

# The Durham Tobacco Plant.

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## A MOTHER'S HEROISM.

A Story of our Forefather's Days.

Among the earliest settlers of Ossipee, New Hampshire, was a man by the name of Ruben Grey. Three years before we call the readers attention to him and his, he had come from the settlement in Dover, and built a substantial cabin on the south shore of the lake which gave the name to the settlement and town. Here, for a couple of months, he lived alone, with the late exception of three days when he had gone to the house of his nearest neighbor, three miles away, and engaged him to assist in building the walls of his cabin. This done he had returned, and Ruben Grey toiled on alone until the cabin was completed to his mind, and quite a little clearing had been made upon the lake. Then he turned his back upon the labor of his hands and once more trod the forest in the direction of the southern settlements; and, when after a few days he again faced the northward on his return, his wife and son accompanied him. After two days of toil they were safely installed in their new home, and had gone to work with a will to make things snug and comfortable. The land upon the margin of the lake was fertile, and the result of their toil was that it brought forth abundantly, while from the beautiful sheet of water outspread before them any quantity of the most delicious trout could be obtained, and for three years they enjoyed a season of peace and plenty unalloyed by danger from the red men, who often came long distances, even from beyond the Notch in the White Hills, which reared their heads away to the northward, to fish in the waters of the lake, as their fathers had done for ages and ages before the foot of the white man had ever left its imprint on the sands of the shore.

But now an ill-will had grown up between the white man and the red, and the air was thick with rumors of the outrages that were being committed by the savages. Several cabins of the more exposed settlers had been burned and their inmates either ruthlessly murdered or carried away captives to Canada, a fate almost as bad, for few of the women and children survive the long and tedious march through the wilderness. The red men although they came to fish in the lake, now and then, were seldom seen by the white settlers, and less frequent still was any friendly intercourse held between them.

One morning Ruben Grey left the cabin early, to be gone all day. It was his intention to visit the neighbor of whom we have before made mention, who lived three miles away, and southward from the lake. A few days before, this neighbor, whose name was Perkins, had worked for him, and this day had been appointed for an exchange of labor in settlement, Grey having agreed to perform some work for Perkins.

In these few days the rumors which had been long rife, had augmented, and signs of savage had been seen about the lake.

In taking his departure that morning, the settler felt ill at ease, and had it not been for disappointing his neighbor he would have remained at home. As he threw his ax over his shoulder he bade his wife and son—now a youth of ten years—to remain close by the cabin, and keep a good lookout for any danger that might threaten them. His rifle he left in the cabin for their greater protection, as he knew that in case of emergency his wife could use it in their defense. Repeating his caution as he crossed the brook which fell into the lake a little way from the door, he went over, and from the door way the mother and son gazed after him until he had disappeared in the forest, when they went about the usual employment of the day.

The first thing to be done was to milk the one cow they possessed, and when Mrs. Grey had done this, the boy Phillip drove her to the pasture but a short distance away, while his mother, mindful of the injunctions she had received from her husband, watched him until he had crossed the bars and returned to the cabin.

The day was a long one to Mrs. Grey and Phillip—the latter missing his

father's company very much, and perhaps more than he would have done had he been allowed to have fished, up the brook, as he was wont to do. Fearing that some harm might befall him in his father's absence, that the Indians might be lurking about the shores of the lake, she would not consent that he should for a moment leave her sight, and he, accustomed to obey, had borne his deprivation as best he could.

The sun was something less than an hour high above the tree-tops, when Mrs. Grey came to the door of the cabin, and glancing at it, called to Phillip, who was busy with his knife and some sticks making a dam across the brook. He at once obeyed the summons, and coming to her side, asked what was wanted.

"You may drive up the cow, Phillip. It is rather early, but I don't care to have you go high the woods when the shadows begin to fall: If she is out of pasture, do not try to find her. Let her go until morning, when your father will hunt her up."

"But I am not afraid of the Indians, mother," said the boy, proudly drawing himself up to his full height, as if he would have her see how much he had grown. "If she has got out where she did the other day, may I not go down as far as the great oak where father found her? The clover grows thick there, and it would do you good to see her swallow it down. I know the way—and I don't believe there is an Indian within a dozen miles of here."

"I think you had better not, Phillip. The woods down that way are thick and tangled, and danger might be near when you little thought. I hope she has not broken out, but if she has you had better let your father hunt her up in the morning. You know he said you must keep close to the cabin to-day."

Phillip did not entreat further, for he knew that his mother would not give her consent, so he turned away and went whistling down toward the pasture, and standing in the doorway, his mother watched him take down the bars and then run across the pasture toward a little grove of trees which had been left to afford a grateful shelter for their cow during the hot days of summer. Here was a deep hollow, into which he disappeared, and as he did not immediately emerge into view on the opposite side, she concluded that he had seen the cow in the ravine further down and so had gone in that direction.

