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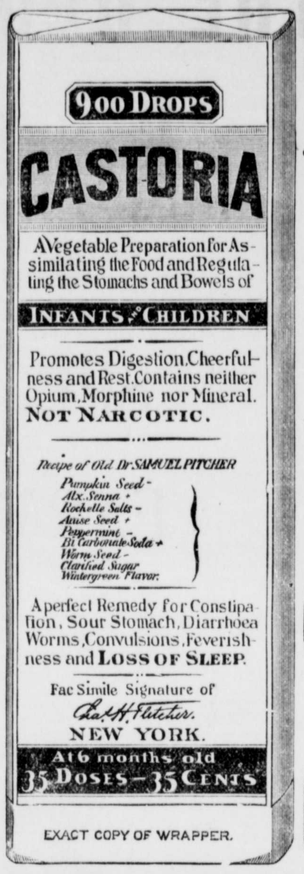

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(Continued from Second Page.)

paper, over which Williams nodded with compressed lips, but with a new light in his eye. Ann looked from one to the other in bewilderment and fear.

Rahl approached Ann, with an ugly leer. She stood her ground and from a table drawer beside her calmly took a pistol.

She raised the weapon. The Hessian staggered back, and she lowered it.

The house began to fill with the prowling foreigners.

"Wait awhile!" threatened their commander. "And you"—to Colonel Williams—"you go at once!"

"Not until I turn over my other prisoners to Captain Hardy for safe conduct to the camp. This paper speaks of but one, the spy."

Ann looked still more bewildered.

"What other prisoners?" asked Rahl.

"That is no affair of yours. Hardy, go upstairs to the room on your right and bring down the man you pursued today."

Presently Stryker was brought into the room.

"Here is your prisoner," said Williams solemnly to Rahl. Ann Wilson, her pistol still in hand, approached her lover, who, throwing his left arm around her, kissed her forehead, and, taking her right hand, placed it in Williams'. "Save her!" was all he said.

"So! Ha!" cried Rahl derisively. "Five minutes for you to pray, young man; so prepare!"

"Goodby, dear, dear Ann!" A tear rolled down Stryker's swarthy cheek. He turned his back lest any should witness his further emotion and slowly mounted the stair to spend to best profit the five minutes' grace accorded him for his soul's good.

"Captain Hardy, take Dr. George Wilson, Elizabeth Peters and Ann Wilson into your custody as suspected of treason, and take them to the camp in Bordentown!" cried Williams. He then whispered to Hardy the true reason for sending them.

Ann's voice was raised in useless protest. Rahl, half drunk though he was, saw that he could not interfere with that order, and, with a curse, he ordered his Hessians to bring down the spy instantly, so that "no one might miss the fun!"

"Now all's lost but glory!" muttered Williams chokingly.

Ann Wilson shrieked and fainted.

* * * * * * *

So fair a day had given place to a night of fury. Snow was whirling madly in its blackness, and its cold was intense. Trenton town was about to have a temporary respite from its reign of Hessian terror, for Rahl and his troops had marched out of it at nightfall and were making their way silently to the spot six miles up the river where the patriot chief was to be delivered into their hands.

An hour ahead of them Colonel Williams, now in Continental buff and blue, had found a ferryman awaiting him at that very spot. The boatman, muffled to the very eyes and shivering in spite of that, plied the oars vigorously as his sharp lookout for ice floes would allow, and in ten minutes they were at the other side.

"Now for it," muttered Williams. "Come with me and do not fear."

The man obediently trudged on behind. In front of a small farmhouse a hundred yards away staggered a sentry through the buffeting blast, and just beyond him stood, leaning against a flagstaff, a tall and majestic figure apparently indifferent to the roaring winter gale.

"Who goes there?" challenged the sentry.

"Captain Stafford of General Lee's command, with important news for General Washington!"

"I am General Washington. What is your news?" spoke the man of majesty, advancing.

"General Lee bids me say that with 500 men you can take Trenton now if you act promptly. He has reached the river bank by a detour and has learned that the town is held only by 2,000 drunken Hessians. He will have all his men on yonder bank in an hour. I will guide you to the spot, general."

"What do you bring from General Lee to insure my trust in this?"

"A letter." He handed Washington a paper.

The general rapidly led the way into the farmhouse. Turning around when they had entered its well lighted parlor, he smiled as he said:

"I should need no other credential than the company you keep, captain."

Williams looked behind at his boatman and sank speechless into a chair.

* * * * * * *

"I got on my Hessian suit in a hurry and picked up a musket and bayonet—the house was full of them—and walked downstairs at my leisure and into the street just as the dragoons were riding away with the Wilson family. Soon there was a great hullabaloo, and as I saw the Hessians start out in all directions searching for myself I thought I had better be active, too, and I never stopped searching till I found the ferryman and tied him up in his cabin, where the Hessians would soon find him, discover the trick and go back fully convinced that you will not cross tonight."

