tone, with one foot on the trunk, a pistol in each hand, pointed at the intruders, and which shook in his nerveless grasp; yet he stood determined to part with the treasure only with life.

“Stand off! I say,” continued the old man, as Jablonsky continued to advance, “I’ll fire both pistols into ye.”

“Go not near him, sir, he’s desperate,” cried Mary, flinging herself between her father, and Jablonsky. “Use us, sir, as you would have your own sisters and parents used, and we’ll submit to your will.”

“No, no!” gasped the old miser, “I’ll surrender nothing; it’s mine, all mine.”

Meanwhile Fagel, after casting a glance round the chamber, made free with a handsome fowling-piece, of antique construction, inlaid with silver and ivory.

“It is mine!” cried Jasper, making a spring at Fagel. Dropping one pistol, he grasped the fowling-piece with one hand, and pointed the other weapon at the captain’s breast.

Mary, alert to prevent bloodshed, and its fearful consequences, had barely time to dash aside the barrel of the pistol, as Jasper, in his phrenzied passion to protect his property, pulled the trigger. The ball passed harmless into the wall.

Fagel, enraged at the attack, seized the old man by the throat. In the struggle, they fell together on the floor.

“Part them! part them!” cried Knipslach.

Jablonsky and Schulz, with difficulty, succeeded in rescuing Jasper from the grasp of the Hessian.

“Protect us, sir—do you protect us!” exclaimed Mary, falling on her knees before Knipslach. “What in reason you would have, we will give. My father is an old man and passionate; his goods he loves better than me—better than his life.”

"What does this poor girl say, Jablonsky?" asked the Count, as he lifted her from the floor.

The Pole communicated the substance of her appeal.

"It is but reasonable," said Knipslatch. "My friends," he continued, "let us make a treaty with this little maiden; her father is a blockhead and an ass, and we need not heed him—though look to him close."

Fagel was sullen, and muttered dissent; the land, he said, was captive, and all that was in it belonged to the conquerors. But on Knipslatch requiring his forbearance, as the only terms on which he would consent to forget the past, and renew friendship, the latter promised acquiescence.

The Count then instructed Jablonsky to propose, that they should be supplied daily with a fair quantity of what Jasper possessed in such profusion, and in consideration of such supply, they would refrain appropriating any money, jewelry, or other article of value, or of apparel; restricting their demand to rations of wine, hams, and other eatables.

These conditions were translated by Jablonsky, and very cheerfully agreed to by Mary Crowe, though with many a half-suppressed snarl of dissent from Jasper.

"What is the maiden's name?" asked Knipslatch.

"Mary Crowe," answered Jablonsky.

On hearing her name mentioned, Mary looked with an inquiring glance, both at the Count and his friend.

"Then tell the *fraulein* Crowe," said Knipslatch, returning her glance, "how happy I, and all of us, will be, if she would favour us by resuming the management of the house. Her father (though this you need not repeat) is no better than a turnip, and besides, he quarrels daily with Dian, and withholds the commonest supplies."

Mary's eye sought the floor on hearing this proposal: she would consult her father, she replied, and obey his will.

"And now that we have brought old skin-flint to the rod," added the Count, "let it not be forgotten that I must have the windows in my bed-chamber repaired."

Mary, with the faintest smile, promised assent on her father's behalf.

"Who passes there?" demanded Fagel, on hearing footsteps in the loft.

It was Franz, who said he came up on hearing the report of fire-arms.

"And he comes in good time," cried Jablonsky; "it is too late,—at least I think we are not disposed for bed. Franz, you must untomb Diana; let her boil a couple of hams; take with you this string of sausages, that net of lemons, and return for a few bottles of claret. We will close Christmas-night with the rarest breakfast since we landed on these shores."

As Franz was on the point of unhooking the suspended hams,

Jasper interposed his services, which speedily brought about a wrangling, as he palmed on the German two of the smallest. The "*Fraulein*," as Knipslach called her, ended the dispute, by pushing aside her father, and allowing Franz a free choice.

"And ere we go," said the Count, "I must apologize to our hostess for the damage done by Fagel's bullet, though better as it is, than if it had winged its way to her bosom."

From her account, which she gave with timid reluctance, to Jablonsky, it appeared she suffered rather a narrow escape. As she lay in bed (which was close to the wall of partition) she heard the Hessians discoursing in the adjoining garret, but not understanding the language, knew not the danger she ran, till the bullet, flying over her head, struck against a heap of plates and glass on the opposite side, the noise of which brought up her father, who, with singular obstinacy, refused to answer the summons, or allow her to do so.

Jasper's military guests now retired, to talk over their adventures, whilst waiting breakfast, leaving father and daughter to their own company.

"All, all gone!" exclaimed the old man, with a deep sigh, sitting down on the trunk; "and you, Mary, would give everything! I wonder you did not propose to the old marauder to carry off this trunk."

"I don't know what you think, father," said the maiden, with asperity, "but after firing a pistol at one of these foreign officers, I think you have escaped very easily, and I believe I am not far from the truth in saying, that you owe your life, and the safety of that trunk, to that same old marauder."

"Ugh!" grunted Jasper, "and in gratitude for their matchless generosity, in not leaving me entirely destitute, I presume you intend to make breakfast for these plunderers, and serve up their dinner. Perhaps your generosity may carry you to the extent of accompanying them to Philadelphia—or to hell, if the white-headed old rascal should ask it—*as a favour!*"

Mary burst into tears, and flinging herself on the bed, wept bitterly.

CHAPTER IX.

About seven o'clock, our military carousers left their claret to sit down to the substantial breakfast which Diana Groots had been summoned to prepare. The board was lavishly supplied with hams, sausages, tongues, tea of rare quality—which owing to the contest with Great Britain was exceedingly scarce and dear—chocolate and many other luxuries. Eggs there were in plenty, but we are sorry to record, mostly unfit for table, having become antiquated during sojourn in Jasper's store-room.

A hearty breakfast was about the best prescription the *bon-vivans* could partake of, to wash away the effects of their bacchanal vigil. The events of the night were discussed with freedom and temper, and with remarkable courtesy to Knipslatch's peculiar fancies—and with good reason—for the mystery of the flash of light, and the falling ladder, was a spell, which haunted, and puzzled, the mind of each.

Fagel was the most thoughtful; he was also the first to leave the table, before the others had finished their prolonged meal. Meeting Franz in the hall, which he contrived purposely, on his return from the kitchen—he told him that as breakfast was nearly over, his services would not be required; and he himself had occasion for them. The orderly followed the captain to his quarters.

