

Select Story.

A Heroine's Stratagem.

Whenever an invading army is encamped in the country of an enemy, the inhabitants for miles around are never secure in either property or life. Vindictive, reconnoitering and foraging parties are more or less abroad in every direction—to say nothing of a prowling set of thieves and marauders, who follow an army as wolves do a hunter, or jackals the lion, to pounce upon whatever they can with impunity.

During the war for Independence, almost a hundred years ago, these villainous marauders became very troublesome in some sections of the country, and the unprotected citizens, between the lines of the two armies, often suffered terribly in life and property. In many cases the head of the family being away with the army, the only inmates of the dwelling were one or more women, with perhaps a few children, too young to afford their mother any assistance in the event of an attack; and such defenceless places the cowardly marauders delighted to assail, plunder, and burn, in the dead of night, not unfrequently murdering in cold blood the entire household, or adding such foul deeds to their list of crimes as we care not to relate.

In a rather lonely part of the country a few miles northward from Philadelphia, at the time the British took possession of the city, there stood a solitary dwelling, occupied by a Mrs. Parker, a maiden sister, older than herself, and two children of tender years, the husband and father being in the army under Gen. Washington.

A small farm, owned by her husband was all Mrs. Parker had to depend on for a living; and this during his absence was carried on by herself and sister, both working in the fields at ploughing, planting, and hoeing, and only getting a man's help for a few days in haying.

Neither Mrs. Parker nor her sister, Miss Price, were at all delicate in person or strength, but on the contrary, quite strong and robust, and their out-door labors, of course, increased their masculinity in some degree. Nor were they as timid as they found the enemy near—but when they found the deprecations and barbarities of here and there a roving band of villains, they clenched their hands, set their teeth hard, and said it was well the scoundrels did not have two such persons as themselves to deal with. It might naturally be asked what two women—ay, or for that matter, two men either—could do to protect themselves against a party of ten or twenty armed desperadoes; but, as we could answer the question to-day by telling what they did under just such circumstances, we will proceed to state the facts that we wish to make known.

As one means of protection, and also to destroy any game, troublesome or otherwise, that might chance in their way, a loaded rifle was always kept in the house; and this weapon both of the sisters had learned to handle with nearly as much skill as the owner himself. In order, too, that there might never be any lack of ammunition, Parker, before enlisting for the war, had purchased a keg of powder in the city, and stored it in the cellar, in a little cell prepared expressly for it, where it was kept perfectly dry, and with little or no danger to the inmates.

Now, one dark night, at a late hour, the sisters were aroused from sleep by a rapid succession of thundering knocks upon one of the outer doors of their dwelling, and they also heard several gruff voices rapping out the most blasphemous oaths and demanding instant admittance.

"Sally," said Mrs. Parker, starting up in bed, "it's them cut throats come to try their hands on us."

"Just so, Nancy" replied Mrs. Price, springing out of bed and hurrying on some of her clothes; "and do you know what we always said we'd do in case they did come?"

"It's awful though, ain't it?" returned the other, in a tone of considerable dismay and alarm, as she hastened to follow the example of her sister. "Oh, my poor dear children! if we should fail what will become of them?"

"Die, I s'pose, as we will," replied their maiden aunt. "But it won't do to fool away time in talking—we've got to act, and that, too, before the scoundrels get in. I'll go and speak 'em fair, and keep 'em from breaking in, if I can, whilst you run and get the powder."

"Shall we need a light?" asked Mrs. Parker.

"Yes, but I'll attend to that; you'll not want any to get the powder with, because it ain't ourselves we want to blow up."

With this both hurried out of their bedroom into a large apartment, which occupied nearly the whole of the front side of the dwelling, and was used as is customary in farm houses as a sitting room, dining room and kitchen. From this apartment a door led outside, another into the cellar, and a third into a wing of small dimensions, which was much newer than the main building, and was principally used as a kind of work shop and storeroom.

"Who's there, and what do you want?" screamed Miss Price, as soon as she reached the kitchen, while her sister hurried down the cellar stairs to get the powder.

"Open the door, you angel, and we'll tell you," was answered from the outside, accompanied with a laugh, that was neither merry nor musical.

between the door opening from the main building into it and another that led to the party outside. Miss P. then took the loaded rifle from the hooks on which it rested, and, having reprimed it from a horn, hastened to set the candle on a table, a little beyond the powder, so that the light shown full upon it.

"Oh, my poor children! God help us!" said Mrs. Parker, in a low and agitated tone.

"It will all depend on one single shot," Nancy," returned her sister, with compressed lips and unquivering eye, as she placed a chair in the doorway, between the larger and smaller buildings for her gun to rest on while she sighted it. "I don't hardly expect I shall live through it whether our plan succeeds or not," she added solemnly; "so just kiss me good-bye, Nancy."

The sisters now embraced, Mrs. Parker giving way to tears and sobs, but Miss Price remaining firm and outwardly composed.

"There, Nancy," pursued the maiden sister, as if she were giving directions about some of the ordinary affairs of life; "we're as ready now as we can be, I s'pose—so just run and shove back the bolts of the room door, but don't make any noise about it, and then hurry into the bedroom to your children, and pray for all of us. If heaven is pleased to smile upon our hopes, you and they will most likely be saved, and my poor life ain't much matter, one way or t'other."

"Oh, Sally!" sobbed Mrs. Parker, "how can I see you give yourself away to die for me and my children?"

"Oh, that's nothing, Nancy. I've got to die sometime, and I don't care much about living, except for you and the little dears; and you can often kiss 'em for me, and tell 'em about: aunts; William that should have been mine, he's in heaven, you know—and may be when I die I shall meet him again. But come! there's no more time to talk—for already the scoundrels are trying to break down the door."

