

WILMINGTON JOURNAL.

DEVOTED TO POLITICS, THE MARKETS, AGRICULTURE, FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC NEWS, LITERATURE, AND GENERAL INFORMATION.

DAVID FULTON Editor.

GOD, OUR COUNTRY, AND LIBERTY.

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June 18, 1845. 39-1y

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THE HERO WOMAN.

A Legend from George Lippard, Esq.'s Fourth Lecture on the 'Romance of the Revolution,' delivered before the William Wirt Institute.

In a thick wood, not more than half a mile from the Schuylkill, there stood, in the time of the Revolution, a quaint old fabric, built of mingled logs and stone, and encircled by a palisaded wall. It had been erected in the earlier days of William Penn,—perhaps some years before the great apostle of peace first trod our shores,—as a block-house, intended for defence against the Indians.

And now it stood with its many roofs, its numerous chimneys, its massive square windows, its varied front of logs and stone, its encircling wall, through which admittance was gained by a large and stoutly-built gate; it stood in the midst of the wood, with age-worn trees enclosing its veteran outline on every side.

From its eastern window you might obtain a glimpse of the Schuylkill waves, while a large casement in the southern front commanded a view of the winding road as it sunk out of view, under the shade of thickly-clustered boughs, into a deep hollow, not more than one hundred yards from the mansion.

Here, from the southern casement, on one of those balmy summer days which look in upon the dreary autumn, toward the close of November, a far-ner's daughter was gazing, with dilating eyes and half-clasped hands.

Well might she gaze earnestly to the south, and listen with painful intensity for the slightest sound! Her brothers were away with the army of Washington, and her father, a grim old veteran—he stood six feet and three inches in his stockings—who had manifested his love for the red coat invaders, in many a desperate contest, had that morning left her alone in the old mansion, alone in this small chamber, in charge of some ammunition intended for a band of brave farmers, about to join the hosts of freedom. Even as she stood there, gazing out of the southern window, a faint glimpse of sunlight, from the faded leaves above, pouring over her mild face, shaded by clustering brown hair, there, not ten paces from her side, were seven loaded rifles and a keg of powder.

Leaning from the casement, she listened with every nerve quivering with suspense, to the shouts of combatants, the hurried tread of armed men echoing from the south.

There was something very beautiful in that picture! The form of the young girl, framed by the square massive window, the contrast between the rough timbers, that enclosed her, and that rounded face, the lips parting, the hazel eyes dilating, and the cheek warming and flushing, with hope and fear; there was something very beautiful in that picture, a young girl leaning from the window of an old mansion, with her brown hair, waving in glossy masses around her face!

Suddenly she shouts to the south grew nearer, and then, emerging from the deep hollow there came an old man, running at full speed, yet every few paces, turning round to fire the rifle, which he loaded as he ran. He was pursued by a party of ten or more British soldiers, who came rushing on, their bayonets fixed, as if to strike their victim down, ere he advanced ten paces nearer the house.

On and on the old man came, while his daughter, quivering with suspense, hung leaning from the window,—he reaches the block-house gate—look! He is surrounded, their muskets are levelled at his head, he is down, down at their feet, grappling for his life! But look again!—He dashes his face aside, with one bold movement he springs through the gate; an instant, and it is locked; the British soldiers, mad with rage, gaze upon the high wall of logs and stone, and vent their anger in drunken curses.

Now look to yonder window! Where the young girl stood a moment ago, quivering with suspense, as she beheld her father struggling for his life now stands the old man himself, his brow bared, his arm grasping the rifle, while his grey hairs wave back from his wrinkled and blood-dabbled face! That was a fine picture of an old veteran, nerved for his last fight; a stout warrior, preparing for his death struggle.

Death-struggle? Yes!—for the old man, Isaac Wampole, had dealt too many hard blows among the British soldiers, tricked, boiled, cheated them too often to escape now! A few moments longer, and they would be reinforced by a strong party of refugees; the powder, the arms, in the old block-house, perhaps that daughter, herself, was to be their reward. There was scarcely a hope for the old man and yet he had determined to make a deep-ate fight.