"Franz," said the officer, "you have a close tongue—a ready hand, and a prompt wit. These are good qualities, if you know how to put them to good use."

"I have been promoted, Meinherr, from the ranks," replied the soldier, "to serve the honorable mess."

"That is but small promotion in itself, Franz," rejoined the captain, "if it were not, that it put you in the way of serving others, and by so doing, serving yourself."

"How can I serve Meinherr?"

"You have seen the old man's pretty daughter—that little body whom we unearthed so oddly this morning?"

Franz replied in the affirmative.

"I have a notion of taking herto spend a few days at Princeton, or New Brunswick," said Fagel, "it will be a pleasant change after being so long immured amongst sausages, and old clothes."

"Very pleasant, both to the lady, and Meinherr," observed Franz.

"And to yourself—I suppose, if I pay you handsomely for helping us off?" remarked the Hessian.

The soldier observed that, certainly, payment would make considerable difference in his feelings. But would not Herr von Knipslatch, and Ensign Schulz, take it very ill? He might suffer from their anger.

"That is as much as to say, Franz, that you suspect they would be jealous of me, and visit their resentment on yourself."

"I hope Meinherr will protect me," replied the soldier.

"Make yourself easy, Franz," said the captain; "I have the best claim to her society, if it be only in recompense for the danger I ran from her father. If it had not been for the daughter's arm, the old brute would have shot me."

"That proves her affection for Meinherr," observed Franz, with a broad vulgar grin.

As the parties now understood each other, it was arranged, that Franz should immediately procure a light country wagon; and after receiving further instructions (with permission to absent himself

from duty) and being furnished with money, he departed on his unscrupulous errand. Captain Fagel immediately went to headquarters, and procured from Colonel Rahl a fortnight's leave of absence. Returning to Jasper Crowe's, he found his friend, still lingering idly over the breakfast-table.

"Why you look as bright as a new krentzer, Herr Fagel," cried the count, eyeing his late antagonist, "may I ask your recipe for good looks after a nights debauch?"

"The prescription, I followed this morning," replied Fagel, "was ten minutes' walk through the sleet and snow."

"Billiards would be a good substitute," cried Jablonsky, "and better than a parade through the snow—What sound was that?"

"The crack of a rifle," said Schulz.

"An excellent idea!" cried the Pole, "but let us go aloft. 'Tis a famous shooting-gallery. We'll club ten dollars, and the steadiest hand takes the purse."

"Add a kiss from Mary Crowe, and it's a compact," said Schulz.

The Ensign had scarcely uttered the words, when they heard the report of a scattered firing. "What can that mean?" exclaimed Knipslatch, appealing to his friends. The drum immediately beat to arms, and the firing momentarily grew louder and nearer, and more frequent. "To arms, gentlemen," cried Knipslatch, "the outposts are attacked; whether I survive, or fall—remember that I predicted, from the aspect of my secret monitor, that a change was at hand."

There was no time for further parley, or discourse. Arming themselves hastily, Knipslatch and his friends issued forth to join their respective corps, amidst ceaseless discharges of musketry.

Soon as they were gone, Jasper Crowe crept forth from his chamber, and ventured into the officers' mess-room. Sad to the miser, was the scene he contemplated! Such a goodly array of provisions—which under his penurious management would have lasted several weeks—squandered, in profusion, in one morning's meal.

"The d——d rats!" exclaimed Jasper, eyeing the remains of breakfast.

"See, here, Mary," he continued, as his daughter entered the apartment, "both hams cut at the same time! The cursed locusts! may their own throats be cut, even as they sliced the hams. But half-a-loaf is better than none—so help me, Mary, to take up stairs what remains, or it will fall into the hands of that toad below."

Mary, ever obedient to her father's command, save when his life, or property, was imminently endangered by his obstinacy, began removing the half-consumed viands as she had been bidden.

Meanwhile Franz returned with the wagon. From the discharge of fire-arms, and other movements, he comprehended the real posture of affairs: but as Fagel had granted leave of absence

from military duty, he did not deem it incumbent to join his regiment. Drawing up the wagon under shelter of the stable, he entered the house, and found, as he expected, the officers had quit-
ted. Peeping slyly into the mess-room, he beheld the work in which Jasper was so earnestly absorbed, but retreated without showing himself.

Hurrying next into the kitchen, he was met by Diana Groots, armed with a formidable bar of iron.

"Why, whom do you take me for, Diana?" cried the soldier. "How fares it with the Anspachers?" demanded Diana, "do we make prisoners, or strike tents?"

"The battle's scarce begun," replied Franz, "and your trade is a long way off."

"My trade!" exclaimed Diana, in a tone of mingled scorn and derision; "my trade, indeed! and what have I made of it?"

"Why, not much, perhaps," replied the other, "yet I have seen two gold-watches, and I will not say how many broad gold-pieces, to say nothing of silver dollars."

"Why curse the poverty-stricken wretches," exclaimed Diana, "if one meets with a pair of epaulets, there is nothing in the pockets but a roll of paper money, not worth the weight in tobacco."

"You have not yet learned your trade, Diana," said Franz with a sneer.

"What is it, ye mean, ye prowling thief!" rejoined the sutler "*tausend teufeln!* this bar shall teach ye how to behave."

"Throw aside the beam, my good Diana, and listen to me," said Franz, "and I'll point out the way, by which you shall make more money in five minutes, than you would have done in two campaigns."

Seeing that he was in earnest, Diana became an attentive listener. Franz related on what mission he had been employed by captain Fagel; he also gave a description of the store-chamber in which so much wealth was, confessedly, deposited. There were but two beings now in the house, in custody of the treasure; a feeble old man, and the young girl just come to light, his daughter.

What prevented Diana and himself, he asked, binding Jasper Crowe, and carrying off, in the confusion occasioned by the enemy's assault, both the treasure, and the young damsel?

"*Himmelsblast!* why, the girl—is not the gold enough?"

"Aye! for you and me," replied Franz, "but there is only one road we can travel—backward, the way we came. And if we take the girl to either of the places, the captain named, I shall make my peace with him, and stand clear of deserting!"

"Well! and we go halves?" cried Diana.

"On my honor," exclaimed Franz, laying his hand on his breast.

"And the old man, do you splinter him?"

"No, Diana, I have a conscience," observed Franz; "let us fasten him in the cellar."

Providing themselves with a rope, and large sack, they made fast the door leading from the basement into the garden, and then stole quietly up stairs. The hall-doors, both front and back, were next secured without observation.

