

# THE WESLEYAN.

"HOLD FAST THE FORM OF SOUND WORDS."

Scripture.

VOLUME I. HALIFAX, N. S., MONDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 11, 1839. NUMBER 25.

## NARRATIVE.

### JUVENILE COURAGE AND PATRIOTISM.

INSTANCED IN CANADA, DURING THE DISTURBANCES AT THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR 1837.

TIMES of peril and strife are not without their uses. It is at such periods that the more sublime virtues are elicited, serving at once to ennoble the human character, and to stimulate those who come after to an equally honourable course, when duty to their country demands their exertions. It is true likewise, that such periods bring to view the darker portion of our nature; the base passions and selfish devices of the heart are developed, as well as those which appertain to the better part of our being: and times of commotion may truly be said to exhibit beacons to shun as well as models for imitation. The following brief narrative contains instances of both; the good however being the subject matter, and the bad incidentally. It consists of well authenticated facts, and whilst the conduct of the high-spirited damsels is worthy of all praise, it must be evident that loyal chivalrous feelings must have pervaded the hearts of the parents from whom they have learnt so noble a bearing in difficult emergencies.

CHARLOTTE and CORNELIA are the daughters of Captain P. DE GRASSE, a military officer of long experience and tried loyalty, residing in a retired situation a few miles distant from the city of Toronto; and it will be seen that the same patriotic feelings which animated his bosom were carefully cultivated in the hearts of his children. On the memorable 10th of December last, Captain De Grasse having accidentally heard that the rebels proposed to possess themselves of Toronto, he felt himself called upon promptly to leave all domestic ties and comforts; and confiding the protection of his family to the Arm that was mighty to save, he proceeded at 11 o'clock at night to the city, in order to take up arms in its defence. His daughters, the elder of whom had not completed her fifteenth year, resolved to accompany him and see him safe to the city, that they might relieve the anxiety of their mother; and with some difficulty obtained his permission to execute so perilous a design.

It was a beautiful moonlight night when they commenced their journey, a considerable portion of which was through the bush, or uncleared country. Between Hattwell and Berniett they fell in with the notorious Matthews and his party, forty in number, who were advancing in two files. Captain De Grasse was now in imminent danger from which he would not have escaped, but the presence of mind of Charlotte saved them. She suddenly took to the left file, and by paddling through the mud she came in contact with Matthews' foot tracks, and attracted his notice; by which means Captain De Grasse and his other daughter passed unobserved. Charlotte was allowed to pass without obstruction. At length about one o'clock the party arrived at Toronto, where they found all in alarm and commotion, guns were heard firing in all directions, and all the preparations for immediate hostilities were at hand. Notwithstanding these omens of danger, the youthful heroines determined to return home, even at that untimely hour of the night. The

moon continued to give her light until they reached *Arthur's Distillery*, after which they had to encounter all the terrors of darkness, and the fears of falling into the hands of rebels known to be disseminated in all directions of the vicinity. All these however they escaped and reached home about four o'clock in the morning.

On the following day (Tuesday) the sisters went to Toronto, carrying with them the information of the proceedings of the rebels at the *Don*, and they returned in the evening after having enquired for their father. On Wednesday they again succeeded in crossing the dreadful bush which separated their home from the city. Their father was that day on duty at the Parliament house; but some one had told Cornelia that he was at the advance post, at the turnpike in Yonge street, where indeed he would have been had it not been for the temporary indisposition of Colonel M—, which made the alteration necessary. Cornelia not finding her father at the post described, and perceiving the general terror on every countenance, in consequence of the report that the rebels were 5000 strong, she promised to proceed *alone* to Montgomery Tavern, their head quarters, and ascertain the truth or falsity of the rumour. As she passed through the rebel lines all seemed amazed at seeing so little a girl on a fiery poney coming fearlessly among them, and she could bear them enquiring of each other who she was. Thus she reached the wheelwright's, adjoining Montgomery, without molestation; and after enquiring the price of a sledge of particular dimensions, and promising to give the wheelwright an answer the following day, she was about to return to the city, when suddenly three or four men seized her bridle, exclaiming, "You are our prisoner!" By these men she was detained nearly an hour, waiting the return of M'Kenzie. All at once a general hurraing was heard, and M'Kenzie appeared, apparently elated. He cried, "Glorious news, we have taken the Western mail!" Then followed the coachmen and passengers, prisoners. The congratulations of the rebels and their crowding round their captives caused some confusion, and relaxed the vigilance of her guards, and Cornelia taking advantage of the opportunity, whipped her poney and made her escape, although pursued and fired at several times.

After ridding herself of this party, she was again fired at from *Watson's*, and was summoned to surrender, but this seemed only to give additional strength to her resolution, and at length she reached the city, bringing the news of the robbery of the public mail, and describing the numbers of the rebels to be greatly exaggerated, many of them to be mere boys armed with club sticks, few possessing guns or rifles, chiefly carrying long poles with spikes on the ends, and the people having little or no ammunition.

In the meantime, the other sister Charlotte had been detained by the loyal party at the market house, when one of the officers begged of her to have the kindness to take a despatch of the greatest consequence for the safety of the town, as they had not a horseman to send out. She complied with the request, and carried the despatch some distance on the Kingston road, where she met the picquet, and returned with the answer to the city. After which she set out on her return home in the evening. When near the corner of

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