"Ah, well done, Captain Stryker, as usual. Now we will surely cross, but not for a few hours. Have you any request to make for clemency for our prisoner?"

"None, general."

* * * * * * *

How the army crossed the Delaware that Christmas night and in the dawn of morning captured the town from the drunken Hessians, mortally wounding Rahl, is history. What happened to rash Colonel Williams must be plain to all who read the fate of Major Andre, and this Christmas tale is not written for those so dense as not to guess that the numerous and respected Strykers of New Jersey are proud of their relationship to General Warren Stryker and his good wife Ann.

The Mistletoe Bough

[The following poem was written by Thomas Haynes Bayly, an English poet, novelist and dramatist of considerable note; born 1797; died 1839.]

The mistletoe hung in the castle hall,
The holly branch shone on the old oak wall,
And the baron's retainers were blithe and gay
And keeping their Christmas holiday.
The baron beheld, with a father's pride,
His beautiful child, young Lovell's bride,
While she with her bright eyes seemed to be
The star of the goodly company.

"I'm weary of dancing now," she cried.
"Here tarry a moment—I'll hide; I'll hide!
And, Lovell, be sure thou'rt first to trace
The clew to my secret lurking place."
Away she ran, and her friends began
Each tower to search and each nook to scan,
And young Lovell cried: "Oh, where dost thou hide?
I'm lonesome without thee, my own dear bride."

THE OLD MAN WEEPS FOR HIS FAIRY BRIDE

They sought her that night, and they sought her next day,
And they sought her in vain when a week passed away.
In the highest, the lowest, the loneliest spot
Young Lovell sought wildly, but found her not.
And years flew by, and their grief at last
Was told as a sorrowful tale long past,
And when Lovell appeared the children cried,
"See, the old man weeps for his fairy bride!"

At length an old chest that had long lain hid
Was found in the castle. They raised the lid,
And a skeleton form lay moldering there,
In the bridal wreath of that lady fair.
Oh, sad was her fate! In sportive jest
She hid from her lord in the old oak chest.
It closed with a spring—and, dreadful doom,
The bride lay clasped in her living tomb!

FANTASTIC CELEBRATIONS.

Mysteries and Moralities at Christmas In Middle Ages.

During the middle ages Christmas was celebrated by the gay fastastic spectacle of dramatic mysteries and moralities given by personages in grotesque masks and singular costumes. The scenery usually represented an infant in a cradle surrounded by the Virgin Mary and St. Joseph, bulls' heads, cherubs, eastern magi and many ornaments.

Then there were the Christmas carols or some which recalled the songs of the shepherds at the Nativity. These songs were attended by dances to the rhythm of the various musical instruments. Everybody joined this merrymaking, and the wild music and singing were kept up the livelong night. Of these ancient Christmas carols but few have been preserved to us. The foregoing seemed to be the custom of all Christian nations during the middle ages.

In Italy it was the custom of the Calabrian minstrels to descend from the mountains and discourse their wild music before the shrine of the Virgin Mary. In England and on the continent the bells are still rung at midnight. Among other revels of the Christmas season were the so called feasts of fools and asses, in which everything serious was burlesqued, inferiors dressed up as their superiors and great men becoming playful, the whole showing the proneness of man to reverse the order of society and to ridicule its decencies.

In England Christmas is a term at once for a religious and merrymaking festival for every rank and age, the festivities commencing on Christmas eve and lasting till Candlemas, and every day being a holiday till Twelfth Night (Jan. 6). In the houses of nobles a "lord of misrule" formerly was appointed, whose duty it was to provide the rarest amusement and whose rule lasted from All Hallow eve till Candlemas. They lived on the fat of the land, and all of the tenants were invited in to share the general fun and merrymaking.—Houston Post.

Burgundy's Christmas Carols.

In Burgundy carols are exceedingly popular. Indeed not more cherished is the German Christmas tree, with its glittering ornaments and the Christ Child, or the Englishman's red holly berries, mystic mistletoe, blazing hearth fire and smoking plum pudding than are the ditties sung all through advent until Christmas eve by the good folk of that province.

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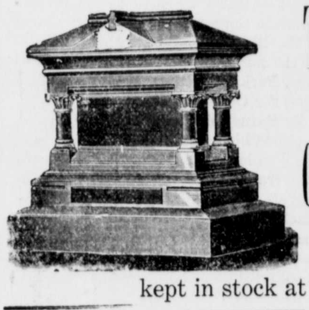

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