'We must bluff off these rascals!' he said, with a grim smile, turning to his child. 'Now, Bess, my girl, when I fire this rifle, do you hand me another, and so on, until the whole eight shots are fired! That will keep them on the other side of the wall, for a few moments, at least, and then we will have to trust to God for the rest!'

Look down there, and see, a hand stealing over the edge of the wall! The old man levels his piece—that British trooper falls back with a crushed hand upon his comrades' heads!

No longer quivering with suspense, but grown suddenly firm, that young girl passes a loaded rifle to the veteran's grasp, and silently awaits the result.

For a moment all is silent below; the British braves are somewhat loath to try that wall, when a stout old 'Rebelle' rifle in hand, is looking from yonder window! Here is a pause—low, deep murmurs—they are holding a council!

A moment is gone, and nine heads are thrust above the wall at once—hark! One—two—three! The old veteran has fired three shots, there are three dying men, grovelling in the yard, beneath the shadow of the wall!

'Quick, Bess, the rifles!'

And the brave girl passes the rifles to her father's grasp; there are four shots, one after the other; three more soldiers fell back, like weights of lead, upon the ground, and a single red coat is seen slowly mounting to the top of the wall, his eye fixed upon the hall door, which he will force, ere a moment is gone!

Now the last ball is fired, the old man stands there, in that second story window, his hands vainly grasping for another loaded rifle! At this moment, the wounded and dying band below, are joined by a party of some twenty refugees, who, clad in their half-robber uniform, came rushing from the woods, and, with one bound, are leaping from the summit of the wall!

'Quick, Bess, my rifle!'

And look there—even while the veteran stood looking out upon his foes, the brave girl, for slender in form, & wildly beautiful in face, she is a brave girl, a Hero Woman—had managed, as if by instinctive impulse, to load a rifle. She handed it to her father, and then loaded another and another! Wasn't that a beautiful sight? A fair young girl, grasping powder and ball, with the ramrod, rising and falling in her slender fingers!

Now look down to the wall again!—The refugees are clambering over its summit—again that fatal aim—again a horrid cry, and another wounded man toppling down upon his dead and dying comrades!

But now look!—A smoke rises there, a fire blazes up around the wall; they have fired the gate. A moment, and the bolt and the lock will be burnt from its sockets—the passage will be free! Now is the fiery moment of the old man's trial! While his brave daughter loads, he continues to fire, with that deadly aim, but now—oh horror! He falls, he falls, with a musket ball driven into his breast—the daughter's out-stretched arms receive the father, and with the blood spouting from his wound, he topples back from the window.

Ah, it is a sad and terrible picture!

That old man, writhing there, on the oaken floor, the young daughter bending over him, the light from the window streaming over her face, over her father's grey hairs, while the ancient furniture of the small chamber affords a dim background to the scene!

Now hark!—The sound of axes, at the hall door—shouts—hurras—curses!

'We have the old rebel, at last!'

The old man raises his head at that sound; makes an effort to rise; clutches for a rifle, and then falls back again, his eyes glaring, as the fierce pain of that wound quivers through his heart.

Now watch the movements of that daughter. Silently she loads a rifle, silently she rests its barrel against the head of that powder keg, and then, placing her finger on the trigger, stands over her father's form, while the shouts of the enraged soldiers come thundering from the stairs.—Yes, they have broken the hall door to fragments, they are in possession of the old block house, they are rushing toward that chamber, with murder in their hearts, and in their glaring eyes! Had the old man a thousand lives, they were not worth a farthing's purchase now.

Still that girl—grown suddenly white as the handkerchief round her neck—stands there, trembling from head to foot, the rifle in her hand, its dark tube laid against the powder keg.

The door is burst open—look there!—Stout forms are in the doorway, with muskets in their hands, grim faces, stained with blood, glare into the room.

Now, as if her very soul was coined into the words, that young girl, with her face pale as ashes, her hazel eye glaring with deadly light, utters this short yet meaning speech—

'Advance one step into the room, and I will fire this rifle into the powder there!'

No oath quivers from the lips of that girl, to confirm her resolution; but there she stands, alone, with her wounded father, and yet not a soldier dare cross the threshold! Embrued as they are in deeds of blood, there is something terrible to

these men, in the simple words of that young girl, who stands there, with the rifle laid against the powder keg.