At this moment some article of food she was cooking for supper demanded her attention, and re-entering the cabin, she remained there until the fire had died down but a few moments, when she again went to the door, and bending her gaze toward the pasture, listened intently for the sound of Phillip's voice calling out to the cow.

All was so silent about the place that she could hear the tiny ripples of the lake upon the shore and the chirping of the crickets in the grass close by, but no sound of her son's voice reached her ear. The pasture was small and he had plenty of time to have gone over it by this time, and she began to fear that he had disobeyed her, and gone in search of the cow, which must have broken from its inclosure. She waited a few moments longer and then threw her apron over her head and set out in pursuit of him.

She had reached a point about half way between the cabin and the bars, when a wild, piercing shriek in the well known voice of her child fell upon her ears, and which for a moment seemed to turn her blood to ice, her heart to stone, and to deprive her of the power of motion.

Again it was repeated, and this time the words came distinctly upon her ear. "Mother! mother! the Indians have got me!" and then there was the same breathless silence as before.

"Oh! Father in heaven, spare my child from the heathen loes," burst from the pale lips of the mother, as she strove to rouse herself from the great fear that oppressed her heart, and to burst the bonds which had deprived her of motion.

By a violent effort she was successful and took a few steps forward in the direction whence the sound had come.

"What can my feeble hand do to save

my child," she said, despairingly. How can I strive to wrest him from the terrible savages? Oh! Ruben, Ruben, that you were here to save our Phillip!

For a moment only did she give way to despair, and then a look of determination took its place, and turning she ran swiftly to the cabin, never pausing as the faint cry of Phillip, apparently at a greater distance than when he had called before, broke upon her ear.

For a moment she disappeared within and when she emerged from the cabin she bore her husband's rifle in her hands, while about her waist was his belt to which his hunting knife was attached, as well as powder-horn and bullet-pouch.

Leaving the door standing wide open, she set out at the utmost speed in the direction of the spot where she had last seen her child.

The bars of the pasture were down as she had seen him leave them, and passing through she soon gained the spot where he had disappeared into the hollow. A quick glance up and down revealed nothing, nor did a sound break the silence save the warbling of a robin on a bush close beside her. Going into the hollow, she beheld near its upper extremity, by the fence that here crossed it, their cow, and passing rapidly along in that direction she traced in the misty earth the footprints of her child, and about half way up, close by a clump of bushes she beheld the imprints of moccasins, and at once realized that Phillip's captor had here been concealed and had unexpectedly sprang out upon him. A trail which the savages had taken no pains to conceal, was easily traced in the moist earth, and the mother, almost frenzied by the loss of her child hurried along the hollow urged on by the hope of coming up with them, and in some way by her unaided arm, separating him from his captors.

From the impression made in the muddy earth she judged that the savages were three in number, and, after going on a few rods she could see no signs of her child's footsteps. She came to the conclusion that they had borne him away in their arms, he not being able to keep up to the pace they desired. This conclusion urged her on to greater exertion, and she followed with all the speed she could command, determined to save her child or scarce his fate. In a few moments the extremity of the hollow was reached, or rather that portion of it which was inclosed in the pasture. Here by the fence she saw a man kneeling quietly, and the animal raised her head and seeing her mistress at once started off for the cabin, while Mrs. Grey continued in the opposite direction.

"Phillip, Phillip!" How often was that name on the tongue of the mother, as she hurried on, and now she longed to shout aloud his name, but she prudently desisted, fearing to give warning to the savages that they were pursued. The sun went steadily down, and at last it was hidden beneath the treetops, and the gloom of night began to creep into the forest. Night was fast coming, and in the darkness how could she follow the trail, which even now cost her many precious moments, as she paused in uncertainty at a point where it was rendered obscure by the rocky nature of the ground; but much to her satisfaction, the trail turned abruptly toward the lake, and as the forest grew thinner more light from the rosy west was thrown on the scene, and the trail was again plainly discernible. On the shore of the lake was a narrow beach of white sand, and upon this the trail struck; and so plain were the footprints that there was no difficulty in following even after the light had died out of the west. With her husband's rifle firmly clutched, she hurried on, seeing nothing before or around her save the trail, and thinking of nothing save her child.

The moments lengthened into hours, and at last midnight came. The moon had risen and the trail upon the sand was as easily followed as in broad daylight, and still she toiled on, unmindful of fatigue or the dangers of her situation, but the way which had been so easy was now about to change. A huge cliff thrust itself far out into the lake, and the sandy beach led no farther in this direction.