Jasper's weak footsteps were now heard descending the staircase, and to prevent being seen, the worthy pair retreated into the closet in which Franz usually slept. Soon as the old man passed into the mess-room, they crept after him, and ere he was aware, the mouth of the uplifted sack was drawn over his face, and body, by Franz. Diana Groots, who held the cord, wound it several times round the sack, enveloped in which, the old man was struggling, and kicking to get free. But his arms being now fastened by the rope, and his cries stifled in the sack, he was borne neck and heels, into a cellar which opened from the kitchen, and in which was usually deposited the winter-fuel.

Having bound him securely to a post, from which there was no possible escape, by his own unaided efforts, a hole was cut in the sack, large enough to admit the passage of his head.

"He'll not die for want of air," said Franz, casting a last look at his victim as he quitted the cellar.

"Wretches! will ye starve me to death? mercy! mercy! you mean it not! Loose me, and I'll give you gold, all I have! Mary—help—Mary—help.

More he may have uttered, but the door was closed on the unfortunate Jasper—the key turned in the lock, and withdrawn. Harsh was the grating of that key in old Jasper's ear!

Often had Mary ridiculed the idea of his affixing a lock on a cellar into which there was need of constant access, and in which nothing of more value, than fuel was stored. But the slave, (his former menial,) he affirmed consumed by far too much wood, so he bought a lock. Did he feel how bitterly his niggardly penuriousness recoiled on himself? That lock in whose safe binding magic, he so much exulted—which he had procured at—as he said—a heavy cost, after the plan had so oft failed of counting the number of sticks, and blocks! His own weapon turned on himself!

"Now we must silence the little *fraulein*, while we peep into the closet where all the gold and silver pieces be stored—and so, frau Groots, take off your shoes, and tread lightly. Those little vixens have sharp ears, and shrill clappers."

And so saying, the adroit marauder led his companion in quest of their victim.

CHAPTER X.

WHEN Franz and the suttler crept into the loft, they found the broken wall blockaded with furniture, and other cumbrous articles, impeding further progress. It was a main point with the rascal to surprise the girl and stifle her cries, ere she had time, or chance, to raise alarm. As he heard, through the conversation at the breakfast table, that the secret stairs to Jasper's stronghold led into a closet in his bed-chamber, he proposed to frau Groots, that she should remain sentinel in the loft, to prevent escape in that direction, whilst he returned to the floor below, and approached through the miser's apartment.

But this prudent arrangement met with unexpected opposition from the sage Dian.

"*Nein! nein!*" was her whispered protest. More by signs than by words, she gave the fellow to understand, that she would not trust him alone in the treasure-chamber—they were to share equally, and division should be made when both were present.

Cursing her, in his heart, for a selfish old hag, and for everything else that was bad and opprobrious, he found opposition to her wishes both useless and dangerous, as time was already lost in discussion. Retracing their steps, they entered Jasper's bed-chamber, passed into the closet, and from thence upward. The temporary and hastily arranged stairs, creaked as they ascended.

"Father," cried the maiden, "this is all labour in vain. We shall have to carry everything down again, when they have returned from fighting."

Hearing no reply, nor yet seeing her parent, for Franz paused in doubt how to act, she ran to the stair-head, and beholding the unwelcome visitor, shrieked loudly, and ran to possess herself of a gun which Jasper kept loaded. But the wary ruffian, seconded by the female fiend, were too nimble for the courageous attempt; the weapon was wrested from her grasp.

Spite of her cries, her hands were tied, and by signs which there was no mistaking, she was threatened with instant death if she resisted being blindfolded. Frighted with the horrid menaces of the female fury who stood over her, and knowing but too well from the stories which she had heard related of the brutality of the camp-women, when excited by hope of plunder, that the threats would be put in execution, she submitted to her fate.

Thus far were the marauders successful. Their next exploit—an easy one—was to commence ransacking the long-boarded stores of the miser. In its progress, however, it proved more difficult than they contemplated; there was such an *embarras de richesse*, that they knew not either how to act, or what to take—or what they could make up their mind to leave behind.

On forcing open the trunk, for whose safety Jasper displayed

such desperate courage, it was found to contain an immense bulk, in bags, of dollars in specie. Other bags, of lesser size, were filled with gold coin—a treasure which the miscalculating old man had been afraid to put away from his sight, and bury in the earth, as most of his neighbours had done with their valuables; for which short-sighted policy he was now doomed to suffer most bitterly.

To carry off the trunk, entire, was the discreet wish of both robbers; but it proved too heavy, and they were, besides, in momentary fear of discovery. As often as Franz withdrew his mind from the absorbing contemplation of the riches by which he was surrounded, he heard the commingling sounds of battle, and knew from experience, that the contest was growing severe, and the issue doubtful; and in whosever's favour it was decided, he must away with his plunder, before victory gave leisure to the conquerors.

“What hast there, fool?” cried he, on beholding Diana appropriating a very rich dress, probably the wedding apparel of Jasper's mother, or deceased wife, and whose bright colours and woven gold, attracted the woman's fancy, not deadened to what gratified her sex.

“Throw it down,” he exclaimed, snatching it from her hand, and flinging it aside; “and those silver pieces, leave them for our superiors. Here is gold, which will buy every thing, fill thy pockets with it.”

Not without much ado, Dian was persuaded to relinquish the more gaudy, for the more substantial, and portable, wealth. Having laden himself, and companion, with as much as they could both carry on their persons, of the precious metal—as to encumber themselves with boxes or trunks, was inconsistent with the line of proceeding which he meant to adopt when he arrived at the British head-quarters at Princeton or New Brunswick, he left the trembling captive in charge of his accomplice, and hastened below.

Time was precious. As he gazed from a window in Jasper's bed-chamber, he beheld many of his straggling countrymen retreating toward the bridge over the Assanpink Creek. The day was then unfavourable to his masters! Should he, or should he not, persevere in his design of carrying off the old man's daughter? If he did not, his conduct would be viewed in no other light than desertion, and as he must follow the same road by which his countrymen retreated—within the British lines—to escape from the service (ignorant of the language of the country, and branded as a robber), was impracticable. But by carrying off Mary Crowe, he was fulfilling the orders of his superior officer, on whom alone the blame must fall, and who, for sake of his own character, must screen him from the consequences of being absent from his regiment, and for his mal-practices (if they should be complained of) in Jasper's house. The flight of Diana Groots

he could justify on the argument, that he had been forced to seek her aid in accomplishing the captain's designs upon the maiden. He was the more inclined to the latter alternative, as there appeared every probability, from the expected issue of the engagement, that the Hessian brigade would be forced to retreat on Princeton, and his officers would arrive there nearly as soon as himself.