'They stood, as if spell-bound, on the threshold of that chamber!'

At last, one bolder than the rest, a bravo, whose face is half-concealed in a thick red beard, grasps his musket, and levels it at the young girl's breast!

'Stand back, or, by —, I will fire!'

Still the girl is firm; the bravo advances a step, and then starts back. The sharp 'click' of that rifle falls with an unpleasant emphasis upon his ear.

'Bess, I am dying,' gasps the old man, faintly extending his arms. 'Ha, ha, we foiled the Britishers! Come—daughter—kneel here; kneel and say a prayer for me, and let me feel your warm breath upon my face, for I am getting cold—O, dark and cold!'

Look!—As those trembling accents fall from the old man's tongue, those fingers unloose their hold of the rifle—already the troopers are secure of one victim, at least, a young and beautiful girl; for affection for her father, is mastering the heroism of the moment—look! She is about to spring into his arms! But now she sees her danger! again she clutches the rifle; and although her father's dying accents are in her ears—stands there prepared to scatter that house in ruins, if a single rough hand assails that veteran form.

There are a few brief terrible moments of suspense. Then a horrid sound, far down the mansion; then a contest on the stairs; then the echo of rifle shot and the light of rifle blaze; then those ruffians in the doorway fall crushed before the strong arms of Continental soldiers. Then a wild shriek quivers through the room, and that young girl—that Hero Woman, with one bound, springs forward into her brother's arms, and nestles there, while her dead father—his form yet warm—lays, with fixed eye-balls, upon the floor.

THE POTATO AND ITS DISEASES.
The London Examiner has the following article, headed 'Anticipation of the Potato Disease:—'

'In a note in Darwin's Temple of Nature, we find this remarkable conjecture:—

'Mr. Knight first observed that these apple and pear trees, which had been propagated for above a century by ingraftment, were now so unhealthy, as not to be worth cultivation. I have suspected the diseases of potatoes attended with the curled leaf, and of strawberry plants attended with barren flowers, to be owing to their having been too long raised from roots, or by solitary reproduction, & not from seeds, or sexual reproduction, and to have thence acquired these hereditary diseases.'

'The poetic text illustrative of this opinion is as follows:—

So, years successive, from perennial roots
The wire or bulb with lessened vigor shoots:
Till curled leaves or barren flowers betray
A waning lineage verging to decay;
Or till, amended by connubial powers
Rise seedling progenies from sexual flowers.'

'That the potato is an esculent, is the creature of cultivation, is quite certain. In Dr. Paris's Pharmacologia we find that

'Molina, in his history of Chili, speaking of the potato, says: 'It is indeed found in all the fields of this country, but the plants that grow wild, called by the Indians maglia, produce only very small roots of a bitter taste.' Dr. Baldwin also found the wild parent of the potato plant at Monte Video; and Mr. Lambert informs us that this statement has been confirmed by Captain Bowles, who not long since returned from the South American station; he says, 'It is a common weed in the gardens, bearing small potatoes, but too bitter for use.'

With regard to the notion that the disease of the potato may possibly arise from the cultivation of old and worn out varieties, without resorting to the method of obtaining new sorts from cultivation by seed, the Examiner does not seem to be aware that all this matter has been very thoroughly discussed by the agriculturists. Nor does the Examiner seem to know that from time to time, new varieties of the root, raised directly from the seed, are introduced, and the older ones abandoned, as no longer fit for cultivation. Yet these new sorts are subject to the potato disease as well as the old, though some contend that they are not affected by it in so great a degree.

As to the apple and pear and other fruits, the theory of Mr. Knight, that the varieties which have been cultivated for above a century by grafting, grow unhealthy, has long been familiar to cultivators, and at one time seemed to meet with very general reception. Lately, however, it has been controverted, with an appearance of much force of argument. In Downing's excellent book on Fruit Trees, the reader will find a summary of the facts and reasonings on the subject.

What Darwin calls the hereditary disease of plants; may be propagated as well by the seed, as by slips, or cuttings, or grafts. It is thought by gardeners to be pretty well ascertained that peach stones

from the fruit of unhealthy trees—for example, trees affected by the yellows—produce in turn trees liable to the same disease.—N. Y. Eve. Post.

