

draw a breath of air that is not laden with the sighs of departed humanity, what wonder that when the close of the garish day has drawn the curtain over the vain pageant of the present, and the solemn, stately night shows us the realities which reign in and around us there should be a "solemn hum!" Rather might we hear a grand and tragic symphony, were our grosser sense sufficiently awakened.

There was no moonlight, but on the little rivulet that ran past the wall of the farmhouse, the starlight feebly sparkled. On such a night, a poet might well ejaculate:

"Oh, pity the heart that cannot sleep,  
When God Himself draws the curtain!"

Still she sat, fixedly gazing at the same spot on the darkened wall. The large watch-dog howled for a moment and then his cry sank to a groan and he became silent. As she listened, she fancied she could hear a low grating noise at the hall window below, and then a light flashed for an instant. She rose, quietly opened the door, went barefoot to the stairhead and listened. She was quite alone in that part of the house, the family and farm-servants being lodged in another wing of the straggling, old building. Feeling uneasy, she took up a heavy, old-fashioned candlestick, and, with that as her only weapon, she crept downstairs. In the vast dining-room, two men were busily engaged in cramming into a huge sack the silver dinner and tea service which stood on the massive oak sideboard, while a third held the lantern the flash of which had startled her at first. Clubbing the candlestick, she rushed boldly at the nearest robber, shouting loudly for assistance. With one blow, she stretched the burglar senseless on the floor, while the one who carried the sack rushed with it to the window and escaped. The third man, being armed with a heavy, short

crowbar, and seeing only a woman opposed to him, raised his weapon for a deadly blow. Mary caught it in a vice-like grasp, closed with the ruffian and a "fight to a finish" commenced. The burglar being a large, powerful man, Mary had seized him by the throat, and that iron grasp he vainly tried to loosen, though in his desperate struggles he dragged her across the room, beating her savagely over the face and overturning the chairs in the death-grapple. At last, voices and lights approached and a ray from a candle, flashing in through the window, showed the burglar a large carving-knife left, by ill-luck, on the table. With one desperate lunge, he swayed toward it and, crushing his opponent backward over the table, buried the long blade, quick as lightning, up to the handle, in her side, sprang to the window and leaped out, just as the farm-servants came rushing in through the door. He had not run many yards, however, before a shot from a blunderbuss stretched him dead on the grass, while the farmer, running hastily to Mary, caught her up, and tried to stanch the dark blood that welled from her side. They bore her up to her room, at her own request, and pending the surgeon's arrival, laid her on her little bed. She feebly turned toward where the portrait hung on the wall and, with one earnest, loving gaze at it, and a weary sigh—"at last!"—she expired. When the surgeon arrived he found her already stiffening. As he opened her dress to examine the wound, he started and said: "Why, this is a man!" And indeed, on that breast, which was *not* that of a woman, they found, hanging to a neat black ribbon, a lock of beautiful blonde hair, stained with blood, and—THE WATERLOO MEDAL!—the last sad relics of the lost love, youth and hope of Frank Farland!

*Byren H. Basinia.*

