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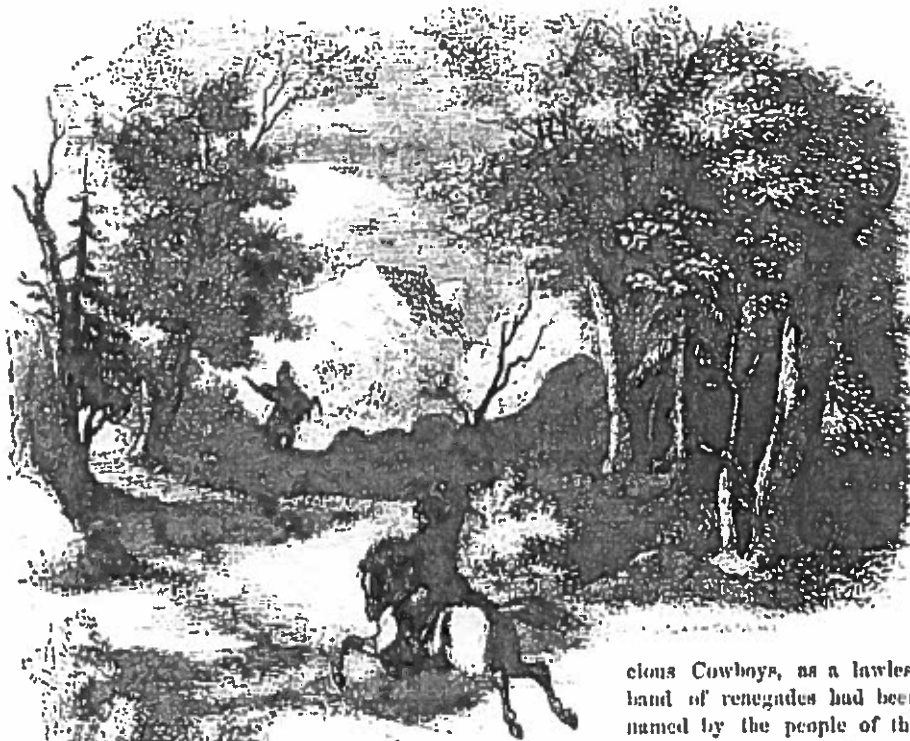
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7



THE INTERCEPTED MESSENGER
OF RAMAPO PASS;

BY MRS. E. OAKES SMITH.

CHAPTER I.

It was a bright morning in September when I first entered the Valley of the Ramapo. I had heard much of the picturesque scenery embraced therein, and knew the whole region was alive with historic and romantic associations. Here more than one romance had transpired, thus imparting to the beautiful valley something like a classical interest. It had been the scene of many a bloody outrage by the atro-

clous Cowboys, as a lawless band of renegades had been named by the people of the Glen, because they drove away

their herds and bartered them to either of the belligerent parties, as best suited their interest or convenience.

New Jersey has often been called the Flanders of America, and it certainly earned the name by the number of battles fought upon its soil, and by the expenditure of life and money, in the great war of the Revolution. Ramapo Valley suffered more than any other locality. Three years the American army encamped therein, and its fastnesses were often in the hands of the enemy, or usurped by marauders, who killed and pillaged either army without principle and without mercy.

What is now called Ramapo was formerly spoiled Ramapough, as is attested by old records still extant. The name is of Indian origin, the valley having once been the residence of a powerful tribe. For several years after the close of the War of Independence, the remnants of the tribe of Ramapough returned to the valley for the purpose of burying their dead, and to celebrate also some of the ancient festivals of their people. Slowly they dwindled away, till one solitary man, bent with years, returned to lay his bones with his fathers. He was taciturn and lonely—avoided companionship, and supplied his simple wants by trapping and fishing.

"Here," said my guide and friend, pointing



* THE BALD EAGLE IN HIS ABRIE.

to a slight opening in the woods, under a shoulder of the mountain, where the stream rested itself, in the shadow of the forest and rock. "Here was where he built his cabin—a stern old warrior, scarred in many a battle. But he was very gentle, though unwilling to talk, and shunning observation. We called him old Ramapaugh, and sometimes the Bald Eagle. He was a perfect Jove in aspect. Do you see that rock there, rising up naked against the sky? I have seen old Ramapaugh seated there by the hour—his blanket folded around him, his eagle tuft waving in the air, and he as motionless and as sharply defined as the rock on which he sat."

"Heavens!" I exclaimed. "what a grand statue he must have made there against the sky, the eagles wheeling above him, the river flowing beneath, and the old woods sweeping off in the distance. It was the genius of his people—silent, stern, gazing with an eye of rebuke upon the miserable interlopers who had robbed them of their heritage."

"Even so," returned my guide. "One day it was remarked there was no smoke from the hut of Ramapaugh—he had gone to hunt, it

was thought—the next day it was the same. He might not have returned—Ramapaugh did not like any intermeddling. But when the fourth day came, and there was still no smoke curling like a stream of incense through the trees, up the side of the rock, Heavenward, we went in a body to learn what it should mean. The door of the cabin was closed; green branches were spread upon the floor—a pipe, inverted, was laid across the threshold—upon a pile of skins was stretched the body of the old warrior. His tomahawk was in one hand, his bow in the other; a quiver full of arrows at his side. His white locks were newly braided, and crowned with plumes of the war eagle, while his face was bravely painted; thus were the rites performed by himself, and thus had he gone out on that long journey, prepared to meet his people in the spirit-land."

As my guide finished his narrative he arose, and we both walked to a little inclosure, thickly grown with the wild raspberry and blackberry, looking like a small, lonely island in a sea of wheat, for the inclosure was in the midst of a cultivated field.

"Here," said he, as we leaned over the rude wall, "here are the ashes of the tribe, and in the midst we laid the body of Ramapough, just as he had prepared himself for burial."

We gazed awhile in silence upon the resting-place of the tribe. Indeed, the pretty cemetery looked to me like a beautiful funeral urn, in which was held the ashes of a nation. *The transit.*

As we proceeded up the valley, my friend, who was nearly blind with years, leaned heavily upon his staff and pointed out one locality after another as if by instinct.

"Alas! that you are blind," I exclaimed; "this lovely valley must be full of memories, and they will fade, one after another, for lack of some hand to transfer them to history."

"Even so," he replied; "and yet when I walk over this remembered ground, where I have wandered when a child, every spot rendered sacred by the footprints of the great Savior of our Country, who passed through here again and again, my youth returns to me once more—my memories quicken the worn organ of sight, and I see again."

I looked into the old man's eyes, and a clear light emanated therefrom; his cheek glowed, and the old man had renewed his youth like the eagle.

"Listen," he said; "I feel I am walking this valley for the last time; before I descend the silent one to the long bourne, I have a story to tell you, and you must commit it to paper. It is an incident which gave the turning point to the Revolution. It is true—it must be recorded—mind, it is true."

Mr. Pierson spoke sternly and slowly, as a man of ninety years has a right to speak to us of to day.

I promised to obey; and then the old man, who had stopped in his path, went on, pausing at intervals to point out the several places of interest.

"Do you see that old hemlock, there?" and he pointed to a column which shot eighty feet into the air, unmarked by a single branch, while the top spread itself into numerous branches. What the palm tree is to the tropical landscape, the hemlock or pine tree is to the hyperborean. "Stately as the palm tree" is a metaphor of youth and power in the Orient, and "shapely as the pine," "stately as the hemlock," are favorite comparisons with our aboriginals.

"That hemlock is on the old Hopper farm, and was a favorite spot with Washington; his camp was pitched under its branches during

three campaigns. Yonder is the old farm-house. Dame Hopper was, in that day, a handsome young woman of twenty, and a favorite with the General. She still lives, with her descendants about her—five generations under one roof. Ah! children and grandchildren, to the third and fourth generations, are a heritage of the Lord, and reward those who lead a godly life."

The old man was thinking proudly of his own heritage.

"Madam Hopper kept open hospitality in that day, and the General was always a welcome guest. She preserves one room just as it was the last time the General occupied it. There are the chairs, the table, the pictures, painted on glass, of the Prince of Orange and Mary of England, his wife, religiously preserved. Old spoons of silver, of ancient and massive make, brought from Holland, are in the room, because Washington had made use of them. The bedstead is the same on which he slept, and no form has since that day been stretched upon it. The sheets and pillow-cases are all sacredly kept, unprofaned by other use."

"Truly, this Dame Hopper is a goodly dame," I replied.

"She is a woman of the older time," he answered, with a significant glance, meant to convey a volume of rebuke to us of to-day.

"The Ramapo Valley is holy land to the patriot," continued the old man. "Its legends and its history had much of interest even before the War of Independence; and at that period every stage of the struggle was marked by some striking event in the valley. You see this old house on this little plateau, where the river winds around the rocky point. There transpired one of the atrocities of the Cowboys. I will show you more of them anon."

We seated ourselves upon a stone, while he gave utterance to what follows:

"Claudius Smith was a brave, handsome man, but devoid of all principle. He had been for a long time leader of the Cowboys; and though it may be presumed he would not himself wantonly imbrue his hands in innocent blood, still he was responsible for the atrocities of his accomplices, whose depredations were carried on under his own eyes. Smith was in a habit of entering houses at mid-day, when the men of the household were at work upon their farms, and having surrounded the dwelling, and secured the women from any power of giving the alarm, by threats, and even by gagging them, he and his followers carried away provisions, clothing and silver,

leaving the house naked of all articles of value. For this reason the inhabitants kept all valuables buried in the ground for many years, and families retired daily to the mountain, returning only at night, when protected by the male inmates of the household. At length Smith was taken prisoner and hanged for his crimes; but he left a son, Richard, a cruel, fiery youth, who swore to be revenged upon the Whigs for the death of his father; and for a long time he was the terror of the whole region.