This was literally true. The party outside, becoming madly impatient at the delay of those inside to throw open the door to them, where now in the act of battering it down, and loudly cursing and swearing at the occupants of the dwelling. Mrs. Parker hastened to undo the bolts of the wing door, which, for some reason, the assailants had not touched; and when she got back to her sister, the latter was kneeling before the chair in the doorway, her rifle rested and pointing at the key.

"Go, Nancy—go, and heaven bless you!"

"And you, Sally!" sobbed the other, as she again kissed her and hurried away to the room in which her innocent children were still sleeping, undisturbed by the noise and unconscious of the danger.

"Halloo, outside there!" now called out Miss Price, in a loud tone; "what are you trying to do?"

"Break in, you witch!" cried out one of the robbers.

"Well, can't you wait for me to open the door?"

"Not unless you're quicker about it!"

"Well I can't get that door open; but t'other one is all right; come in that way will you?"

The pounding ceased, and a moment after a voice exclaimed: "Ah, here we are!" and as the door swung back a dozen men came crowding into the room.

The foremost had just barely got a glimpse of our heroine sighting her rifle and was in the act of springing aside to escape being shot, when she fired the whole charge directly into the keg of powder, which instantly exploded with a tremendous report, tearing the wing to pieces, considerably shattering the main building, killing ten of the midnight marauders—blowing heads, legs, arms and bodies in every direction. Of the five that now remained alive, two were wounded, and all so terribly frightened as to think nothing of so much importance as a hurried flight from the scene of the disaster.

The noble minded heroine herself was blown back across the kitchen, but fortunately was not killed, though seriously injured. Her sister found her in the darkness and confusion by her groans, and cared for her so tenderly afterwards that she finally recovered.

The explosion was heard for miles around; and the next day the news spread so rapidly, that before night at least fifty or sixty people were gathered at the farm, besides a small body of American troops; all of whom assisted in collecting and burying the dead villains, and tearing away the rubbish, and putting the house into as comfortable a shape as possible for the sisters who had resolved to remain where they were.

On being questioned as to why she did not fire the powder by a train, instead of shooting into it, Miss Price replied, that she feared it might fail, and she preferred risking her own life to make the thing sure and thus save her sister and the children.

Such noble heroism had many parallels during the War of the Revolution.

Plain Speech to Mothers.

Professor Simpson, of Edinburgh, who has had large and long experience in the medical treatment of mothers and children, gave a published address lately on matters of hygiene. He spoke most plainly to mother who send their children to the grave by exposing arms and legs, while other parts of the body are warmly dressed. Mothers, he continued, commit child-murder, and then wonder how God could be so unkind as to take away their darling. They not only murder their children, but in his opinion commit suicide themselves by exposing their own necks to the cold air. It was a puzzle which he could not understand, that woman should cut off the top of their dresses, and appear with bare bosoms in refined society, while that part of the dress which should protect the heart and lungs, and other vital organs, is trailing in the mud.

and the rest which modesty would conceal. The boundary is too changeable. More ought to be left to the imagination and less to be condemned by good taste. But if mothers and full-grown daughters insist on being the victims of fashion, children ought to be exempt from their insane and cruel requirements. What has fashion to do with children, or they with fashion?—*Philadelphia Ledger.*

Dry Goods.

The total value of the goods usually classed under this heading arriving at this port in 1867 was only eighty six million dollars, against one hundred and twenty-six million for the year 1866. To raise the value of these amounts to green-back currency, it is necessary to add 82 per cent.—50 per cent. for duties and 35 for premiums on gold. To these might be added 15 more for freight, insurance and other charges; making the currency cost of the goods just double what it appears to be. While the total landed at the port during the year was only eighty-million, the total thrown upon the market was \$91,242,975, showing a decrease of the stock previously left in bond of five million dollars.

There are no changes in the prices of leading articles since our last quotations, worth noting. Unbleached cottons of the better styles are firmly held, the supply not being excessive and the prospects of a rise in the price of the raw material leading to the conviction that an advance in fabrics will take place on the opening of the spring business. Bleached goods are in full supply, and prices do not show any tendency upward. Prints are a shade firmer in price, but the sales for the week have been very small. Muslin de laines are in moderate demand, but the transactions are on a limited scale. In Italians there is a slight improvement from the clothing manufacturers. Woollens of all descriptions are less active.

The trade in foreign dry goods is not in a very satisfactory condition. There is very little doing; the steamers bring but few invoices, and our large importers prudently hesitate to send our large orders until the prospects of 1868 take a more definite shape than they wear at present.—*N. Y. Independent, 9th.*

An exchange says that diphtheria in its early stage may be recognized by any person of ordinary capacity by two marked symptoms: the sensation of a bone or hard substance in the throat, rendering swallowing difficult and painful, and a marked feature is unpleasant smell of breath, the result of its putrefactive tendency. On the appearance of these symptoms, if the patient is old enough to do so, give a piece of gum camphor of the size of a marrow fat pen, and let it be retained in the mouth, swallowing slowly the saliva charged with it until it is all gone. In an hour or so give another; and at the end of a third, a fourth will not usually be required; but if the pain and unpleasant breath are relieved it may be used two or three times more, at a little longer interval, say two or three hours. If the child is young, powder the camphor, which can be easily done by adding a drop or two of spirits of powder, and blow it through a quill or tube into its throat, depressing the tongue with a haft of a spoon.—*New York Examiner.*

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