

way through thick, tangled underbrush, while black flies and mosquitoes innumerable swarmed about her. Under such circumstances a ten-mile walk is considered a good day's work for a man,¹ but Laura had covered nineteen miles in that time. At sunset she found herself on the bank of a swift stream—the twelve mile creek. It grew dark, wolves howled in the distance; but, nothing daunted, she clambered on hands and knees along a mossy log which overhung the stream, and, crossing, she found herself at the foot of Beechridge, up which she had a hard, fatiguing climb. When the moon rose she had reached the Indians who formed the vanguard of Fitzgibbon's little force. The rest of the story must be told in her own words: "As I approached they all arose with one of their war-yells, which indeed awed me. You may imagine what my feelings were to behold so many savages. With forced courage I went to one of the chiefs, told him I had great news for his commander and that he must take me to him or they would all be lost. He did not understand me, but said: 'Woman! what does woman want here?' The scene by moonlight to some might have been grand, but to a weak woman certainly terrifying. With difficulty I got one of the chiefs to go with me to their commander. With the intelligence I gave him, he formed his plans and saved his country."

When Laura reached headquarters, her skirt and jacket were in tatters, her hood had been lost in the forest, her shoes were worn off her feet. Lieut. Fitzgibbon was perfectly amazed at the courage and daring of the noble woman who had undertaken and successfully accomplished such a dangerous expedition. But his gratitude exceeded his astonishment when he found what an important service she had rendered. Every attention was shown her; for, he says, "Mrs. Secord was a person of slight and delicate frame, and made the effort in weather excessively warm, and I dreaded at the time she must suffer in health in consequence of fatigue and anxiety, she having been exposed to danger from the enemy, through whose line of communication she had to pass." An escort was detailed to conduct her to a friend's house three miles distant "where (she writes) I slept right off, for I had journeyed on feet twenty miles and safely. God be praised."

The attack the next morning (June 24) on Lieut. Fitzgibbon's outpost and its defeat are matters of history. The little force was placed

See Coffin's *Chronicles of the War*.