"Yonder house was at that time occupied by a young Whig, devoted to his country, and who had been mainly instrumental in the capture of the leader of the Cowboys. The young man, despite the troublous times, had married one of the most beautiful girls of the valley. To this day she is talked of as the maiden loveliest of her kind, with a skin white as milk, and a cheek like the rose. But her great charm was a head of hair of such luxuriant growth that it reached to her knees, rippling like threads of gold. One night, when the young husband had stolen home to his beautiful bride, who lived there with her mother, these miscreants surrounded the house, and having bound the two women and secured the three without firing a shot—which they dared not do for fear of giving the alarm—they put the young man to death with their bayonets, in the presence of the women, he fighting desperately all the while. They were afterward found covered with the blood of the young husband, and nearly dead with horror. The girl's long hair had turned perfectly white."

When my guide had finished the narrative we moved onward, keeping our path by the side of the beautiful Ramapo, which sparkled as brightly to-day as in that period of trial. At length we came to a bend of the river, and Mr. Pierson paused and pointed out the peculiarities of the ground.

"Look to the other side of the river," he said; "what do you see?"

I looked above and below. Above was a high ridge ascending nearly perpendicular from the bed of the river, lined at the margin by a ridge of green trees, which barely found a foothold, while here and there stunted trees and shrubs emerged from the crevices of the rocks, and cast the river into deep shade below.

"Look again," he said; "my eyes are dim and see but imperfectly what should be clear to younger eyes. Look half-way up the mountain; do you see nothing there?"

"Ah! yes, indeed; I see a projecting rock, rounding like a table from the surface."

"That is it. The upper edge will sustain a man with ease. The trees growing beside it can be drawn together, creating a perfect screen. The position commands the road upon both sides. No object could escape the observation of a person so stationed."

"Nothing above or below. It is as perfect a loop-hole as if built purposely into the bastion of a rampart for that very purpose."

"That is the Devil's Pulpit."

I started, for I had often heard of this spot, so celebrated in the adventures of the Cowboys.

"Yes, that is the Devil's Pulpit. Smith used to place his scouts in ambush, with preconcerted signals, and, having mounted yonder rock would reconnoiter the valley; and many a brave man was picked off who wandered through the valley totally unconscious of the terrible fate awaiting him. Detachments of men were picked off by shot after shot from unknown assailants. Cattle disappeared, and youth and maidens were waylaid and dragged into a terrible bondage by these unscrupulous marauders, who demanded large sums for their liberation.

"Yonder is the Thor, or King Mountain, the highest in the range. The German settler so named all high peaks. From the top of the Thor, New York bay and harbor may be plainly seen, a distance of thirty miles. Often of a morning the stately form of Washington might be seen standing here, like some fabulous demi-god, reconnoitering the country. It was his favorite place of observation. If your eyes are good you will see a fissure in the face of the rock, as if it had been rent by an earthquake. Ascend there and put your ear to the crevice and you will hear the ticking of a watch."

"The ticking of a watch!"

"Why not the ticking of a watch? It is well known that Washington, by accident, dropped his into the crevice, and our people believe it goes to this day."

A smile upon the face of the blind is always peculiarly winning, and that of my guide had all the fun of a boy as he said this.

"Here we are at the 'Clow,' he continued, "which is so called because the mountains barely separate themselves upon either side to give passage to the river, leaving a narrow strip of alluvium, just wide enough to furnish a road down the valley. This narrow pass has been the scene of many an action worthy to be numbered with that of the Pass of Thermopylae of old. Indeed it bears a striking resemblance to the features of that remarkable Pass."

"Here are the remains of a rampart; tall trees have sprung from the soil, and lean their great limbs against the rock. You can easily trace its position, however, and can see that whoever commanded this pass would hold the key to the whole valley. Sit down here, and I will tell you the story of the *Intercepted Dispatches*, just as I heard the story from the bearer of the same—from the lips of Montague himself."

We seated ourselves upon the old embankment, and my guide, leaning upon his staff, related to me the following story.

Let me first premise that Mr. Pierson, the relator, was, at the time of my visit, the proprietor of the town of Ramapo, which is composed entirely of his own workmen, employed in extensive iron works. From this vailed the scenery at night has a peculiarly weird, unearthly aspect. The works are kept in action day and night, relieved by alternate groups of men; hence all night the bright sparks ascend amid the gloom, dancing and gleaming amid the foliage, which is peculiarly deep in color, and dense in growth, doubtless fed by the iron of the soil. Augusta Falls are now fallen into disuse, but have all the charms of a ruin. Passengers upon the Erie Railway are agreeably surprised to see an arch of stones by the wayside covered with vines, and a beautiful fall of water flashing in the sun. These are Augusta Falls, which has given rise to the romance of the Lost Angel.

Ramapo at this time is owned by several proprietors, the Piersons and Townsends being the principal, who are not a little proud of their estates, and well they may be. They live also a portion of the year upon them, and I can well testify to their elegant hospitalities. Judge Hagerman, who married into the Hopper family, is now, alas, no more; but I remember a week passed in the family enlivened by the kindly grace of the wife and the lively beauty of the daughter as among the brightest of my life. The Judge had the ardor of a boy, with great vivacity of intellect and goodness of heart—qualities as winning as they are rare. Alas! the beautiful valley has its sad memories now.

CHAPTER II.

"For thou art Freedom's now, and Fame's
One of the few, the immortal names,
That were not born to die." [HALLOCK.

The Summer of 1781 opened with a better prospect of success to the cause of human freedom than even its most enthusiastic supporters had dared to anticipate. It was evident to all

that the war, protracted to more than seven years, must soon be brought to a close; that a handful of people, who had so long struggled and bled for their country, must cease from their toil, or lose the hope of emancipation—the cherished desire to become a nation; for cold, and hunger, and nakedness had dogged the footsteps of war, and threatened to annihilate them altogether. We are called a braggart people, whose Fourth of July orations are one universal outbreak of national laudation. Let it be so. We, who in our day of small things, when we were held in derision by our foes, and when we, even to the truest and stoutest hearts among us, seemed but the Forlorn Hope in the vanguard of a disenthralled people—we, who then despaired not, and finally triumphed, have a right to glory in the past, a right to raise a shout of exultation the length and breadth of our fair inheritance, that our children, hearing, may learn to emulate the actions which have made us great as a people.

Thanks to the living God that it was not amid the stunted and down-trodden nations of the Old World that we were called to achieve a nationality, else might the fate of France, of Poland, and of Greece have been ours; made sanguinary by unaccustomed freedom, we might have rivalled the ferocious Parizian; or, hemmed in by overwhelming powers, have been dismembered and scattered, and be left to nations what the torso of a Hercules is amid the feebleness of statuary; or, again, be suffered to exist only because helpless and unprotected.

No, the whole world had been verging to that point when a nation should be born in a day. Men from all parts of Europe, capable of feeling a wrong or of appreciating a good, had sought a new portion of the great earth, whose magnificent features and uncontaminated soil were designed to cast the human mind into a freer and larger mold. Whether impelled by religion, philanthropy, commerce, or the mere love of adventure—whatever the motive for going forth, the fact argued a courage and individuality of character which must have left its impress upon the generations succeeding. From Maine to Georgia it was the same; Huguenot or Puritan, Cavalier or Burgber, each carried the seeds of a new order of things, each learned to spurn oppression as monstrous to the soil. The necessities of their condition had taught them self-reliance, and this self-reliance had imparted a sturdy manfulness, able to stand for the right.

Now the battle-cry of Lexington had been

echoed and reechoed from North to South. Each and every State had been watered with the blood of the patriot; sacred and holy were the drops which baptized the land to eternal freedom—the ashes of cities—little ones, it is true, but hereafter to shake the earth like Lebanon—the ashes of our towns and villages had ascended in the face of Heaven to call down the day of retribution. A needy and ill-equipped and ill-disciplined army, an army of boys, indeed—for it is well known that every true patriot sent forth his household cheerfully to the contest, and striplings of sixteen and eighteen crowded the ranks—had made themselves heard in many a hard contested field. Bunker Hill and Beanington, Saratoga, Tron-ton and Camden were but the higher points in the mounds of our battle-fields, and now it remained to strike the final blow which should decide at once the fate of the country.

It was evident that whatever might be the result, the feelings of our people had been too fully outraged for anything like sympathy to exist between us and our oppressors. We must be totally and entirely separated from them as a Government, or be reduced to that unnatural compliance enforced by power over unwilling minds, which, covering the rankling and moldering elements of revenge, are liable at any moment to break forth, or if subdued, having the effect to harden and brutalize the national character.