The wagon was accordingly brought from the stable, and Mary (her cries partially smothered by a cloak wound around her head) forced into it. She was laid on the bottom of the vehicle, Dian following to prevent her rising, or attempting to escape. Locking the outer door, Franz put the key in his pocket, and applying the whip to his steed, he drove rapidly down the street, and over the Creek-bridge, refusing to listen to the call of several fugitives on foot, escaping in the same direction.

Not ten minutes elapsed after his flight, when Girard came to the house. Often, during the engagement, had he thought of Mary in her lone prison-chamber, frightened at the horrid din, which from every side, greeted her ears.

He knocked—there was no answer. Every door was locked—every shutter fastened. It was natural, (he thought,) whilst the fate of the day was uncertain; but how convince old Jasper that he might unbar his doors with safety? He called to him by name; declared aloud that the town was in possession of the American forces; still no response.

“Den I go in after de old fashion, and make Mr. Crowe give me vun good breakfast for de news I bring. O! I will have de rare fun wid de old man, and wid Mary, if I can see her.”

And so, without more ado, Girard clambered to the roof, and lifting up the trap, lowered his firelock by the belt, and dropped after it himself.

CHAPTER XI.

THE floor shook with the heavy weight of Girard, yet the noise brought no one forth. Great was his surprise on beholding the shattered wall, and the repaired breach. The retreat of Mary was no doubt discovered; perhaps the very means which he adopted to frighten the old German, and encompass his own escape, had proved the cause! With this reflection rankling in his mind, he hastened to Jasper's chamber, with intention of penetrating to the secret store, and of fathoming the mystery of the strange, and unaccountable silence. On the floor of the bed-chamber, he observed several pieces of money, which increased his suspicion of foul play. Rushing up stairs, he beheld sad evidence of robbery; if no deeper crime had been perpetrated. Money, apparel, letters, and parchments, were scattered about in sad confusion.

Lifting from a heap, a rich, antique dress, trembling at the thought that beneath, he might behold the lifeless form of the little piquant Mary, his eyes rested on—a cooked and half-consumed hair.

Had Jasper, with his daughter, fled? no! no! the idea was incapable of reconciliation with the old man's character. He would never abandon his wealth! Had the Hessian committed murder? Were such the case, they would hardly have left, undivided, the spoil.

After inspecting the priming of his firelock, he descended again to Jasper's bed-chamber: searched each apartment on that floor, then passed to the rooms below, the mess-room, and the sleeping-quarters of the Hessian officers. With lightest tread, lest he should unawares encounter more than he could manage, with his single arm, he crept softly down the basement stairs, but the kitchen, and adjoining passages were as solitary as above.

Returning to the hall, on the principal floor, he espied on the staircase, which led up stairs, a shoe. By the size, and shape, it was Mary's. Strong proof, this, he thought, that she had been carried away by compulsion. In reflecting on the horrors to which she might be exposed, it was but poor consolation, that the idea of her murder was lessened by the discovery of the shoe. It were well, and advisable, he conceived, to prevent farther depredation, that he should lock up Jasper's chamber, till the key could be restored to the rightful owner, or placed in legal custody.

He had scarcely locked the door, when a noise at the garden-gate, caused him to descend. It was followed by a loud knocking at the hall-door. On opening it, he beheld on the piazza, the same officer whom he had seen standing (whilst concealed in the barrel,) within the red-chalk circle. But how different now his condition! He was borne, with aid of several American soldiers, by his companions, Jablonsky and Schulz, and was carried straight to his former quarters.

Without inquiring who or what he was, the services of Girard were readily accepted by Jablonsky. After the Count's wounds were dressed, and the surgeon had departed to attend another officer, the Pole, pleased with the alacrity of the Frenchman, put several questions respecting the service to which he belonged, and the character of General Washington.

Girard, who had been ruminating how to act—whom to apply to, under the strange mystery which overhung the fate of Jasper's household, was delighted to find himself addressed in the English language. There was an open military frankness in Jablonsky's countenance which won confidence, and our spy made confession how he had discovered the house locked up, and that on gaining access, found it untenanted. He suppressed, however, the particular mode of entry, lest he should incur the resentment of the officers whose strange vigils he had so unceremoniously disturbed in his previous escape from the left.

Jablonsky was astounded. Gone! all gone!—Herr Crowe—

his daughter—Franz (though he was possibly shot or made captive)—Diana Groots—surely *she* was below!

“Not vun soul in de house!” exclaimed Girard, emphatically, “and de shoe I find prove vera much wrong done.”

“The suttler,” remarked the Pole, thoughtfully, “would not stick at murder, if there were store of gold to tempt her eyes, but she alone could not carry off her victims.”

In continuation, Jablonsky said he was also tempted to believe there had been foul play, for, from what he had seen of his host, not all the peril of the late fray, would have inadc him abandon wealth, on which his affections were so deeply fixed.

The Pole’s attention was suddenly recalled to Knipsatch, who reminded his friends, that even as he predicted, so it had fallen out, that a change of fortune was at hand. Had he possessed the courage to face his awful visitor, he would, doubtless (like his ancestors), have been forewarned of, and taught how to evade, the peril.

“Poor Fagel is dead,” continued the Count; “he did not survive his fall, many seconds; he fixed his eyes on mine, and I fancied he wished to communicate some request, but the power was denied. The surgeon promises me better fortune, but there is one in whom I have greater confidence, did I dare see him.”

His friends listened in silence; recent events made the subject too interesting to be treated with levity; and yet Jablonsky, after a pause, could not help observing, that he wished some familiar would communicate to him whether he should be speedily exchanged, or whether it were his destiny to undergo a long captivity.

Even as he spoke, there issued, as from beneath, a noise resembling cry, or groan.

“*Heilige geist!*” exclaimed Schulz, changing colour, “I shall be glad when the American Commissary orders our removal. This old house is haunted from cellar to garret.”

The groans or cries were repeated.

“What think you of this, Mr. Girard?” asked Jablonsky, looking significantly at the Frenchman.

“I do tink I will make vun grand search below,” replied Girard, pointing downward with his finger.

“I quite agree with the American officer,” observed Schulz, who saw Girard’s motion with the finger, though he did not understand the words; “the evil one is at work sure enough, but I hope he’ll not appear.”

“Our new acquaintance,” said Jablonsky, laughing, “is a Frenchman, though in the service of the States. Will you accompany him, and myself, to the realms beneath?”

