

evergreens. I knew there was some coarse aftermath upon the hill that father was anxious to have put on the strawberry beds, and seeing Thomas go up there with his basket, I tied a scarf over my head, took another basket and went up to help him.

"As I passed up the hill I saw a man in the highway speak to him. I hesitated about going on, but the man made only a moment's pause and then went down the hill and was soon concealed by a turn in the highway.

"Who was that, Thomas?" I inquired.

"Oh, miss, it was a man from the mills, saying that my brother has had a bad fall on the dam and is bellowing for me to come and see him. His legs are broken entirely.

"What will you do?"

"I told the man I could not come to see him to-day—but if I went, miss, I would be sure to be back by eleven o'clock, if not earlier."

"You may go, Thomas, if your brother is hurt so bad. Papa will not be away long."

"But, my young lady—"

"Never mind me in such a case as this." I always was very tender-hearted. "You may go, and I will run right back to the house."

"He talked a few minutes more, was profuse in his thanks for my kindness, and then started down for the city. I took up the two baskets and went singing to the house.

"I sat an hour by the open window, enjoying intensely this being alone, and the quiet beauty of this cool autumn evening.

"Perhaps you will wonder at this," and the dimples played around her pretty mouth, "but little birds were singing a new song in my heart, and the quiet let me hear the sweet echoes.

"But directly I chided myself for becoming rather careless, as the road was a thoroughfare, and a chance straggler might surprise me. I arose, closed my window, and obeying some strange, impressive power, I walked through the hall into the library, took my father's key from its accustomed place, unlocked the desk, found the package of \$5,000, and placing it in my bosom, re-locked the door and returned to the sitting-room. I did not light a lamp; I had no need of a fire, as that from the kitchen stove warmed the sitting-room in this mild weather.

"The house was old-fashioned, very, with a fireplace in the sitting-room opening up into a chimney of capacity sufficient for a foundry stack. We had cheerful open fires later on; but the house being an ancestral pile, was getting somewhat dilapidated, and the partition separating the flues in the large chimney had fallen in. Men had been sent out to clear the rubbish and make repairs, but the work, half done, was suspended on account of the arrival of Captain Boswell and this important business affair.

"I would have enjoyed immensely to kindle a sparkling fire in the huge wide fireplace, but as affairs were I could not. So I mused in darkness for hours. I really took no heed of time, until my quick ear caught the sound of a footfall approaching, close up to the doostep, I could have taken my oath. It was so light an echo that I sprang to my feet, thinking that my Cousin Milly, absent when my father called, and returning later, had to come down to stay with me.

"I sprang up with a smile to answer her knock, albeit I was a bit jealous of her pretty face; but no knock came, and the echoes died out, and altogether I concluded I had de-

ceived myself in regard to them. Anyhow, I would light the lamp. I did so, and was startled to find it past ten o'clock. I was sufficiently aroused from my reverie to want a book from the library shelves. I took up my lamp and went singing into the room.

"I obtained the desired volume, stepped down from the stool, and—

"If ever anyone felt themselves dying I did at that moment. My song died on my lips, while a thousand thoughts seemed to flash into my mind in one instant. Involuntarily I gasped, and then with a strong effort of the will power for which I am famous, I took up the song again and sang it to the close.

"Among other things I remembered that the lock was off the library door for repairs. I remembered the lateness of the hour and the probability that all the people were in bed and asleep. I remembered the footsteps in the dooryard, and—there was a fresh, pungent smell of tobacco-smoke in the room. A scent of smoke that was not in the room when I was there and placed the package of money in my bosom.

"Do you wonder that my brain reeled and my heart stopped beating for an instant? Besides, whoever the robber was, he would soon begin work, not knowing how early my father and the Captain might return. And I should be murdered. Somewhere within a few yards or a few feet of me the robber assassin was concealed—either in the recess behind the cabinet, or under the long, draped, paper-strewn table.

"A faint sound outside nearly made me set down the lamp; still I had unconsciously left my first song and was singing—

'For his bride a soldier won her,  
And a winning tongue had he.'

"I knew that temporary salvation—power and liberty to leave that room, even—depended upon my appearing unconscious of the robber's proximity.

"I got out of the library and found myself in the sitting-room. A hasty glance at the door showed the key absent from the lock.

"Treachery!

"I wonder that this new revelation did not suffocate me. The man on the highway—the injured brother—Thomas had betrayed us. He had overheard about the money. A robber was in the house and another was outside. My retreat would be cut off. How thoughts ran through my mind! How would they kill me? Would I suffer long? At this instant I was sure that I heard a faint creak in the library door at the far end of the long hall.

"One swift, despairing glance around me, one wild idea of escape, and I extinguished the light upon the table, and, crouching in the fire-place I rested one foot upon the andiron, and swung out the iron crane, stepped the other foot upon the strong support and rose up into the flue. Something touched my head. Thank God! It was the rope with which the dislodged brick had been hoisted out. Grasping this carefully with my hands I held myself like a wedge in the opening. If I had envied large, noble-looking women before, I now had reason to be thankful for my diminutive form and ninety odd pounds of avoirdupois.

"I had little time, however, to think of anything except the imminent danger of knocking down a fragment of brick or mortar, and thus discovering my hiding-place. The clock began with sonorous peals to strike eleven. Under cover of its echoes there were quick, soft steps in the hall, and the