

TERMS OF PUBLICATION.

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Selected Poetry.

THE PRICE OF TRUTH.

Truth is dearly bought. The common truth, such as men give and take from day to day, is the common wealth of easy life, blown by the careless wind across our way.

Truth is the market, at the current price, of the smile, the jest, the perchance the bow; with no tales of daring or worth.

Sometimes even the surface of the soul.

Truths are greatly won. Not formed by chance, Not washed on the breath of summer dream; Not grasped in the great struggle of the soul, Had battling with adverse wind and stream.

Truth in the general heart, "mid corn and wine; Not in the merchandise of gold and gems; Not in the world's gay hall of midnight mirth; Not in the blaze of regal diadems.

Truth is the day of conflict, fear and grief, When the strong hand of God, put forth in might, Struggles us the subsoil of the stagnant heart, And blithely the imprisoned truth-seekers to the light.

Truth from the troubled spirit, in hard hours Of weakness, solitude, perchance of pain; Truth springs, like harvest, from the well-ploughed field, And the soul feels it has not wept in vain.

Miscellaneous.

STAPLEFORD GRANGE.

I heard the following narrative at a dinner-party in a country house about five miles from the place where the events related occurred, and it was related to me by the chief actress in it, Miss Miles—pretty, lady-like girl of twenty, the daughter of the rector of the parish in which Stapleford Grange is situated:

It was the Saturday afternoon before Christmas-day, nearly two years ago, when I was sitting on our squire's fish-pond. We had been eating some dinner, and I was not till the winter daylight was beginning to wane that I had entirely forgotten to do a commission my mother had given me in the morning. This commission was to walk to the Grange, a big house, and bespeak some geese for dinner on New Year's Day. My mother said, decidedly, "Those geese must be ordered today, Cissy," so I knew that I could have it off; although the Grange was a mile off, though it was very cold, and darkness was coming on, and although I was terribly afraid of a big black dog which I had seen just in front of the Grange back-door.

"Who'll go with me to the Grange?" I asked quickly, as the remembrance occurred to me, sitting down and beginning to unstrap my skates. "I've forgotten all about the geese, and mama said I was to order them today."

No one answered. The next day was Sunday, and it might thaw before Monday. Every boy, big or little, seemed laudably anxious of taking the most of present opportunities.

"I won't go by myself," I called out, in a pathetic tone; "it would be quite dark when I got home again."

"Tell the truth, Cissy," called out Charlie, a quick, good natured boy of fifteen, "and let your friend of Jip. Never mind; I'll be with you, if you must go." And he came on the bank, and proceeded to do as his skates.

Thanks to all my brothers, I was a prettily good runner, and we sped across the fields, and through the narrow lane leading to the Grange, as fast as possible. When we got to the last field, which joined the Grange, we slackened pace a little, and when we got into the big courtyard it was walking slowly and stately.

"How dreadfully lonely it looks," Charlie said, almost with a shiver at the dreary aspect of the place, which had been a grand gentleman's house forty years ago, but had been suffered to fall almost ruinous. "I am glad I'm not Mrs. Johnson, particularly as she has no children, and I should have to keep her company when Mr. Johnson is away."

"Well, don't you stop and prose to her about a time, Cissy, do you hear?" retorted Charlie, good-humoredly.

"I don't greet us with his usual noisy greeting, and there was no sound of any kind about the place except the gabbling of some turkeys in the rear of the farm-buildings. We went up and knocked at the door, and when I turned round, I observed that Jip's kennel, which stood exactly opposite to a line with the front of the house, was empty.

"Where can Jip be?" I said, "I thought he never let him loose." And I walked a few steps, and became aware that the dog's chain and collar were lying on the ground. I stood for a moment wondering, while Charlie, getting impatient at Mrs. Johnson's non-appearance, knocked again at the door. Suddenly some marks of blood on the flagged path led me to the kennel, where I arrested my attention.

"What can it be, Charlie?" I said, in a whisper.