At the foot of the cliff she paused for a moment and then began the weary ascent of the hill whence the rock thrust itself out. It was of considerable height, and several times she was obliged to rest through sheer exhaustion, but at last she stood upon the summit and gazed down the steep declivity before her. A thick forest covered the hill, reaching down to the water's edge, for the sandy beach did not extend in this direction beyond the cliff. The trail she had lost, owing to the rocky nature of the ground, and as she stood perplexed gazing about her in the darkness, she suddenly beheld a glimmering light shining amid the trees far below. A thrill of hope that she was close to her child, inspired her, and she cautiously began the descent.

Full ten minutes had elapsed before she reached the foot of the hill, and found herself but a short distance from the camp-fire, which now shone through the trees in a manner that showed it was being augmented by the keeping of a quantity of dry fuel upon it. The red flames shot upward, throwing out a red glow into the forest, and from the spot where she stood she could see the dark forms of the savages as they flitted about the fire preparing some food before they continued on their course.

That they would not remain so near the settlement through the night, after the outrage they had committed, she was well convinced, and if she would rescue her child it must be done at once; and if at last before they were prepared to resume their way, so with the caution which would not have disgraced a soldier long used to such warfare, she approached the camp and was soon so close upon them that she could behold all that transpired, while she was shielded from sight by the darkness and the trunk of a large tree, behind which she had taken refuge.

One of the savages was seated upon the ground a little apart from the fire, and close beside him was Phillip, placed in such a position that his slightest movement could not escape the eyes of his captor, and the mother's heart sunk within her as she saw his danger, from which there was but her feeble arm to rescue him. The bullet slumbering in the barrel of her husband's rifle would do for one of the savages, but would not do the other two before upon her before she could reload. The one guarding her boy should have this bullet, for if one of the others fell, he might at once avenge himself by that of Phillip's. Nothing would be gained by waiting; and with a prayer upon her lips for success and strength in this her great hour of trial, she brought the rifle to her shoulder, and taking deliberate aim, fired.

Loudly the report rang through the forest, and the savage, springing from the ground, stood erect upon his feet, and the next moment fell headlong upon his face a corpse, while Phillip with a half-frightened cry sprang to his feet, and looked eagerly about, as if debating in his mind in which direction the shot had come, and whither to flee for safety.

For a moment the two surviving savages seemed stricken with astonishment at this unlooked-for assault and death of their companion; and then one of them sprang toward Phillip with uplifted tomahawk, while the other turned toward the point whence the report of the rifle had come. Not a movement of the savages had escaped the attention of Mrs. Grey, though she was striving with all the haste possible to reload the rifle. A handful of powder had been poured into the barrel and she was driving down the wadding upon it, when she saw the savage springing toward Phillip. With a cry she bounded forward, missing the tomahawk sent at her head by the savage nearest her, and the next moment stood revealed in the fire-light to the gaze of both savages. The one rose to her and Phillip suddenly faced her with his tomahawk circling above his head, preparatory to giving it the fatal blow.

With a sudden thought, which to her seemed like inspiration, she presented the rifle, with the ramrod still remaining in the barrel, and pulled the trigger. A loud report followed, and the recoil was so great that the intrepid woman

was thrown violently backward, while the savage, with a howl of pain, fell to the earth with the ramrod driven completely through his body, while the force of the fall impaled him to the ground, where he remained howling most horribly.

Only for a moment was Mrs. Grey confused by the recoil of the rifle and the injury she received in falling. Springing to her feet just as the other savage, coming to avenge the fate of his companions, sprang toward her with uplifted tomahawk, completely at her mercy, as she had no weapon of defense, she expected every moment the fatal blow; but before the tomahawk could descend the report of a rifle rang out loud and clear close at hand, and the savage fell to the earth with a bullet through his heart, and the next moment, with a shout of triumph, Ruben Grey, followed by the son of the neighbor for whom he had been at work, quickly emerged from the gloom of the forest and clasped her in his arms, which were opened wide that they might include the little figure of Phillip, who was hanging about his mother's neck.

In a little time Mrs. Grey told him of what had occurred, and in return learned that her husband had come home with the youth who was to help him the next day, and finding the cabin deserted, had sought the trail and followed on just in time to strike the last blow in the battle which she had so valiantly sustained against such fearful odds.

Mr. Grainger smiled.

"My dear Polly, don't suggest that it was possible that she ever said a word against you in her life."

"You know she has."

"You take Mrs. Dashaway's word for it, my dear. And, upon my honor, I should a great deal sooner expect Mrs. Dashaway—"

"Oh, of course" and the point changed to a regular frown. "Just because she is my friend."

