

left of the bridge, about fifty yards from the river bank, he would see a fine memorial stone to the memory of the killed at Beaver Dams.

Not such was the valley nor such the road in 1812, when Laura Secord essayed her journey of patriotism and mercy. The whole of the valley was a black swamp traversed by innumerable creeks, full of wild creatures, and across which no path led. The road was a quagmire, and, moreover, was not open to peaceful travel. To have pursued a direct route to Fitzgibbon at DeCew's would have been a trying and toilsome journey indeed, but the delicate woman, the mother of four little children, was forbidden even that. The enemy's pickets were out on all the roads; she would have to travel through the swamp, climb the heights at Twelve-Mile Creek, push her way through the beech woods, and reach DeCew's from the back. The distance involved was the smallest item of the terrible journey. The thickets of the swamp, with its dense underbrush, the lurking-places of the wolf, the wild-cat, the bear, and the rattlesnake; the pathless wilderness with its oozy bottom, its solitude, its terror, these were the real hardships. Even the mountain, its steep sides, its brawling stream, its dark mantle of virgin forest, was not so terrible, for, once upon it, she might meet a British picket; she did not count on Indians, a sufficient terror in themselves if come upon unawares.

But duty had to be done, and Laura Secord did it. Leaving her home, her sick husband and young children—not without many a scalding tear, we may be sure, though all signs of agitation had to be concealed—the brave woman set forward on her journey, all unprepared for it indeed, for she did not dare alter her usual early morning attire by one iota, and had to circumvent three American sentries before she reached St. David's, one at her own gate, where the pretence of a strayed cow sufficed, the others by the true story of a sick brother at St. David's.

At St. David's she entered the swamp, through which she guided herself by those signs of the points of the compass known to most settlers in those times. But she lost herself more than once, and the moon was