The campaign of the Southern army, under Greene, had been, on the whole, favorable to our cause, and, though Fabian in the greater part of its movements, had not failed to give evidence of power. The allied French forces were ready to cooperate wherever the wisdom of Washington should direct; and it remained for him to decide whether his movements should threaten Sir Henry Clinton in his position at New York, or be directed against the vaunting Cornwallis, who had stationed himself at the two points of Yorktown and Gloucester. The stress of the times, the evident crisis of events, which now became apparent, rendered the greatest circumspection requisite, as the least false step might plunge the army into disaster and ruin. It was a period of terrible and intense anxiety; on its issue depended the fate of the country, and the hopes of the patriot. The skillful management of events should prove whether the past had been the disorderly, accidental movements of a restless and turbulent class of men, opposed to the wholesome discipline of government, or had been the wise, concentrated and resolute action of a people

determined, at all hazards, to hold fast to the prerogatives of freemen.

The calm mind of Washington took in all with its rare comprehensiveness, and came to results at once wise and for the general good. Illicit to his movements had been such as to lead Sir Henry Clinton to suppose that New York would be the unquestioned point of attack; and the impression had been given to our own army, so that the taking of New York had become the familiar gossip of the camp. It had been thus determined by a council of officers, but the subsequent reinforcement of the English army at the above named place, together with certain operations of the French fleet, had introduced a new feature, and led to a change of measures—a change known only to the few, and studiously concealed from the army at large.

CHAPTER III.

For here amid these woods did he keep court,
 Before whose mighty soul the common crowd
 Of heroes, who alone for Fame have fought,
 Are like the patriarch's slaves to Heaven's chosen
 bowed—
 He, who his country's eagle taught to soar,
 And fired those stars, which shine o'er every shore."
 [HOWLAND.]

Anxious as was the period of which we are treating, it was, as we have said, one full of hope. The revolt of the Pennsylvania militia at Morristown, and the subsequent mutinous rising of the Jersey corps, while they for a moment spread dismay through the country and increased the already overwhelming burdens of the Commander-in-Chief, had yet a bright side, and served to develop into stronger light the noble materials of which the army was made. Though importuned with the most flattering offers of pardon and emolument from the British, their liberty and exemption from military service fully guaranteed, they not only rejected such proposals, but delivered the emissaries of Sir Henry Clinton up to the Commander, to be dealt with according to the usages of war. They loved the cause and the country none the less, but goaded by suffering, had resolved to start Congress from its lukewarmness in regard to them.

Severe as was the crisis to the country at large, the individual trial was most heavily felt by Washington himself. He saw that another such Winter would sink the hopes of the country. Added to these emergencies, the aid of the French naval power had been far from efficient or salutary. There certainly had been too much disposition to independent action; a latent feeling of vanity prompting to single

trial of prowess between English and French arms, rather than combined and concentrated cooperation with the tactics of our own army. Washington felt all this, and by the most strenuous efforts, and the most skillful reasoning, counteracted the evil. He labored day and night, vigilant for every department of interest, and sustaining a correspondence, wonderful alike for its voluminousness and ability.

He had now concerted a plan of operations remarkable for adroitness and completeness, the features of which demanded the utmost powers of concealment on the part of all intrusted with the details; a concealment so well sustained, that to this day the whole matter is half shrouded in mystery, and now that we are able to look back to its entire success, we are compelled to regard the whole as superhuman—that something beyond mere human skill and forethought were requisite to bring about measures embracing so many contingencies, the favorable action of so many agents considered fortuitous, and the exact subordination of so many parts to the whole. Such were certainly the features of the remarkable events preceding the attack of the allied armies upon the encampment of Cornwallis at Yorktown.

At this time Washington and his staff occupied a low stone building in the village of Newburgh, a spot venerated yet as the headquarters of Washington. A place so sacred should be the Mecca of the region, where young and old should repair to reilluminate the ashes of patriotism or to enkindle its fire. Here, before a plain walnut table, covered with diagrams and dispatches, sat the Commander-in-Chief, late at night, maturing the plans of the coming eventful campaign. Absorbed and anxious as he was, there was a singular repose upon the fine features as they were bent over his task.

An iron lamp suspended from the ceiling cast the light upon the top of the head, revealing its most classical and harmonious proportions, the hair slightly thinned about the temples, and flecked with the touches of frost. As the light stole downward, leaving a halo upon the scarcely contracted and noble brow, it showed the thoughtful depth of the clear, almost melancholy eye, and left the strongly compressed lips nearly in shadow.

As he perused a paper his hand instinctively grasped his chin, not with a philosophic touch, as we see in the pictures of Franklin, but with a firm grasp, the fingers spread upon the side of the cheek and throat, an attitude which indicated, not only a firmness of general character, but a concentration of purpose for the present contingency.*

He had just received dispatches from General Lee, by the way of Morristown, where a portion of the Northern army was located, by which he learned that Sir Henry Clinton, anticipating an attack of the allied arms upon the city of New York, had withdrawn a part of the forces of Cornwallis at Yorktown—this, too, at a time when the army of General Greene was making its way to the North. Washington saw at once the importance of a change of operations. The American troops,



WASHINGTON PLANNING THE CAPTURE OF CORNWALLIS.

suffering and enfeebled, were ill able to compete with a superior and high spirited foe, and it became doubly a measure not only of policy but humanity, to spare them the hazards of

* The author would here remark, that she was much struck with a painting, by Rothermel, illustrating the morning after the "Melancholy Night," in which Cortes is represented in this attitude of the hand, a position betraying at once the difficulties of a crisis, and the firmness to meet it.

loss as well as defeat. Every man was needful to the country, and every moment important in the cause.

He resolved at once to concentrate all the force of the allied arms against Cornwallis, leaving Sir Henry Clinton unmolested in the City of New York, conceiving that a bold and successful campaign in Virginia would decide the fate of the war, with less waste of blood, and less hazard to the cause than an attack against Sir Henry. In order to do this it was essential to leave the impression still upon the mind of the latter, that the movements of the army were designed against himself. He was now busy in preparing dispatches to the various points of the American army, demanding their cooperation, as also to the Commander of the French fleet, directing him to repair to the Chesapeake.

The inmates of the house were buried in slumber, except the personal friend and aid of Washington, the accomplished Hamilton, who walked back and forth under the piazza, waiting till the labors of the great man should cease. As he thus moved, occasionally immersing into the moonlight, and looking out upon the broad waters of the Hudson heaving up silver wavelets to the night, he looked less like the counselor of a statesman and soldier, than a young cavalier whose gallant bearing betrayed the dreams of ambition, and whose silken curls and intellectual head told that whether in lady's bower, or tented field, or stirring forum, the proudest of those dreams might well be realized.

A slight signal from within called him to the side of the Commander-in-Chief.

"Hamilton, I see nothing wanting to our entire success—but one further step to insure the delusion of Clinton, and which may induce him to withdraw the fleet from the Chesapeake."

"True," returned the other; "an intercepted messenger will do this."

"That is the point. Can we procure one trusty and willing?"

Hamilton shrugged his shoulders. "We have trusty men in abundance, dear General—but a solitary man to risk the certain hazard of a score of bullets requires peculiar mettle."

Washington's hand had been for some moments pressed over his lips, so that the expression there could not be detected; but the fine, open countenance of Hamilton betrayed a pang which might have been a foretaste of his subsequent doom. He leaned his head upon the table, and, sinking his forehead into the palm of his hand, both were a moment silent.

"It must be done, Hamilton," said Washington in a low voice.

"I have been thinking of one, a noble fellow, crossed in love, too, which will make him indifferent to the future, at least for a while. It isn't necessary to tell him more than that he is to take papers a certain route to a certain destination."

This time Washington's features contracted sharply, and his face assumed that rigid aspect we so often see in drawings of him.

"It is the necessity of war, Hamilton; every man must take his life in his hands in times like these."

"I am thinking Montague is just the man. You may have seen him with me, General—a fine, handsome youth; bold as a lion, and versatile as a Frenchman. He is of Huguenot blood, as you see by his name. Montague has taken the wrong side in this war, so believes his Tory mistress, and the two have quarreled in consequence. I am confident her lover is ready to undertake the most desperate enterprise."

"It is necessary to use dispatch—by to-morrow we must be on the move."

"I make no doubt Montague is awake now; there is nothing so wakeful as your discomfited lover. I will send for him directly—and it may be we shall do double service—one to the country first; and, secondly, awake his freakish lady to a sense of what she is in a fair train of losing."

The young man spoke lightly, but the estimation in which he held Wendell Montague showed conclusively that the best spirit, both for man and country, lurked beneath.

CHAPTER IV.

"Yet nerve thy spirit for the proof,
And blanch not at thy chosen lot;
The timid good may stand aloof—
The sage may frown—yet faint thou not.

Truth, crushed to earth, shall rise again:
The eternal years of God are hers;
But Error, wounded, writhes in pain,
And dies among her worshippers." [BYRON.]

A short time served to usher the young man into the presence of Washington. He was a mere youth, with an oval face, as yet ungraced by a beard, and brown, wavy hair clustering abundantly about his high, but somewhat narrow forehead. Brows as fairly defined as those of a girl overlooked a full, gray eye, which appeared black in the shadow of its long curved lashes. A nose slightly aquiline gave an appearance of spirit to a face which otherwise might have seemed too gentle. He was

tall and lightly made, with an air at once proud, yet respectable.

Washington regarded the youth with an evident look of surprised admiration, and then glanced almost reproachfully at Hamilton, as if he would say, "the sacrifice is too great." It may be that the shadow of the unfortunate Andre, so justly but painfully doomed, flitted before his mind's eye. Whatever it might have been, he stayed to affix his signature to a document, which he did, and then pushed the paper aside. Looking steadfastly in the face of the youth, he began:

"It is no ordinary man that must serve on this occasion."