“Herr Von Knipsatch may not prefer being left alone,” replied the Ensign.

“Go, Schulz,” replied the Count, “the weaker I grow in body the more courage I feel to possess.”

The Ensign, though very loth to accept the challenge, scorned further subterfuge, and, putting on a cheerful countenance, expressed his willingness to join in the adventure.

The strange noise ceased for the interval, perhaps, of one minute; but as they crossed the stone floor of the kitchen, it was renewed.

"I do know dat cry," said Girard, stopping suddenly.

"What does he say, Jablonsky?" asked Schulz, looking from one to the other.

"He says," replied the Pole, with solemn gravity, "that he knows the being who made that noise."

"*Der teufel!* he does!" exclaimed Schulz, widening the distance between himself and the Frenchman, "then I do not wish the acquaintance of your new friend."

"Whom do *you* suppose the cry to proceed from?" asked the Pole, turning to Girard.

"Oh! it is old Crowe, I be sure."

"Old Crowe!" ejaculated Jablonsky, "not the *black* crowe—the devil, as my friend believes."

"Old Crowe be vun deyvil, sure enough," replied Girard, "but den he be fader to de little cherub, Marie Crowe."

Meanwhile, old Crowe, or the devil, aware that he was in the vicinity of good company, began vociferating most lustily. Schulz, who had not the advantage, like Jablonsky, of confidential intercourse with Girard—ignorant of the revelations made by the Frenchman—participated in all the superstitious belief of Knipsatch, without possessing a particle of the latter's subdued courage and resignation. Ashamed to display fear, yet too much terrified wholly to conceal it, he watched the proceedings of the others, without aiding them.

Several holes and corners were searched before they came to the right spot, but as soon as they began handling the cellar door, all doubt ceased. The prisoner, though nearly exhausted with previous efforts, redoubled his cries. The door was forced open, and the old man discovered.

At another season, the ludicrous aspect of Jasper—his head seeming to rest on the sack which enveloped his body—would have excited laughter; but the mental torture he had undergone, claimed the sympathy of his rescuers.

"It be very cold here, Mr. Crowe," cried Girard, pulling out his case-knife to cut the rope which bound him.

"Untie it," cried the miser, faintly. It was his *own* rope!

Ere released, he fell into a swoon, and was borne by Girard and the others, to his chamber. Leaving him to the care of the Frenchman, the officers retired to acquaint Knipsatch with the result of their search, and the disappearance of Diana Groots.

"Where is Mary?" cried the old man, opening his eyes.

The Frenchman, in the feeble condition of Jasper, was afraid to communicate the truth; he told him that she had been forced to leave the house, but was in a place of safety.

"Where? where is the——" but the miser stopped short, and looked wistfully at the closet door.

Girard took the old man's hand. Though but slightly known to each other, he trusted that Mr. Crowe had confidence in his good intentions. He was in the service of General Washington, who was now master of Trenton, having totally routed the Hessians; the officers in his house were prisoners, and would shortly be removed to a place of safety beyond the Delaware. Yet before they departed, an investigation ought to take place.

"What? what?" exclaimed Jasper, shuffling off the bed, "have I been robbed? Stand aside—let me go—I can walk—I'll have justice—I'll pursue them to the end of the world!"

But his strength failed him, and he fell into the arms of Girard.

On Girard demanding by whom he was bound and cast into the cellar, he replied by stating what had occurred. The Frenchman said that both Franz and the woman had disappeared, and he was afraid—indeed he was convinced—they had been up stairs rifling his property.

"Carry me up, Mr. Girard," said the miser, breathless and fainting, "carry me up; I will see my loss, if I die."

Girard bore him up stairs, and seated him on the bed.

"Ruined! ruined!" cried old Jasper, gazing around, whilst the tears fell fast down his cheeks, "and Mary deserted me!"

"No! no!" exclaimed Girard, "say not dat thought;" and he related the circumstance of his coming to the house to bring the glad tidings of deliverance from the Hessians—how he was unable to make any one hear—that he forced an entry, and found the premises untenanted, and although he looked into the kitchen, he did not hear Mr. Crowe's outcry, (which might arise from his creeping down softly, unheard by the poor old man,) that he found one of Mary's shoes (which he now produced) on the stairs, above the hall, from whence he surmised that she had been carried off against her will; and in conclusion, from adding his own experience to Mr. Crowe's narrative, had no doubt that Franz and the camp-woman, in the tumult which raged in the town, had borne her away, that she might not raise an alarm, and frustrate carrying off the spoil.

Here was fresh misfortune for Jasper Crowe! His spirits appeared quite broken with the loss of his daughter and his gold, added to the enfeeblement sustained by his frame, during the lone terrors of his prison-house, and the probability of being starved to death.

The coin and treasure lay scattered about; but he had no heart to investigate the extent of the loss, but sat on the edge of the bed, his mind stupified, his eyes dimmed with tears.

Girard endeavoured to console him with oft-repeated assurance, that as soon as Jasper was in condition to take charge of the scattered property, and resume the management of his house, he would make every possible search after his daughter. Her re-

covery, he added—though he did not himself feel assured of the fact—was, beyond doubt, certain; for the German could not cross the river, and he would be forced, not knowing the language of the country, to take refuge in the British lines, where he would at least be obliged to set at liberty his prisoner, even if the gold were irrecoverable.

After this strain, the Frenchman succeeded in soothing in some degree the wo-begone miser; and having suggested the necessity of putting his money and valuables in order, and seen him commence the melancholy task, he hastened below with intention of conferring with Captain Jablonsky on the probable route of the fugitives, and the steps proper to be taken to arrest them.

Jablonsky communicated to his friends the treatment which Jasper had received from Franz and Diana, which fully confirmed suspicion of their villany, and forced conviction that they had also carried off Mary Crowe. Whilst Girard departed in quest of information which might throw light on the nefarious proceedings, Knipsatch dictated a letter to General de Heister, commander-in-chief of the Hessian forces, detailing particulars of the robbery and abduction, and requesting his good offices, and co-operation with the British authorities, in restoring the daughter to her father's arms, and if possible, recovering the gold and valuables which the accomplices had stolen.