"I wish she wasn't, my dear, and I doubt if she is," said the illiglogical Tom. "But seriously, Polly, what earthly reason has Mrs. Howland to slander and abuse you? In the first place she knows nothing of you—"

"And in the second place, sir, she is a horrid, vulgar woman who lives next door to us, and can see everything I do and here everything I say. I wish she could hear me now. She is as jealous and spiteful and envious as she can be; and I know that she has said that I am young and flighty, and extravagant, and no more fit to be a married woman than a baby. There! And I won't ask her to my party, Tom, not if you go down on your knees for it. I can't help it if her husband is able to give you a start in your business. His wife is the worst enemy I have on earth, and she shall not come to the party, Tom! It she does I will leave the house. You ought to be ashamed to ask it," here the little bride broke down and ran sobbing out of the room.

Mr. Tom, left alone, scratched his left whisker with a rueful face.

"Now who would suppose that the little blue-eyed girl who thought just as I thought, and did just I wished, all through our courtship could develop in that? A woman engaged and a woman married are two very different things, I fear. And I must make some kind of excuse to Howland about this nuisance of a party. Mrs. Dashaway put the whole thing into my wife's head, from the beginning to the end, and if Mrs. Dashaway was at the other end of the world I know one man who would feel compelled to wear a weed on his hat. Heigh! I suppose I must give in—one has rows enough outside of home, and I want peace here. 'Let us have peace' by all means."

So the bridegroom went up stairs and made his excuses to the bride for venturing to take Mrs. Howland's part, and then went to his office, leaving her

to consult and plan with Mrs. Dashaway through the long morning of the supper and the ball. At lunch, however Mrs. Dashaway looked long and oddly at her friend.

"Goodness! Polly. What can be the matter with you? Your face is flushed as red as fire!"

"I don't know," said Mrs. Grainger languidly. "I have a terrible headache and my throat is very sore. But it will go off in time."

Mrs. Dashaway turned pale beneath her rouge and rose from the table.

"There—! At this moment I had forgotten a message for my dressmaker! I must run away this instant, my dear, if you will excuse me. No—don't come to the door. Go and lie down, and nurse that head and throat. 'Au revoir' my dear."

She hurried away without kissing her friend, as usual—without even shaking hands. But Mrs. Grainger scarcely noticed the omission, or the flighty hurry of the elegant widow's manner. Her head ached till she could scarcely see, and a strange, vague feeling was creeping over her mind, and she had to recall her thoughts forcibly from the strangest places and themes.

Finally she laid down in her dressing room. Her husband found her here at seven P. M., her face scarlet, her eyes wild, and her voice hoarse and tremulous, as she murmured and gibbered to herself about the party, and her dress. No party or dress had she poor woman. But the scarlet fever instead, which raged terribly just then, in New York, and which led her steps down to the very borders of the grave.

It was a long and weary time before consciousness and convalescence came together, to the invalid. But perfect health and her unsaddened heart won the battle at last, and she was able to sit up in bed once more, propped by pillows and holding her husband's hand in hers. He had neglected business and every thing else, to watch beside his darling, and was pale and haggard as a ghost. But she loved him better so than in the height of his manly beauty; and he had never been one half bar so much her own, as now that he had won her back from the very arms of death.

"And who has been my kind nurse, Tom?" she said suddenly. "All through the fever and the pain I was conscious that some one—a woman—was watching over me as tenderly as my own dear mother could have done. Who was it? Mrs. Dashaway?"

"Mrs. Dashaway scuttled away from you in a panic, the moment she saw what ailed you, and has never been near the house, or sent to ask for you, since!" was the indignant reply. "Here is your faithful nurse!"

And going into the next room, Mr. Grainger led a fair, portly, smiling lady, of fire and forty, to the bedside.

Mrs. Grainger stared wildly. It was her "worst enemy" who stood there.

"But I thought you hated me! I thought you said all kinds of things about me," she gasped out, too weak and too much startled to tell anything but the simple truth.

"Bless you dear I never said nothing more than that a baby was as fit to be married as you," said Mrs. Howland, with a jolly laugh. "And that's the truth, for you're nothing but a baby yourself, and that Mrs. Dashaway filled your ear full of such stories for her own ends and aims, my dear. If one likes you as well as I and my old man do, you won't have much trouble in this world, I think, for want of friends. So eat this jelly now, and then go to sleep like a good child, and your husband and I will sit here till you wake."

The little bride wondering but docile obeyed, and slumbered sweetly. A month after, and the grand party came off. Mrs. Dashaway was "conspicuous through her absence," and Polly didn't leave the house, though Mr. and Mrs. Howland were the guests most honored at the supper and the ball.

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