THE GAME OF THIMBLES; OR, BEST TWO IN THREE.

Who has not heard of the game of Thimbles. For the edification of those who have been so fortunate as never to have seen it, we will succinctly describe it.

The sporting gentleman produces three common sewing thimbles and a small ball, and placing them upon his knee or some smooth surface, commences operations by rolling the little ball by his third finger under each of the thimbles, which are in a row, lifting first one and then another, as the ball approaches it, with his thumb and fore-finger, and passing it along from one to the other. When all is ripe, he suffers the ball to stop, half-disclosing half-concealing its resting place. Hands are then lifted, and the easy dupes make their bets as to the identical thimble under which the ball may be found. The strength of the game lies in the legerdemain by which the gamster removes the ball and places it under any thimble he may choose, after the bet is made.

Thousands of dollars have been lost at this game. About three years ago we took a trip upon one of the fine Western steamboats up Red River to the foot of the Raft. As usual, there was a large number of passengers on board, among them the celebrated Dr. B——, the inventor of the game of 'thimbles!' The Dr. frequently amused the passengers with several games—particularly one called 'Calculation,' which seemed to be his favorite, and brought him quite a revenue during the trip. The Doctor himself, was quite a subject of curiosity and study to us, having heard so much of his unrivalled shrewdness as a sportsman, and the vast amount accumulated by him by the little game of 'Thimbles. Indeed, it was said that he was the moving cause of several penal statutes in regard to gaming, having been enacted by this State and Georgia.

One evening after supper, it was insisted by some of the passengers that the Doctor should exhibit the game of 'Thimbles, which, with his usual modesty, he declined to do, protesting among other things that he had no thimbles. This difficulty was easily remedied, a messenger being despatched to the ladies cabin, soon returned with the requisite number. The Doctor made him a little ball of paper, and commenced the performance. At first he was quite unlucky—but he paid up punctually, and consoled himself with a favorite expression of his, that 'sometimes I am very severe, then again not quite so.'

Among the lookers on was a young gentleman from good old Connecticut, on his first visit 'South.' He was on his way to the head of navigation, with a pretty little stock of groceries, by way of trying his fortune in the Great West. He soon manifested considerable interest in the game, declaring he knew the thimble under which the ball might be found. The Doctor gave him a knowing wink, and desired him in a whisper 'not to tell.' But so often did our friend 'guess' right, that at last he laid aside all scruples of conscience, and desired to be permitted to bet a few dollars.

To this proposition the Doctor at first objected, declaring 'he did not like the young man's eye, it was too keen,' that he saw the ball, &c. This seemed to please 'Connecticut' very much and made him the more anxious to bet.

After much parley and a good deal of reluctance on the part of the Doctor, it was at last agreed that 'Connecticut' might bet a few dollars, 'just a few,' if he would allow the Doctor a little chance against two such piercing eyes as he had, by betting two to one. This being at length settled, our young friend put up his twenty dollars against the Doctor's ten. Hands off and all being ready, he lifted the thimble and sure enough there was the ball. The Doctor gave up the money and all enjoyed a hearty laugh at his expense. This was the largest bet which had been made that evening. The Doctor observed, 'sometimes he was not quite so shy.'

The ball and thimble were again put in motion—again all being ready our lucky friend proposed to bet—but the Doctor declared he must have some chance against such great odds as 'Yankee eyes,' and insisted on three to one, or thirty dollars to ten being made. This was also accepted—again the thimble was raised, and sure enough there was the ball. Our friend again pocketed another X, and again the 'social hall' rang with laughter at the Doctor's expense.

The thimbles were again arranged.—This time we observed, the game closely, as we thought from his repeated losses the Doctor was hardly entitled to that great reputation for cunning and sagacity which had ever been attributed to him. Now in the moving of the little paper ball, we thought we discovered the source of the Doctor's misfortunes, for becoming a lic-

tle unrolled a portion of the paper of which it was made, stuck out from under one of the thimbles. This our Connecticut friend plainly saw, and we presumed the Doctor, through old age, (now about 70,) had his sight so impaired as not to be able to see it, and could not, therefore, play his game with his accustomed adroitness.—But the tale was soon told. Our 'Yankee friend' proposed to double the bet 'having the thing so dead.' The Doctor impatient of repeated losses told him to make it hundreds instead of tens. This was done, and our friend bet three hundred dollars against one hundred dollars. (Just here we thought it a shame to take advantage even of a professional gamster's blindness, for the location of the ball was so evident.)