The intelligence picked up was but scanty. From a boy residing in the street in which Jasper's house was situate, Girard was informed, that the lad, whilst peeping through the grating of the cellar, where the family had taken refuge against the flying balls and bullets, he saw a light wagon drive rapidly by, in which were a Hessian and a female. From a woman living close to the Creek-bridge, and who, from an upper window, beheld the escape of the more fortunate Hessians, he gathered, that she saw the wagon driven over the bridge, and there appeared a third individual lying at bottom, whom she imagined was wounded. Her memory was clear, inasmuch as she was struck with the selfishness and brutality of the driver. A poor disabled fellow, in the same uniform, made appeal to be taken into the vehicle, but was met with a heavy stroke of the whip, as he attempted to lay hold of the reins.

This evidence was at least sufficient to confirm belief in the abduction of the young maiden. On his return, Girard found the old man with Knipsatch and his friends. He had received the letter to De Heister, as well as one from Jablonsky, to a British officer of rank, in New Brunswick, on the same subject.

They were interrupted by a visit from the American Commissary-General of prisoners, who was accompanied by his Excellency's staff physician. The latter came with a polite message from Washington to Count Knipsatch, and an offer of the doctor's services; the former to announce intention of removing all prisoners, who could bear transportation, across the Delaware,

without delay. If Herr Von Knipslatch were unfit for removal, he was instructed to take his parole, that he would, as soon as convalescent, surrender himself to the nearest American outpost. The condition of the Count's wounds—severe if not dangerous, made the offer very acceptable, and parole was given accordingly.

The parting between Knipslatch and his friends was affectionate and sincere, as between men who had shared the perils of war, and the society and pleasures of the mess. The same day, the twenty-sixth of December, witnessed the return of Washington to the Pennsylvania territory, with his prisoners, and the rich spoils of war. Colonel Baylor, chief of the staff, was despatched to Congress, carrying with him the standard of the regiment of Anspach, and his Excellency's narrative of the action.

The retrograde movement of the American commander was dictated by sound policy. At New Brunswick, Amboy, and other cantonments, were six thousand British and Hessian troops, whilst Washington's forces were but twenty-four hundred, previous to the engagement. To repass the Delaware, in view of a superior army, was impossible; to secure the prisoners and captured artillery and ammunition was, therefore, a primary object, and this movement was effected without loss or accident.

CHAPTER XII.

VERY much to his satisfaction, Girard was ordered to remain in New Jersey to procure intelligence of the enemy's motions. He was prepared to run the risk of going, in disguise, to Princeton, in hope of tracing the flight of the Hessian and his victim; but Jasper Crowe, who testified much gratitude for the Frenchman's services, absolutely forbade him risking the inevitable fate of a spy, by passing, for such a purpose, so near the British head-quarters; and our adventurer, having special regard to conciliating the old man, was prompted to obey. At Jasper's suggestion, the more open and direct course was adopted, in respect to the documents furnished by Jablonsky and Knipslatch. Advantage was taken of a flag going within the British lines, to forward the letters to their destination, accompanied by another from Jasper, with a more minute account of the abduction and robbery, and description of the figure and age of the accomplices. He was advised to add the offer of a reward for the recovery of his daughter, or apprehension of Franz and Diana, but this proposition was rejected by the thrifty Jasper, who alleged, very speciously, that as it was known the Hessian had carried off a considerable sum, in gold, there needed no stronger inducement to cause the scoundrel to be arrested wherever he showed his face.

"I have said that their pockets were crammed with guineas and doubloons," observed Jasper, "and depend upon it, Mr. Girard, for sake of the gold, the British will keep a sharp look-out. I have put my mark upon the thieves as effectually as if I had branded their foreheads with hot iron. Mary may be restored, but the money," added the old man, with a deep sigh, and an awful shake of the head, "will be sequestered as belonging to an enemy. And where's the use, I would ask, of throwing more after it, by offering reward?"

The renewal of hostilities by the patriot army, was destined to continue. The peculiar distresses to which Washington's troops were reduced by the severities of rain, cold, snow and storm, the charge of the prisoners and artillery they had captured, in addition to the difficulty of crossing the river, under any circumstances, and of its impracticability if harrassed by the enemy, forced him, as we noticed in the last chapter, to return whilst return was in his power, without pursuing the advantages his army had gained.

But after repassing into Pennsylvania, he discovered that numerous corps of militia—the entire detachments under Generals Ewing and Cadwallader, and several regiments from Philadelphia—had crossed over to new Jersey, at various fords. Cheered and flattered by the reviving courage of the militia of both provinces, he prevailed on the regular continental forces, whose time expired on the first of January, to stay with him a few weeks longer, for which condescension he agreed to pay a large bounty.

After two days' rest, the army again passed into New Jersey, and effected a junction with the militia assembled there. But the British commander-in-chief was now roused to the necessity of making a vigorous effort to prevent his forces being driven shamefully from the district they had overrun. Lord Cornwallis, on the point of embarking for Europe, was countermanded into Jersey, to take command of the army, and drive back the Americans beyond the Delaware. Howe followed, with all the reinforcements he could with safety draw from New York.

From these preparations of the British, it will be apparent, that the renewed zeal and alacrity of the militia (which had lain dormant when most needed), drew Washington into a serious dilemma. Anxious to give their courage whilst at its height, he had thrown himself into the province, with intent to follow up the victory at Trenton; but through the activity of Howe and Cornwallis, and the strength of the reinforcements they brought, he stood exposed to a highly disciplined enemy, superior in numbers, in front, and the broad river in his rear, over which hasty retreat was impossible.

After skirmishing on the road between Trenton and Princeton, he found himself, on the afternoon of the second of January, obliged to retreat into the former-named town (the scene of the recent engagement). The best, and indeed, only tolerable posi-

tion, was the eastern bank of the Assanpink creek, a small stream, which, after turning a mill-wheel, flows under a bridge, and loses its waters in the Delaware. The eastern bank presents a perpendicular rise of some fifteen feet, with a level surface above; the opposite margin is a continuation of marshy meadow ground. Seizing and fortifying the bridge and the mill, which protected his left flank, Washington planted artillery along the bluff, with full command of the low meadows opposite. Occupying this position, he awaited the attack of Cornwallis, and a severe cannonading commenced, and lasted till after dark. The river was but a shallow fordable stream, and it were an easy affair for the British to cross higher up, and turn his right flank. Sir William Erskine proposed to Cornwallis that this movement should be effected without delay; but his lordship replied, that the men were excessively fatigued; the American general was in toils from which he could not escape, and after a few hours' rest, he would be easily beaten on the morrow. "If Washington is the man I take him to be," rejoined Erskine, "we shall not find him here on the morrow."