Montagnie started with something like impatience, and answered with a boldness and promptitude which carried its own charm.

"General, we all love and reverence you; there is not one in the ranks who is not ready to lay down his life, first for his country, next for your excellency; but, to save time, I must declare I, for one, can go on no service that will cast a stain upon my good name."

Washington now gave a gesture of impatience.

"Young man, I honor your sentiments. In ordinary times they are all that is essential; but now we need men who can forget all—forget himself, kindred and friends for country."

Turning to Hamilton, he continued, "Time wears; can you divine nothing further?"

Hamilton touched the shoulder of Montagnie, and they turned to the window, while Washington followed them with his eyes, his face assuming an expression of intense melancholy; both were eminently beautiful—both in the flush of youth, and as they stood in the pale light of the moon, there was something still and unearthly in their sharp outlines, as if "coming events cast their shadows before," and invested each with a strange interest.

Hamilton would have spoken, but Montagnie leaned his shoulder against the window frame and with a faint smile broke the silence:

"Say nothing, my friend. Washington has made the only available plea. Let me have ten minutes for thought. Call me when they are past."

Obeying the first warm impulses of his generous nature, Hamilton threw his arms around the devoted youth, and whispered "God bless you, Montagnie."

The young man stepped out upon the piazza, where, leaning his back to the wall, he firmly clasped his arms to his breast, and his eyes peered into the distance without being fixed by any one object. It would be difficult to follow the train of thought as image after image arose to his mind. The gesture of Hamilton had disposed him to a degree of tenderness, and the first gushings of emotion went forth to his mistress. True, she was capricious, scornful and petulant, but when did ever love ask counsel of wisdom? Many were the discreet, comely, appreciating maidens of the neighborhood, but they lacked the undefined graces of Katrina Mercier, who queened it over her admirers with an easy assurance that kept up a perpetual rivalry among the youth of the village. Notwithstanding this, she honored Wendell Montagnie with such an exuberance of freakishness, wit and smiles that all regarded him as the favored lover.

True, that very day she had spoken scornfully, even harshly, if a voice so sweet and lips so fair could be



MONTAGNIE'S MENTAL STRUGGLE.

thus disposed. She had stigmatized the cause so dear to the heart of Montagnie as "rebellious, treasonable and insane"—more than this, they, the supporters thereof—they, the half-clad and half-starved army, who had left the peace and comforts of home to march and counter-march before a nolly equipped foe—aye, die and be forgotten, leaving only the result of the conflict to brighten the hereafter—men like these Katrina had stigmatized as a "ridiculous rabble," "a host of ragamuffins," who must soon grace the gibbet in return for their folly.

Montagnie thought of these things bitterly; and his love waned as he recalled the scornful curve of her pretty lip, and the flashing of her bright eye coupled with words like these. He remembered that she had intimated that more than one British officer (who had found the way to the house of her Tory father) had spoken of himself with approval, and that wealth and promotion might both be his by a change of service. He felt no temptation here, rather a bitter scorn for himself that anything should lurk about him by which another should dare couple him with so base a thought. No, insignificant as he might be, he was all freedom's; doubly so when peril and shame were heaped upon her cause—doubly so when his own hopes were baffled.

Then appeared the image of Katrina, as she had sometimes appeared, gentle, winning and most womanly, and his mood softened. "She is worth the winning," he said to himself. "but I must not through her learn to despise myself."

Suddenly the thought of his mission flashed like a pang through his nerves. He was as yet unaware of its precise import; he had only learned that some one superior to the ordinary soldier was necessary to sacrifice somewhat for the public good. Then came the images of Nathan Hale, of Hayne, of Andre, and others whose deaths had been such that the mothers that bore them might well shriek aghast, as if the shame of the mode might leave its blighting shame upon the soul, and forever blend it with their memories. True, these were ennobled by the act which cast a temporary degradation about them—the fatal tree was to them the cross by which they had elevated the sentiment of patriotism to a sublimity second only to the greater one of religion; yet there stood the martyr men before him—scuffed, dishonored, helpless, strong only for the land to which each owed his allegiance.

A cold sweat started to his pores, and his arms fell to his side at the greatness of the

sacrifice, nor was even he aware how the kindling embers of love of country were burning within him as these terrible images floated before him. Had not a price been set upon the head of Washington himself? Did not all the leaders of the Revolution act with this terrible alternative before them? Capture or defeat, the failure of the cause, and the stout men who made up the Congress of the people—Washington himself, the great, the revered—would each and all hang from the gallows trees, as the bones of Coligny, Cromwell, and others of the truly great have done before them, making that hallowed which was designed for a type of shame.

As thus he stood, he was roused by the exclamation of Hamilton, who had approached unperceived; "My God, this must not be," escaped from his lips, as he marked the deadly paleness of his friend.

Montagnie was instantly aroused. "I have decided," he said, laying his hand in that of Hamilton, and they entered the presence of Washington. Here each seated himself silently before the table. At length Montagnie broke the silence by saying, "I am ready for whatever you require."

"To-morrow," replied Washington, and his voice, though even in its firm tones, had a touch of huskiness unwonted to him. "I shall have a series of papers in readiness, which I desire to transmit to General Lee, by the way of Morristown."

Montagnie looked up with a smile of surprise, as if the torturing ordeal which he had just passed in his own mind, had been a weak and childish waste of power, and he simply asked,

"Am I to know the nature of these dispatches?"

Washington's eyes were fixed upon the papers before him, as he replied,

"They contain details respecting the anticipated attack of the allied armies upon the City of New York."

Montagnie threw himself back in his chair with the air of one overwhelmed with intense self-disgust, and which for the moment bore down all other considerations.

"This is a mere boy's task, your Excellency I had foolishly nerved myself for a great sacrifice."

"You will secure the papers carefully about your person, descend the Hudson in the rear of the mountains: leaving them upon your left, you will follow the gorge of the Highlands, through the Cleave of the Ramapo, ordering your time so that you will do this before day-break."

While Washington spoke this slowly and distinctly, Montague arose to his feet, amazed at what he heard.

"The Pass is in the hands of the enemy!" he at length ejaculated.

Washington had resumed his pen, and seemed unconscious of the presence of the speaker, while Montague stood as if plunged in reverie, with his eyes fixed upon the unchanging aspect of Washington; but no vague and dreamy reverie wasted the faculties of Wendell Montague, as he thus stood; they were all keenly alive in disentangling the maze of thought spread out before him. Strange and bewildering surmises crowded upon him, as to the motives of the Commander-in-Chief. What could they be? Was he, the noble—the true—the devoted, after all — No, no; the ingenuous blush of youth mantled his cheek, as the startling and unworthy thought darted across his mind; yet why expose his measures to the sure hazard of being known to the foe? The route prescribed was unusual, circuitous, and the Pass of the Ramapo in the hands of the enemy. Why not take the back road further to the North, which had been constructed expressly for the use of the troops, in order to keep the communication open between West Point and the Jerseys? Unable to solve the enigma, he was still resolved to act. At length a bright flush cast itself over his face, and a sad smile played with it as he broke the painful silence.

"I must double the ramparts of the enemy, take any quantities of winged lead, and be deprived of my papers."

Washington raised his head impatiently, and answered in a deep, stern voice, at the same time bringing down his foot with a heavy stamp upon the floor: "Young man, your duty is to act not talk."

This stamp of the foot is better than any parade of words, as revealing the internal fiber of the man Washington.

Montague bowed coldly, but turning to Hamilton he said:

"I shall be accounted a miserable dupe, a braggart fool; be it so, one might choose a more chivalric and better understood aspect of adventure, but it is a trifle to be ridiculous for the public good."

The bitterness of this trifling struck to the heart of Hamilton, and he ventured a few low words to the Commander-in-Chief; but whatever might have been his suggestion, Washington shook his head, and continued bent over his papers in a manner that showed, however

much he might rely upon the readiness and breadth of apprehension of his young friend in ordinary cases, where an emergency demanded simply firmness of purpose, involving few conflicting elements, he relied solely upon his own judgment. Waving his hand in a manner that showed the conference was, for the present, at an end, he sat absorbed in his great plans long after those who had obeyed his counsel had retired.

[To be concluded in the next number of the Magazine.]

A MOTHER'S LOVE.

AN AFFECTING INCIDENT OF THE PLAGUE.—In the village of Carreggi, whether it were that due precautions had been taken, or that the disease was of peculiar malignant nature, one after another, first the young and then the old, of a whole family dropped off. A woman who lived on the opposite side of the way, the wife of a laborer, the mother of two little boys, felt herself attacked by fever in the night; in the morning it greatly increased, and in the evening the fatal tumor appeared. This was during the absence of her husband, who went to work at a distance, and only returned on Saturday night, bringing home the scanty means of subsistence for his family for the week. Terrified by the example of the neighboring family, moved by the fondest love for her children, and determined not to communicate the disease to them, she formed the heroic resolution of leaving her home, and going elsewhere to die. Having looked them in a room, and sacrificed to their safety even the last and sole comfort of a parting embrace, she ran down the stairs, carrying with her the sheets and coverlets, that she might leave no means of contagion. She then shut the door with a sigh, and went away. But the eldest, hearing the door shut, went to the window, and, seeing her running in that manner, cried out, "Good bye, mother!" in a voice so tender that she involuntarily stopped. "Good bye, mother," repeated the youngest child, stretching its little head out of the window. And thus was the poor afflicted mother compelled for a time to endure the dreadful conflict between the yearnings which called her back, and the pity and solicitude which urged her on. At length the latter conquered; and amid a flood of tears, and the farewells of her children, who knew not the fatal cause and import of those tears, she reached the house of those who were to bury her. She recommended her husband and children to them, and in two days she was no more.