'The money up, 'Connecticut' was all impatient to realize his expectations and in great eagerness he raises again the thimble—and sure enough it was NOT there!!! He had reached the climax of the Doctor's expectations in regard to his ready cash and willingness to bet, and he could not win. We have seen many pictures of disappointment, but the appearance of that young man's countenance we can never forget. The laugh was now uproarious. As much as you have pitied, the poor dupe the laugh was irresistible—but the poor fellow, 'like the boy the calf run over, saw nothing to laugh at.'

He was a statue of amazed misery. The Doctor coolly pocketed his cash, while our friend stammered out his astonishment with the declaration that all was not right, that he had never bet before and had surely been taken in.

'Never mind,' says the Doctor, 'what's a few hundred dollars to a young man with your eyes? The ladies all admire them—I heard them speak of them to day—and you won twice out of three times—that's the best two in three any how.'

The Ladies Can Tell.—The editor of the Louisville Iris, on his way home the other night, picked up a very extraordinary piece of decoration belonging to some young woman. He appeared to be at a loss to know what to call it. We presume, however, that some of our female acquaintances could give him light on the subject. Hear him describe it:

'It is shaped, or rather was, a good deal like a recent half moon; some like an Indian-rubber life preserver, and some like a pig yoke; felt a little soft like, and was covered with bed ticking. We had nearly broke our neck over it, and as we never had any luck in our life, we thought may be we had found a treasure at last. We didn't know but it was a new way the banks have adopted of making remittances so as to prevent robbery, for the ugly thing had a string at each end so that in an emergency a man might tie it around him and carry it a short distance. With anxious hands, therefore, we seized our knife and tore into it, it ripped about six inches, and the first thing that protruded itself from the orifice was an old roundabout, and then, in rapid succession, three short shirts and two long ones; an old fur cap; a pair of breeches, old and ragged; the skirt of an old calico dress; a pair of old calico drawers, with fringed bottoms; four old night caps; two cradle blankets; one old leg-horn bonnet; one old morocco boot; two table cloths; ten small pieces of diaper, very much worn; an old piano cover; two long night-gowns; one ragged chemise; three quilted petticoats and six hippins. What on earth could these things have been? Do tell!

A Man with One Hundred and Forty five children.—The Worcester 'Herald,' published at New Hill, Maryland, gives the following account of an extraordinary man, now living in Somerset county, in that state.

'There is at this time, in a neighborhood in Somerset county, Md., a gentleman named Nelson, in his 91st year, who has 145 children, grand children and great grand children now living within the sound of his voice. In his own language, he can stand at his door on a calm morning, and make every one hear him with the exception of three.' He further says, reasoning from what has occurred, 'if his life is spared five years longer, he will have 200, instead of 145 children; immediately around him.' He yet retains the vigor and activity of youth—is fond of sports, and often amuses himself by hauling the seine, and sometimes stands the hours with bed effect from water, without experiencing any bad effect from whom he had lived in happy wedlock 69 years.

It has been 20 years since he has had any sickness and 40 years since he has required a physician for himself. He is quite a monument of antiquity, being perfectly familiar with the scenes of the Revolution, during which time he was engaged in the then profitable business of oystering, and supplied Gen. Washington's table with oysters at Mount Vernon until his death. He has frequently been in his house and received the money for the cargo from the great man's own hand. He says it was his custom never to buy less than fifty bushels, part of which his neighbors would get from him.

Ways of the West.—At Little Fort, there are being storage rooms sufficient to accommodate the large amount of produce coming forward at that thriving point, we learn, the 'Country House' being full, that a commencement has been made to fill the Chambers with wheat.—Chicago Journals.

Large Dividend.—The Atlantic Mutual Insurance Company of New York, have declared a dividend of 36 per cent on the net earned premiums of 1845.