The event justified Erskine's sagacity. The American camp-fires were lighted, the sentinels relieved and paraded, and there was every appearance that the troops were bivouacking. It was agreed in council, in the patriot army, that the heavy baggage should march toward Burlington, the guards remain on the field till day-break, whilst the main corps retreated in silence and in darkness.

By midnight, the baggage was far on its march, its removal unheard by the British; the ground being soft and the wind blowing from the south, having induced a partial thaw. Renewing the camp-fires, and leaving guards at the bridge and other passes on the stream above, the army commenced its retreat. A sudden change of wind to northward, refroze the ground, and facilitated the march of the troops over the clayey roads.

To avoid the appearance of retreat, which would have depressed the spirits of the militia, Washington determined on a circuitous march to Princeton, with intent to fall on the rear of the British army, which, he had been informed the same evening, by the faithful Girard, lay there encamped.

The general reached the town by sunrise, and found three regiments of British infantry, two of which, under command of Colonel Mawhood, were already on the march. They made a most desperate resistance, which extorted the admiration and respect of Washington, but the gallant colonel, with the entire American army in his front, was obliged to retreat; he fled toward the division under Cornwallis. The remaining regiment, which occupied quarters in Princeton, retreated hastily, and the Americans entered the town. Three hundred prisoners were the fruits of this surprise, in addition to several hundred more slain in the engagement. To bring our military illustration to a close, though

rather out of order in point of time, we may add, that Cornwallis, on finding, in the morning, the Americans flown, was so much alarmed for the safety of New Brunswick, where he had left the military chest and stores of every description, that he marched thither with all speed. It was, indeed, Washington's intention, when he moved from Trenton, to have pushed on to Brunswick; but the harassed state of his troops, many of whom had had no rest for two nights and a day, joined to the danger of losing advantage gained by aiming at too much, induced him, with the advice of his officers, to relinquish the attempt.

To return to Girard. Though strictly forbidden by Jasper Crowe to risk entering the British lines, he had, nevertheless, with his usual temerity, returned to the neighbourhood of Princeton, and from inhabitants on the roadside, as well as from parties within the town, succeeded in tracking Franz thither, and learning that he still sojourned in company with the sutler. Of Mary he could gather no tidings.

Pursuit of this object enabled the spy to afford very accurate information to the commander-in-chief; and he gained credit for diligence and love of his adopted country, which, in truth, should have been attributed to love of one of his adopted country's fair daughters. However, we must not look too closely at motives, which at most, can only be imperfectly known.

During the short occupation of Princeton—which did not extend beyond two hours—Girard made the best use of time. He discovered the lodging of Franz, and was fortunate enough to surprise Diana Groots. During the engagement, she was abandoned by the Hessian, who fled to New Brunswick, leaving to her fate his accomplice, and what proved more fortunate, a considerable portion of the stolen booty. Under threat, Diana confessed, through an interpreter, to her share in the villanous exploit. For two days they succeeded in keeping Mary Crowe a close prisoner, in a cottage near the town, through the instrumentality of a Hessian surgeon, to whom Franz carried a letter from Captain Fagel. The surgeon was employed in tending a barrack hospital, in the vicinity of which was the cottage. On the evening of the second day, watching her opportunity, whilst Franz was in the town, and the woman was in the hospital—whither she went daily—the prisoner, unable to force the chamber door, broke the frame of the window-sash, and lowered herself to the ground. What became of her, Diana could not tell. On return from the hospital she found Mary fled, and the Hessian in a towering rage, cursing his victim, his partner in guilt, himself, and the whole world. After rage had cooled, he informed Diana that he had just learned, from one of his countrymen, of the death of Captain Fagel, and he was afraid that if the surgeon did not stand his friend, he should have no evidence to prove that his absence was connived at by the captain; he had nothing to show for it, but the letter to the Hessian surgeon, and as the af

fair, altogether, was a black one, and the principal was dead, it was more than probable that his friend would deny all knowledge of the transaction, and leave Franz to the double fate of a deserter and robber. He was returning to the cottage with intention and hope of making a compromise with his poor victim, by setting her free on condition that the affair was hushed up, when he had the mortification to find himself foiled by her unexpected escape. The best chance of safety, as he told his accomplice, was to remove into the town, and wait the opportunity of rejoining the shattered remnant of his own brigade, or other corps, or whatever course presented. They accordingly took the lodgings in which Diana was discovered. Franz had turned out to aid in defending the post, and dreading—as his partner imagined (for she had not seen him)—to fall into the power of the victors, fled with what gold he bore on his person, into safer quarters.

The gallantry of Girard would not permit him to act with the severity which the camp-woman deserved: she was dismissed, with a little silver coin; and the Frenchman, with a sorrowful heart, and more than two-thirds of the stolen gold, returned to head-quarters, to demand leave of absence, in order to pursue the investigation, and trace the present refuge, or fate, of poor Mary.

In his way through the main street, near the college, he found his skirts in the grasp of some one who tugged violently. Believing, at the instant, that an attack was meditated on the booty, he turned sharply on the intruder. It was a shoemaker, with whom he had a slight acquaintance, and who requested him to step within his dwelling, as one of the inmates, on seeing him from the window, testified much anxiety for an interview.

Great was the surprise, intense the delight, on beholding Mary Crowe! On her escape, she had claimed the protection of the tradesman, and been received into his family. On hearing her sad history, he judged it prudent that she should remain a while secluded, the town being in possession of the British and Hessians. Though the English generals no longer permitted the ravages which had disgraced the arms, and injured the cause of royalty, which they sought to establish; yet it was very probable that the Hessian officer who had assisted Franz in keeping her a prisoner in the cottage, would, if he knew where she had taken refuge, make an attempt to carry her away.

This reasoning prevailed, and Mary staid till the successful attack on Princeton afforded her—more than she ever dreamed of—the presence of her friend and lover.

Having obtained the permission from head-quarters asked for, Girard returned to the shoemaker's, and leaving with him a gratuity which, he trusted, Master Jasper would not begrudge, he departed with the little Mary, in a wagon, by a circuitous route (through Sandtown) to her own home.

It was not till after dark that Girard arrived, with his fair charge, at the miser's residence.

"Dere! go in, Mary, and make de old man happie," cried the Frenchman, lifting the maiden from the wagon, "and I will put de horse in de stable."

To avoid being present at the meeting between father and daughter, he sent Mary, as herald of her own escape and restoration. The same motive induced him to linger over the offices of the stable, till Jasper himself came in search.

"Come into the house, Mr. Girard," exclaimed the miser, grasping the Frenchman's hand; "come into the house! It will do me good to look at your honest face."