COLONEL JOHN CHARLES FREMONT is recognized throughout the civilized world as one of the most remarkable men of the age. His extraordinary adventures, his wonderful escapes, his scientific observations, his valuable discoveries, his military exploits, his vast resources of invention, and power of endurance, are rendered illustrious by the fact that all his enter-

THE INTERCEPTED MESSENGER
OF RAMAPO PASS;

BY MRS. E. OAKES SMITH.

CHAPTER V.

"Love peeps into the warrior's heart
From the tip of a stooping plume,
And the serried spears and the merry men
May not deny him room;
He'll come to his tent in the weary night,
And be busy with his dream,
And he'll float to his eye in the morning light,
Like a fay on a silver beam." (N. P. WILSON.)

It was yet the gray of the morning, when Wendell Montagnie opened his mother's door to say a few words of greeting before he should start upon his mission. Early as it was, for it was scarcely four, the matron was already up, looking "to the ways of her household." There was something extremely touching in the demeanor of the dames of the Revolutionary times—a sober earnestness which imparted a dignity and appropriateness to all their movements. Dame Montagnie was as yet young and unchanged by time; but devoted and happy in her domestic relations, self had become so secondary with her as to rarely enter into her calculations. No lurkings of vanity divided her singleness of duty, and no love of gossip interfered with the well-ordering of her peaceful household. As yet the children of the region had grown up with an instinctive perception of the harmonies of life, the excessive training of our modern times being as yet unknown; they were obedient and orderly, plous and brave, because such was the atmosphere they breathed, and such the nutriment at their mother's breast, but the how and the wherefore were questions as unnecessary as they were unheard of.

Among these, the children of Dame Montagnie stood preëminent for neatness and good behavior. The clear eyes of the mother were alive with affectionate interest in all their childish movements, and her own staid, gentle demeanor infused an unfailling element of harmony. Tall and slender, her habitual attention to the wants of those about her had given a slight stoop to her shoulders, not unbecoming, while the motions of her hands were of that wavy, directing kind which we sometimes see in old paintings, and which springs naturally from the habits of authority gently exercised.

She stood now in her loose morning robe, just within the hall, and her maidens were panning back and forth, taking the necessary orders for household labor. Pans and milk-pails

glanced by, intermingled with the swing of short petticoats, and the liberal gleams of tidy ankles. A pretty Dutch damsel, with a smart foot and coquetish boddice, was counting out skeins of linen for the loom, which hung partly upon hers, and partly upon the arms of Dame Montagnie. The mother welcomed her son with a bright, open glance, and then with more speed than heretofore, she counted the remaining skeins and gave them into the hands of the pretty Gertrude, who dropped a curtesy, which threw the brief skirt into some action, and then disappeared. Mother and son now entered the room together.

"I have come, dear mother," began the youth, "only to say good morning. I must, within an hour, be on my way to Morristown, carrying dispatches for the Commander-in-Chief."

The mother laid her hand tenderly upon the shoulder of her son, and was silent.

"I may be gone a few days, and I may not return till the movements of the army decide upon further measures," continued the youth.

"That is, my son, till some decisive battle shall determine the fate of the country."

The silence of Montagnie gave assent, and she laid her head upon the shoulder of her child. The youth felt her trembling pulsations and knew, that slight as was the external manifestation, it told of deep and intense anguish. She at length raised her head.

"I am proud, Wendell, of the favor shown you by the good General, but in order to merit it do not risk too much a life as——"

Her voice ceased, and the sentence remained incomplete, but the young man knew what was meant by the tears that fell upon his shoulder, and which the thin dress of the season rendered palpable.

"Country and friends, dear mother," returned Montagnie, after a pause; "I feel as if all that I can do, to yield my life even, were nothing to honor the one and prove my worthiness of the other."

A warm pressure of the mother's arms was the only response. At this moment the horse of Wendell was brought to the door, and she lifted her head.

"Go, my son, and God be with you," she whispered, not daring to trust herself with another look at his face.

Montagnie was soon in the saddle, but as he turned away from the house, his horse stumbled. "Lord a mercy, massa, don't you go," cried Jake, the black attendant. "The horse feel ill-luck, oh, gorry, massa, wait;" and run-

ning on before, the good fellow went through a variety of gesticulations designed to avert any evil influence that might be in reserve. Gaily waving his hand, and waving kisses to the little ones whose heads now appeared at the various dormer windows, and whose little voices called him to return, he rode away. Passing down the principal street, it was natural that he should glance at the windows of old De Witt as he went by. To his surprise Mistress Katrina was leaning from her chamber lattice, humming a gay air, as if all the world were as merry as herself.

Montagnie inclined himself from his saddle, and was about to pass on, when she accosted him.

"How far do you ride, Mr. Montagnie, so bright and early? Wait a bit, and I will have my pony and try a race with you."

Before he had time to reply she darted away, and in a moment more was standing under the stoop, her light flaxen curls tossed by the fresh morning air, and her cheek, into which the color of the peach glowed, and now flushed by coquetry, or it might have been a deeper feeling, the hue invaded for a moment brow and neck.

"I fear I cannot share your race this morning," said Montagnie. "I am ordered upon service which admits of no delay."

"And pray where do you go, Mr. Montagnie, that you claim the right of incivility to a lady?"

"Pardon me, Miss De Witt, my time is not my own now—it is pledged to the service of my country; but at some future day, may I not claim the promise of a morning ride with you?"

The maiden slightly elevated her eyebrows, and tapped her foot lightly upon the step, as she replied—

"In good faith, Mr. Wendell, I never know anything beyond the present moment, which I find abundantly pleasant." There was a roguish smile mingling with these words which induced the young man to dismount, and more than this, to take the hand of the little lady, which he carried to his lips.

"Well, and where do you carry that fine horse of yours—good hunter, noble hunter;" and she lavished endearments upon the horse as if to provoke the spleen of its master. "Neow don't take him down to camp," she laughed, her silvery accent assuming a nasal twang, a species of mimicking which could sit well only upon a pretty woman. Even this grated upon the ears of her lover, who turned almost coldly away.

"I must not wait here, Miss Katrina, however pleasant it may be. But, Miss De Witt, I must say, I could wish—oh, how earnestly!" he resumed in a warmer tone, "that our cause were as dear to your heart as it is to mine. You do not, you cannot know the nobleness of the men who are struggling to make our country free. You know not the blood, the sacrifice—God forbid that you should know! but the time will come when it *will* be known, and then these men will seem little less than demigods."

Katrina looked up into his face so admiringly, even tenderly, with trembling lip, that had not the youth been filled with the magnitude of the sentiment which now absorbed him, he would have spoken more tenderly, and more in reference to his fair listener. The maiden felt piqued, and tapping her toe again upon the sill, she responded in a gay voice—

"Truth! Mr. Montagnie—honor bright! I did not think you had been so eloquent. Did I not regard loyalty as the jewel of virtues, one indeed which holds all others in harmony, you might convert me to your new system of doctrines!"

"I know what you would imply, dear Katrina;" this time the girl laid her hand upon the riding whip in the hands of her lover, and kept her lids bent downward. "I know you would say, that he who is disloyal to king, may be disloyal to love; is it not so?"

Katrina looked up with her archest smile—"I cannot make speeches and commentaries both; but, truth to say, we were so content and secure before this terrible war, and the English officers so courteous, that really I see no good in killing them."

Montagnie laughed heartily at the simplicity of this pretty speech, from pretty lips, and then said:

"Aye, if that is all, Katrina, we wont quarrel. But now I know not when we shall meet again. Perhaps not till the fate of the country is decided."

A slight shade passed over the face of Katrina, which she chased away with her usual address—and she inquired—

"Well, and where do all these gallant Hot-spurs charge!"—and she hummed in an under tone the words of Yankee Doodle:

"Father and I went down to camp."

Montagnie recolled with real bitterness, and placed one foot in the stirrup—

"Miss De Witt, God forbid that I should cross your path in the least. There is not—there can be no sympathy between us!"



THE INTERVIEW.

Katrina's fair brow reddened, and she even bit her lip; but the tears gushed to her eyes a moment after.

"Wendell, I dare say you are right. My sentiment of loyalty is as strong as yours that you call patriotism. I like not this facility of change."

Montagnie would have replied—he would have answered to the tears rather than the words of Katrina; but at this moment the rough hand of old De Witt was laid upon her shoulder, who drew her into the house, pouring out at the same time a mixture of Dutch, French and English invective against herself and the "renegade young rebel," as he was wont to call Montagnie.

Right glad was Wendell thus to have escaped the scrutiny of both mother and mistress, in regard to his destined mission. Neither had conceived of the peril he was about to encounter, and now that nothing lay before him but his duty to his country, he rode on with freer heart, losing his individual importance in the magnitude of the cause. Then he remembered the contempt of Katrina for this very cause, and again he felt himself a freer and stronger man, as he said to himself—

"Everything is contemptible—everything in life, in times like these, except the hopes of the freeman. I will forget her, as I do myself."

Then the tear of Katrina glistened before his mind's eye, and he put spurs to his horse that he might waste the undue sensibility which it engendered by action. Wheeling his horse round an angle of a street he gave one last glance to the windows of old De Witt. There was the gleam of a white handkerchief from the window. The young man paused an instant, waved his hand in the air in return, and then

passed on, ready to meet peril—it might be death.

CHAPTER VI.

"So come the eagle-hearted down,
So come the high and proud to earth,
When life's night-gathering tempests frown
Over their glory and their mirth."

(ORNSVILLE MALLORY.)

Upon returning to the camp, Montagnie found the usual routine of military duty unchanged. There were the morning review, the camp fires, the fire arms stacked for inspection, and the poor garments of the soldiery spread out for washing and airing, together with the ordinary sounds of light jesting, and mirth half bitter and half careless, growing out of the hardships or inaction of the period. Some, more prosperous than others, were sending their clothing to the neighboring farm-houses for renovation—and groups of these messengers were disposed about, giving to the scene an aspect of cheerful, busy idleness, far from being unpicturesque, as the morning sun lighted the white canvas tents, and a stifful breeze swayed them to and fro. Montagnie was surprised at this appearance of inaction, having supposed, from the remarks of Washington and Hamilton, that the troops were to be immediately on the march.

Reaching the quarters of the Commander-in-Chief, he found all in readiness for his departure, together with another dispatch to be delivered at West Point, which he received from the hands of Hamilton.

"I shall sell my life dearly as possible, you may be sure, Hamilton—but really I should be glad to know upon what pretext I lose it," said Montagnie.

Hamilton this time looked grave, was severe

and his answer was so ambiguous that Montague felt himself treated after a school-boy fashion, as if expected to obey quite as much because he is young in years as because he is subordinate, and to whom it is not worth while to give a reason.

"When you reach Morristown," replied Hamilton, "all will be made clear to you."

"Reach Morristown! I shall do that when I am bullet-proof, Colonel, not before. Confound this mystery; I won't stay to be shot like a lame pigeon, be the case what it may; if a stout heart and good horse can double the ramparts of Ramapo unscathed, I shall go through. Farewell."

He put spurs to his horse, and was away as he spoke; but presently wheeling round, he returned to the side of Hamilton.

"My friend, I have quarreled with my mistress, and withheld the truth of my mission from my mother; I would have you set me well with these in case"—the young man dashed a tear from his eye as he spoke, and Hamilton replied only by a warm pressure of the hand.

Montague at first rode on with a speed adapted to the excited state of his own feelings. But as the noble scenery of the Hudson opened before him, and his eyes wandered away where mountain swelled beyond mountain in the distance, a sense of individual nothingness grew upon him, while nature, the great material world, loomed into a gloomy vastness, a solemn and overwhelming magnitude, crushing and grinding him down like the omnipotence of a fate. Gradually the rein slackened and he moved mechanically onward, feeling himself impelled to a certain doom. Montague was young in years, with a strong and buoyant physique, through which the finer elements played with a readiness of response like that of the wind harp to the passing breeze—and as the melody of water and wild bird found their way to his ear, his mood changed to one of human interest; and then it was that he felt the vigorous pulsations of his own heart, and how strong was life within him; then arose that instinctive love of the latter which we lose, perhaps, never—or only when the toils and evils of the world have filled us with weariness and disgust, and its hollowness has made us long. God forgive us, that we long in impatience of spirit, for the true and eternal.

What wonder, then, that Montague looked upon the earth, beholding a new beauty therein; that his own nature felt anew its capacity for enjoyment, and its terrible counterpart for suffering! What wonder that his nerves re-

coiled from the trial before him, and he grasped at life as a thing he could not resign; he in the flush of youth and vigor, with hope, and love, and honor before him! Ay! the last—honor—he ground his teeth at the thought—a gorgeous laurel, understood only by the few, and graced always by the funeral garlands of its victims! Idle as it seemed to him now, the word had its spell of power, and carried him beyond the momentary weakness; again he lost himself in the urgencies of life—again he felt his own subordination to the good of others.

"It must be," he said, "that the few will be sacrificed to the many. The poor fellows who are fighting our battles die and are forgotten—what does it matter, so long as a fair inheritance is preserved for the many who shall come after us!"

He rode on in silence, as he thought, and now became subject to one of those peculiar operations of the mind by which it carries on a double process of thinking, one of which is distinct and tangible, and the other a deeper under-current, betraying the secret reality of an engrossing subject—the first being the mere mechanical train of thought by which we try to escape from the latter.

"Ay, but to die—to go we know not where;
To lie in cold obstruction and to rot—
This sensible warm motion to become
A heated clod—and the delighted soul!"—

He turned sharply round, supposing some one was repeating the passage, and shuddered to find himself alone. Again he rode on, thinking as before, and again the startling language came back to his ear, and it was not till his senses had tricked him in this way several times that he became fully aware that the words proceeded from his own lips.

Startled and ashamed, he now fully roused himself. "It must be that I am a contemptible coward—a coward at heart, acting manfully only when upheld by the undefined influence of others, but blinking from peril when left to myself. It is but death that I brave—death that must come to all at some time, and what does it matter whether we meet it on the battle field, in the full companionship of blood and carnage, or fall a solitary mark for the destroyer!"

Such were a portion of the many thoughts which stirred in the bosom of the youth as he entered West Point. Here he was delayed longer than he had anticipated, so that the day was fast wearing when he again found himself on his route. He had not proceeded many miles when he became aware of a horseman

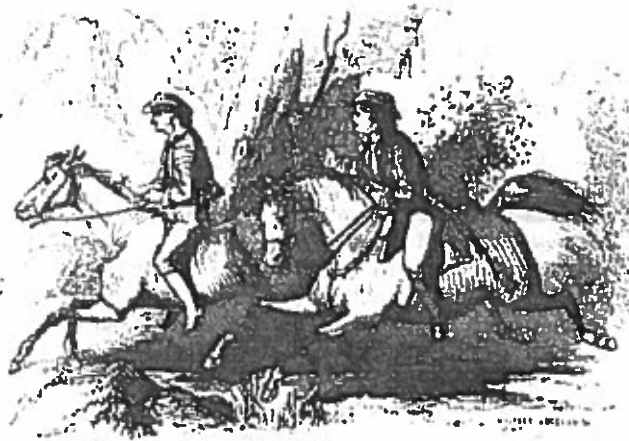
somewhat in advance, who kept the road he was travelling, but at such a distance he could not determine the character of the stranger, though convinced he was himself an object of scrutiny. At length, reaching a part of the way where the hills presented a narrow defile, open for miles in front, he put spurs to his horse and confronted the rider, who, astride of a miserable, stumbling roebuck, could not compete with the better mounted Montagnie.

He was a thin, pale youth, ragged and bare-foot, and having no saddle, the marvel was how he contrived to keep his sitting upon the back of the animal at the pace in which he moved. Indeed, it would seem as if both horse and rider were at that precise point of emaciation which established an entire mesmeric sympathy between them, the bones of the two mechanically swinging in concert, and the yellow locks of the one tossing just as did the mane of the other, so that at a distance they not unaptly suggested the idea of the waving, shadowy outline of the last of the Centaurs.

"My poor Jamie!" exclaimed Montagnie, as he drew near enough to see who it was. To his surprise the boy rode sullenly onward without reply, urging his feet into the sides of the beast to increase his speed, as if he would avoid the speaker. Montagnie hurried on, and looking into his face, found him in tears. Alas! it is for the beautiful to weep and awaken sympathy in the human breast, and they do so confiding in their power; but the poor, the aged and the ugly, turn aside to screen the anguish of the heart, well knowing that the tenderness of response is not for them. Too truly they awaken but a distressing pity, and we give them silence, a commiserating silence, or the condolence of the lips, while the impulsive arm, and the answering tear, or the warm pressure of the hand, is withheld.

"My poor Jamie! what do you here, so far from the camp?" said Montagnie.

The boy sank his head into his bosom, and the tears showered from his eyes, but he was silent.



THE MEETING WITH JAMIE.

CHAPTER VII.

"His simple love of duty and of right—
Omnescence of soul in action, thought and feeling;
His mind disturbed by no conflicting light,
His narrow faith, so clear in each revealing,
His will untrammelled to set out the part
So plainly graved on his untutored heart."

[HOFFMAN.]

James Haven, or Jamie, as he was always called, was one of those poor unfortunates of this world whom we sometimes meet with, all of whose faculties are large and active, except those of the reflective character, by which we are brought into clear relation with those about us, and are made capable of those combinations which insure us understanding, power and efficiency, and enable us to assert our rights upon our fellows.

Poor Jamie had lived a sort of vagrant life, attaching himself here and there as whim or impulse should dictate, and when torn from his prop by the harshness of others, by death or accident, suffering the most intense anguish. At such times he betook himself to tears and prayer with the wildest fervor, for he had in early life been taught the rudiments of religion, and his own constitution predisposed him to worship, from that blind reverence which instinctively leads the rudest man to adore something above and beyond himself. He would pass whole days in supplication, till his incoherent and agonized mood wrought upon the sympathies of some kind heart, and a word of gentleness, a tone of benevolence, warmed the spirit of the unhappy youth into gratitude and affection to the giver. It was a singular fact that Jamie intuitively attached himself only to the finest and noblest natures. Unlike many in his situation, his passions were of the most amiable kind; no sensuality or grimace be-

longed to him, and thence he wore an expression of touching melancholy most painful to the beholder.