Girard felt the old man's hand tremble. The lantern which the latter carried, betrayed his furrowed cheeks wet with tears; his utterance was thick and indistinct.

On the hearth, in Jasper's chamber, was kindled a glorious fire, such as had not been seen in the house for many a year, though as yet, it was only in embryo. A few smouldering sticks satisfied the exigencies of the miser's lone vigil; but on the joyful and unexpected return of his daughter, a huge pile of fuel was heaped over the decaying embers, and flame began to shoot through the mass. During her father's journey to the stable, Mary spent the interval in several trips to the store-room above, and the result was a well-furnished supper board.

"Empty glasses, Mary! how is this?" cried Jasper, his eye glancing the while over the table; "the air is chilly for an old man, and even Mr. Girard's hand is cold."

It is true, the glasses were empty, and so was the pitcher. The old man was in such excellent spirits and temper, that his daughter, afraid to hazard a reverse, by a display of hospitality which might awaken his dormant avarice and moroseness, wisely left choice of beverage to Jasper.

"There is the old ale, Father; will you have that warm, with spice?"

"Ale!" exclaimed Jasper, "hang ale! have I no Burgundy left?"

Mary uttered no reply, but went in quest of the wine. Perhaps a consideration of his extravagance caused an inward twinge, for scarcely had she left the chamber ere he attempted to call her back; fortunately for the honour of his nascent hospitality, she was out of hearing.

"It was a good thought of Mary's," he remarked, turning to Girard; "spiced ale, on a winter's night, is better than cold wine."

"Has Mary told you of de gold I did rescue?" demanded Girard, who saw how matters were going, and was anxious to retain the old man in good humour.

"Gold? no!" cried Jasper, starting from his chair; "she said the rascal fled to Brunswick before your friends entered Princeton. Where did you get it? How much have you? The silly wench said nothing about the money, and I gave it up for lost."

"Den feel here," cried Girard, displaying the exterior of one

of the large pockets of his overcoat, and compressing, with his hands, the coin into a heap.

Jasper's eyes sparkled with delight, as his fingers felt the shape of the gold pieces.

"Broad and thin, I know them; they are my own bright doubloons!"

"Now de oder side," said the Frenchman, displaying the bulk of the opposite pocket, which was equally well lined.

"Mercy! mercy!" cried Jasper, there must be——. How much money, Mr. Girard, do you imagine is here?"

"I did never count it," replied the other, "der may be, in de two pockets, perhaps, vun gal-lon. I did fear dey vud break."

At this instant, Mary returned with the wine, and Jasper commenced a sharp fire of invective for her utter heedlessness in not acquainting him with Mr. Girard's recovery of the stolen gold. She had no objection, he affirmed, to fine dress and good living (neither of which, by the bye, poor Mary had ever experienced), but, like her sex, knew not, nor cared not, whence came the means of procuring them. Perhaps, continued the old man, in his testiness, she deemed her own return to home such an inestimable blessing, that the restoration of gold were not worthy a thought in comparison!

"Vell, Mr. Crowe, I did bring back de little daughter, and de big monie; and I do deserve de one or de oder, for de trouble. "Vich shall I have for mine reward?"

Mary's face and neck were flushed with crimson on her hearing this bold attack. Jasper, in amazement, looked alternately at the Frenchman, and his daughter. The latter seized her father's hand, and kissed it, the tears starting to her eyes.

"Did you know Mary before she was carried away?" demanded Jasper, with a shrewd glance at the Frenchman.

Girard confessed an affection, which he trusted was mutual.

The old man declared that what he now heard explained what to him had proved unaccountable—the extreme solicitude of Mr. Girard for the recovery of Mary.

"But supper waits," he added, and I make it a rule to sleep once before I decide on any matter so important as the parting with money, or the alternative you propose, Mr. Girard."

On the morrow, after a long conference with Mary, he informed the impatient Frenchman, that as he was now growing very aged, he was not insensible to the aid he might derive, in the management of his affairs, from a son-in-law; nor was he indifferent to the claims of one who had behaved so honourably as Girard. But there was an obstacle: Although he himself lived secluded, perhaps ignobly, in the eyes of some people, yet Mary was descended from a race of gentlemen; and Mr. Girard's occupation, as he understood, though confidential, was far from honourable in estimation or standing. The Frenchman hastened

to remove the impediment by inquiring if objections would cease on his obtaining from General Washington a commission in the continental army, to which he was at present only irregularly attached.

Jasper made the lovers happy, by giving his assent to the union, on the condition specified by Girard; the latter had no difficulty in obtaining—what his important service well entitled him to—a captain's commission. In possession of this rank, he was united to the daughter of Jasper Crowe; and from the obscure station of an emigrant barber, found himself heir apparent to a large estate, and—what he valued infinitely beyond riches—guardian of the happiness of the young bride committed to his protection. From this date he served faithfully and zealously the cause to which he was attached, though we hear no more of hair-breadth escapes, nor perilous adventures, within the enemy's lines.

For the remaining term of an extended life, the character of Jasper Crowe underwent but slight change. He hoarded his money and effects, and denied himself the comforts of existence, even as he had done hitherto; but as age crept over him, he was forced to delegate the management of the property to his son-in-law, and his eccentricities were confined within a narrow and harmless range.

Mary, by exchanging her name, had no reason to regret her choice. Her sole fear of the future arose from the recklessness which her husband's career had hitherto exemplified; but she was charmed to discover, that her persuasions, joined to the self-consideration, which the possession of property and station imparts, made François Girard place higher value on his life than before marriage.

For the term of two months, Count Knipslach, attended by a German nurse, from the Hessian head-quarters—an attention which he owed to General de Heister—continued an inmate of Jasper Crowe's domicile. He recovered and lived to return to Germany. No change occurred in his superstitious fancies, or belief; and as Girard—out of respect to Mary—did not divulge his midnight adventure in the loft, explanation of the extraordinary phenomenon was never afforded the Count. His familiar—as he always affirmed—had followed him even to the regions beyond the Atlantic. When his assertions were doubted, he appealed to the testimony of Jablonsky and Schulz, who both survived the war, and they could not deny that they had been witnesses to an agency inexplicable and mysterious.

The family belief, through the strange occurrence, has gained rather than lost strength, and remains unimpaired in the house of Knipslach, as we presume, even in the present enlightened century.

As Diana Groots, and Franz, were never again heard of by

the family of Jasper, and both were lost sight of by the Hessian officers, the villany of Fagel was not disclosed till many years afterward. His premature fate was certainly not undeserved.

THE END.

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