Jamie had grown up amid the disorders of the time, seeing men suffering and hungry, dying by bloodshed, living in tents, watchful, laborious and insecure, and he naturally thought this the common order of society—that men were created to march and counter-march, and hew each other down, rank and file. For many years he had followed the movements of the army because of his extreme attachment to the person of Washington, but the gravity and preoccupation of the great man were oppressive to one so constitutionally reverential, and of late he had devoted himself to Wendell Montague, whose more youthful impulses gave relief to the faculties of the poor boy. He was thin and pale, not so much from neglect as the exhausting activity of a mind always perplexed, and always on the alert to do some good to the object of its affection. Being of a harmless, taciturn nature, he was allowed free range of the quarters of the Commander-in-Chief, and there is no doubt that in this way secrets of the utmost importance to the country found a lodgment in his brain, without detriment to any one, for his movements were regulated solely by his affections, and these, as we have said, were devoted for the present to Washington and Wendell Montague.

The latter was now both perplexed and surprised at the manner in which Jamie seemed determined to avoid him; but supposing this arose simply from a wish to be with him, and a fear that he should be sent back might be the cause of his present emotion, he soothed him by expressions of kindness, and patted his hand upon his shoulder after the manner he would caress a mule favorite in the shape of a horse or bound. Jamie grew more tranquil, and at last, reining in his horse beside his friend, looked into his face so long and steadily that Montague felt a superstitious dread creep over him, as if the stony eyes of a Fate were fixed upon his face.

"Well, Jamie! speak out," he at length said; and knowing that the boy was unable to arrange his thoughts into words while in motion, he also came to a stand.

Jamie twisted himself round upon his horse and replied:

"I want to take the papers down to Ramapo."

Montague grew alarmed to find the secret so well known, and gave him an evasive answer.

Jamie dismounted by the roadside, and gave his bridle into the hands of Montague; then,

seating himself upon the ground, he pressed both hands upon his temples, as was his custom when trying to make an unusual mental effort. Montague, annoyed as he was, and impatient of delay, was obliged to place himself beside him, when Jamie suddenly poured out the contents of his brain without pause, lest he should lose the connection of events.

"I was under the table, half asleep, when I heard Washington plan to go to Yorktown instead of New York, and send you to be shot and robbed at Ramapo. I heard the whole; you are to lose the papers and be killed, killed, dear Mr. Montague, and the crows to feed on you, and leave poor Jamie without a friend! Oh! oh! oh! Give me the papers; I am going down there to tell them not to fire, or if they do, to kill Jamie and not you."

The whole light now broke upon the mind of Montague, and he saw at once through the mystery of his mission. He was long arranging the threads of thought, regardless of the tears of the devoted boy, till he was roused by his taking the bridle again from his hands.

"No, no, Jamie; you must go back," he said; "you have had a bad dream, Jamie—you must go back. I am going to Morristown."

The boy looked earnestly at him and shook his head. "Well, I am glad of that; I will go too."

"No, Jamie, I must go alone. When I come back to Newburgh you shall have new clothes and a hat, and live with me. Now go and tell my mother I said she must take good care of poor Jamie."

The boy looked at his ragged habiliments as if the thought of them were an accustomed one, and then laid his hand first upon his head and then upon his heart.

"Oh! Mr. Montague, it is here and here that I feel pain, and when they kill you Jamie must die too."

Montague was affected at this simple devotion, and urged him to return. Finding entreaties of no avail, he resorted to a more peremptory tone, and directed him instantly to go back and tell Washington what he had learned. "Tell him, Jamie, all you have told me, and tell him all is well; mind, Jamie, and say it is all well."

The boy looked more perplexed than ever, but turned slowly away in obedience to his friend, and it was not till Montague saw his figure recede in the opposite direction that he felt safe in pursuing his route; and as he did so, the lesson which he had just learnt from this poor imperfect creature sank deeply into

his breast. Here was a being ready to lay down his life in the singleness of affection for one who had fed his yearning soul with the crumbs, as it were, that fell from the table of human sympathy—but who, grateful for the pittance, lavished all his faculties, and courted death itself as a return. He felt humiliated before him, and found himself a sadder, but higher toned man from what he had seen. The frolicsome, beautiful Katrina faded in the mistiness of fancy before his more manly perceptions, and one by one the noble and true-hearted arose in their pure statue-like proportions before him—seeming to point upward in their calmness of mien. Then came the fair matronly image of his mother, whose every look was affection, every thought an aspiration, and he felt that she, even she, would say “go,” on a mission like this, where secrecy and fidelity were so much required, as well as a certain tone and breeding, to give the greater reality to the movement. A dull man might perform the office, but the unwonted route, in the face of a foe, would raise the suspicion of craft, and therefore courage and address were the more requisites. Then, too, he saw the delicacy which had induced Washington to conceal his real intentions from him, that, as a gentleman, his integrity might be free from blemish, for, however questioned, he could know nothing beyond what appeared on the face of the dispatches which he carried.

CHAPTER VIII.

“Here through you western arch the moon sinks low—
The mists already tinge her orb with blood;
Methinks I feel the breath of morn e’en now—
Knowest thou the hour?”
[LONNA J. HALL.]

The times and the places have changed since the period of our story; but there are those still living who point out the various routes of the agents of Washington in going to and fro from the different encampments of the army. The road is still in preservation which he caused to be constructed for their convenience, four or five miles to the north and west of the Valley of the Ramapo, which was at that time in possession of the British, whose foraging parties greatly annoyed and distressed the inhabitants of the district. There are those who point out the path of Montagnie adown the valley, and show point after point which he passed, and how this and that position was under the protection of our own troops, and others were held by our foes. The walls of stone are yet visible where stood the forges sometimes worked by our enemies, and sometimes by our-

selves, in this region of iron, as the district changed hands in the chances of war. Still do these mighty engines of power belch forth their smoke and flame from a hundred forges, making the old woods to ring with the clanking of the metal as they did more than a hundred years ago.

The battlements of Ramapo no longer bristle with artillery, nor resound to the tramp of the sentinel; the weary traveler, as he descends the narrow defile, no longer trembles lest some outrage, justified by the tumult of the times, be perpetrated upon himself; but in place of its ancient solitude, disturbed only by the occasional feet of warrior or hunter, and in place of the pomp and circumstance of war, the black and fiery locomotive, like some huge dragon, rushes with burning speed along the highway, and plunges into the gloomy defile, leaving its thick vapors and breathings of flame to mark the path it has trodden. The footsteps of peace now mark this beautiful and picturesque region, developing wealth and enterprises sufficient to ennoble any other nation, but by us, unaccustomed to limitation, regarded only as a natural and every-day affair. The Erie Railroad, one of the grandest projects of any country, covering a length of more than four hundred miles, now threads the Valley of the Ramapo, passing under the very battlements once held by our foes.

The stars of a clear Summer night looked softly downward as Montagnie moved adown the valley, and all the air was so still that the sound of his horse's hoofs broke upon the senses with a preternatural loudness at once startling and annoying, hemmed in, as he was, by the converging hills, which upon either side presented an almost perpendicular wall. From their top and sides the stiff pines shot upward, gloomy and unyielding, their angular outlines affording no relief to an excited fancy. The rapid torrent of the Ramapo rushed onward, in its compressed bed, and now and then a screech-owl, started by the unwonted sound of steps at such an hour, flapped his heavy wings and sought a deeper shade. Forcibly did the appropriate imagery of Scripture arise to his mind, as thus in solitude and at midnight he moved along this narrow defile: “Yea, though I walk through the dark valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me.”

Looking upward he perceived the stars begin to pale in the sky, and now was the time to increase his speed as he neared the ramparts. He put spurs to his horse, and then checked

him again, for he caught the echo of hoofs galloping behind him. Already the light gleamed through the termination of the valley, and he heard the stirring sounds of the garrison, vigilant in their early duty. Looking backward, the obscurity prevented him from distinguishing the form of the stranger, whether friend or foe, and he had hardly time to reflect upon either when the horseman dashed by him with a speed that baffled pursuit: but as he came into the faint light from the opening valley, Montagnie was appalled to behold the square outlines of Jamie Haven tearing down the valley to the post of the enemy.

A terrible suspicion crossed his mind, and he darted forward, calling upon him to halt, in a loud voice. Jamie paid no heed, if indeed he heard the command—and being mounted upon a fresh and vigorous beast, left his pursuer far in the rear, while the whole valley resounded with the sharp ring of the horses' feet as the two approached the ramparts.

"Should he prove traitorous," thought Montagnie, drawing a pistol from his breast—"My God! his treason or his imbecility will be ruinous to the country!"—and obeying the terrible impulse, he discharged the weapon: but Jamie was beyond his reach—and now Montagnie heard the loud challenge of the sentinel—the roll of the drum, followed by the sharp ring of a volley of musketry.

Sick at heart he dashed onward, and arrived in time to find the poor youth surrounded by the enemy, who were lifting him, faint and bleeding, from the ground. Springing from his horse, Montagnie pushed all aside and lifted the head of the poor boy in his own arms.

Jamie looked up, and a loud and ghastly laugh sent the blood in torrents from his wound.

"Oh! Mr. Montagnie, I got here first—I have saved you. Jamie had no friends"—he murmured, falling backward.

The tears gushed to the eyes of Montagnie. "My poor boy! dear Jamie!" he cried. The youth opened his eyes, smiled faintly, and was dead.

There was such entire devotion in the death of Jamie—based upon an affection so single, so divested of all alloy, that Montagnie found

himself swayed by painful and conflicting emotions. He pitied, and this sense of pity was the more distressing that the nobleness of the act was allied to the highest heroism; and, therefore, to pity was to degrade, while at the same time the actor was so imperfect that sympathy for him must of necessity be through the sentiment of human compassion. He held the head of the youth long after the breath was departed, vainly hoping to see him revive, that he might show that affection and gratitude which now converted the lifeless clay before him into that of a martyr. Oh! how did every pang, which the sufferer must have endured in his weary life, rise reproachfully to the eyes of Montagnie, as if things which he might have prevented!

Filled with these emotions, he followed, mechanically, the body of the youth into the fort, scarcely conscious that he was himself a prisoner, and only outraged at the rude manner in which his poor garments were searched in quest of what he might be supposed to carry. When deprived of his own dispatches, he saw that his whole mission was accomplished, yet how little had been done by himself to forward the object in view. The simple affection of Jamie had been a shield, both to himself and country.

When the inhabitants of Newburgh retired for the night which we have been describing, the tents of the soldiery gleamed in the silence, and the whole round of military duty seemed unchanged. The many little offices performed by the poorer part of the population were still open. Many of the garments of the troops were in their possession, and nothing gave indica-



DEATH OF JAMIE.

tion of change. When the morning appeared, not a vestige of the camp remained. So silently and so secretly had the work been performed, that all seemed like a spell of enchantment. Where had been the stir and the tumult of armed men, was now an unbroken solitude.

The well known orders of Washington upon this march, so celebrated in our annals, "to avoid the use of powder, and depend upon the bayonet," shows how important at the period were silence and celerity of movement. While the army was making its way to the Jerseys, by the back road of which we have spoken, the "Intercepted Dispatches" were conveyed with the greatest possible speed to Sir Henry Clinton at New York, and led to a movement in accordance with the hopes and intentions of the Commander-in-Chief, that of the withdrawal of the naval force of the British from the Chesapeake to the Harbor of New York.

Subsequently followed the battle of Yorktown, so fatal to Cornwallis, and vital to ourselves. It is true, that in the siege of that place, the disparity of numbers might have served to insure success to our arms, but the skill of Washington was less displayed in the last final blow, which made our cause triumphant, than in those preparatory measures, originating in a mind whose severity of detail was only exceeded by the vastness of its comprehension and the clearness of its foresight. The combined movements of the various departments of the enemy; the readiness of our French allies; the happy conjunction of favorable winds and tides; the patriotism and bravery of our devoted men, wonderful as each and all of these were, might still have been ineffective but for the Intercepted Messenger of Ramapo Pass.

CONCLUSION.

"Man, perchance,
Scour'd by the world's sharp commerce, or impaired
By the wild wanderings of his summer way,
Turns like a truant scholar to his home,
And yields his nature to sweet influences
That purify and save."
[L. H. SPOONER.]

The interests of nations are decided upon battle-plains, with a waste of life and treasure that might seem for the time being to suspend the more gentle and individual emotions of humanity; but we find this is far from being the case, for man, with his multitudinous faculties, works out his various and stirring personal interests in the midst of the most appalling obstacles. The love-god folds a scarf, a pocket, a blossom, or billet doux under the cuirass of the soldier, and he is doubly brave

in that some beloved or beautiful being trembles for his destiny. Man learns to take life in detail, and thus no one point becomes the all engrossing one, and thus we are useful—content—*common place*—with here and there a hero, who has the power to spurn all things inconsistent with the greatness of a mission. We revel on the present at the expense of the future—prodigal of to-day, and feeding upon husks to-morrow.

At the period of which we are treating, there were many in this region, as well as in other parts of the country, who remained inactive, notwithstanding the stress of the times. Some of these were secretly attached to the cause of the country, and others not the less favored the British. Among the first of these was the hero of our story, who, prior to the event we have here described, had more than once done good service to the country. Really religious in character, he had more than once, under the garb of a minister of the gospel, obtained important information for Washington and his aids. This character was no farce to him, and he readily assumed it when the urgencies of the country required such aid.

But in rendering this service he had never carried a word in writing. He had been treated with entire confidence by Washington, and had relied solely upon an honest heart, a mind fanciful in resources, and a memory that never failed him.

He had more than once visited in this way, as a spiritual aid, the captive Americans at New York City, and had confronted Sir Henry Clinton himself. He exhorted the faithful of either army to sobriety of life, and to bend their minds to the contemplation of eternal things, rather than waste themselves amid the temptations and perils of a soldier's life, forgetful of the Christian warfare. If to screen the purposes of an emissary, willing to do something in the cause of patriotism, he sometimes assumed an extra appearance of cast, he may well be pardoned therefor, and the nasal twang, if not altogether natural to him, the better concealed his designs; he cared not for the contempt cast upon himself, so long as the cause of God and country were advanced.

Of course Montague was not unknown to many in the hostile camp, and no sooner did he see the body of poor Jamie decently disposed than he mounted his horse, and attempted coolly to go on his way, assuming at once the aspect of a clergyman. Slightly relaxing his muscles, and drawing his hair down upon his temples, the goodly youth wore an aspect so

sanctimonious as well might lead his captors to doubt his identity.

"Here, where are you going?" demanded a soldier, who had watched his movements with some scrutiny.

"Even as the Apostle Philip exhorted and instructed the Eunuch riding in a chariot, what hinders that we should here turn aside and worship? Let us pray, my brethren, remembering the Lord while it is day, lest the night come when he may forget us."

Taking his hat from his head, and resting his hands upon the pommel of his saddle, he seemed about to proceed, when the men wheeled by him with a rude laugh.

"No, no, you young hypocrite, didn't we catch a sight of you tearing along the road as if the — were in pursuit of his own? Besides, we have a bone to pick with you; so dismount and wait further orders."

"The Lord forgive you, ye sons of Belial; if I rode in a manner unsuited to a messenger of the Lord, know that these are times when even we are commanded to gird on carnal weapons, to subdue the flesh, and be instant in service. If ye found carnal writings upon my body, of which ye have dispoiled me, am I responsible for the doings of those who may have converted a vessel of the Lord to ungodly purposes?"

"Ha, ha!" cried the soldier, dropping the reins of his horse. "So young a blade to carry such a withered up heart;" and, intent to carry the intercepted dispatches speedily as possible down to New York, they wheeled about, thinking time of more value than even the punishment of a foe.

"Look here, you spooney of a man—look here; these will do the job for you. Go back and tell him that sent you, we are ready for him."



MONTAGNIE AND THE COWBOYS.

With this he held up the dispatches, with the signature of Washington.

By this time the men put spurs to their horses, and Montagnie, looking after them till out of sight, did the same, casting off at once the air of sanctimonious humility so little accordant with his person, which was stout and firmly made, and his mind acute and comprehensive.

A moment after, Montagnie might be seen tearing down the road at a most unclerical speed. The men of the garrison sent after him three cheers and a round of bullets, supposing his speed to be caused by shame of his defeat.

Montagnie at once struck across the country and joined the army of Washington in time to be in at the battle of Yorktown.

It is unnecessary to follow further the various characters of our story, the result of which may be easily anticipated by our reader.

In after years a stone was raised to the memory of poor Jamie. The story of his devotion, his sad life, and great human needs, was often told about the hearthstone of Montagnie. Even Katrina grew to reverence the greatness of principle which carried men through poverty, hardship, and death itself, that no shackle should disgrace this glorious Western heritage.

Time works its changes in all, consigning the warped and wooed in imbecility to their legitimate contempt, and aiding in the development of the true and good in those of a stronger make. Whether it was time or love, both or one, which converted the pettish and spoiled girl into a high-spirited and noble woman, perhaps even Katrina herself might have found it difficult to say; we are only assured of the fact, and that Mistress Montagnie, who had once regarded her with cold displeasure, learned to love her with a most motherly tenderness.

With that strange perversity said to be characteristic of the sex, Katrina was led to love Montagnie devotedly at the time when her own power over him was least in the ascendant.

He had been heard to say more than once, what Katrina as often declared she never would overlook in any man, namely, that "a man must be not only base but a fool, to heed a woman when his country was at stake," a speech which argued so much of manly determination, that Katrina, avaricious as she was, found herself careful never to encroach upon. Even Mistress Montagnie confessed to the staidness and gentleness of Katrina, for the short space which kept her son absent about the person of Washington. But these things are

unnecessary to detail, our object being not to write a "love-tale," but to tell the story of "The Messenger of Ramapo Pass."

MAD ANN, THE HUNTRESS.

ONE cold, raw November evening, toward the close of the last century, an individual was traveling through the unbroken wilderness which skirted the banks on either side of the Great Kanawha River, in the western part of the State of Virginia, mounted on a beautiful black pony, whose sleek, glossy hide betokened the care which was bestowed upon his groom-

ing, and whose slender, but well-knit limbs, broad chest and spirited head showed evidence that he was the choice of a good judge of horseflesh. The traveler was pursuing an old Indian trail, running westward from Covington to Point Pleasant, at the confluence of the Great Kanawha and the Ohio Rivers. The dress of this individual was of a mongrel character, and a close observer might have been undecided which of the two sexes should claim our subject for its own. But let us describe the costumes of this doubtful character.

The head was bound round with a flaming

WENT TO THE MOUNTAINS AND WAS TAKEN BY THE INDIANS AT POINT PLEASANT.