"I don't know," Charlie returned, thoughtfully. "Poor Jip come to grief, perhaps?" And Mrs. Johnson doesn't come, I think, on a voyage of discovery; stay here and come back; and he pushed the door open.

"No, let me go to," I said, hastily, half frightened. I am a coward at the sight of blood.

Well, don't make a row, then," and we entered together.

There was a big blazing fire in the grate,

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which showed that on the table the tea-things were set for tea; and the kettle was hissing away merrily, and some tea-cakes stood to keep warm on a low stand before the fire. Every thing looked snug and cosy. Evidently Mrs. Johnson had prepared every thing ready for tea when the farmer should return from D. market; and was now gone up stairs to "clean" herself.

I had time to make all these observations over Charlie's shoulder, before he gave a sudden start, and strode with a low exclamation to a bundle of clothes which lay at the further and darker side of the kitchen, on the smooth stone floor. A bundle of clothes it looked like, with Jip lying asleep beside it in a very strange attitude.

I shall never forget the horror of the next moment. Huddled up, evidently in the attitude in which she had fallen, lay Mrs. Johnson, with a gaping wound across her throat, from which the blood was still trickling, and Jip, with a large pool of blood near his head, lay dead beside her.

I stood for a moment, too paralyzed with horror—such intense, thrilling horror, that only any one who has experienced such a feeling can understand it—and then, with a low scream, I sank on the floor, and put up my hand to try and hide the horrible sight.

"Hush!" whispered Charlie, sternly, taking hold of my hands, and forcibly dragging me on to my feet again; "you mustn't make a sound. Whoever has done this can't be far off. You must run home, Cissy, as hard as you can. Come!"

He dragged me to the door, and then I turned sick all over, and tumbled down again. I felt as if I could not stir another step.

"Yes, yes, Cissy, I can't stir," I said. "Leave me and go without me."

"Nonsense! Try again."

I tried again, but it was no use; my legs positively would not move, and precious time was being wasted.

"You fool!" Charlie said, bitterly and passionately. How was a boy of fifteen to understand a woman's weakness? "Then I must leave you. It's Johnson's money they no doubt want. They wouldn't murder if they could help it, and Johnson will be back directly."

"Yes, yes, Cissy," I said, understanding that he wanted to fetch help before the farmer came. "I will hide somewhere."

"In the kennel there," he said, looking round quickly; "and don't stir."

He pushed me into poor murdered Jip's kennel, and then he disappeared, and I was left alone in the gathering darkness with those two prostrate forms on the kitchen floor as my company, and perhaps the murderers close at hand.

I combated the faint feeling which Charlie could not understand by pinching my arms and sticking pins into them, and after a few judicious tortures of this sort, the sick feeling went off, and I could think again. "I will take off my boots," I thought, after a moment. "They make such a noise, and I may have to move; for already a glimmering pain had rushed across my brain of how I might warn Johnson. So I rose a little from my crouching position, unlaced them, and slipped them off. I had barely done this when I heard the sound of voices, and the sick trembling feeling came on so strongly, that the pin torture had to be again applied. In another minute three men came out of the back door, and I could distinctly hear every word of their conversation.

"He's late, I think," said one. "If he doesn't come soon, we must go; that girl will be home soon, I heard the old woman tell her not to stop."

"What's it signify?" said another. "We can soon stop her mouth."

"It isn't worth so much blood, Dick," said the third. "We've only got fifty pounds by this, and the farmer'll not have more."

"He ought to be coming by now," said the first, anxiously, coming a step or two nearer the kennel. "Hallo! What is that?"

The tone made me turn sick again. Had Charlie found help already? No. The three men were standing close to the kennel, and during the moment's silence that followed the man's exclamation I remembered that I had dropped my muff. I tried to stop the hard, quick thumping of my heart, which I felt certain they must hear, and then, as if fascinated, I raised my head from my knees, for till that moment I had been crouching at the furthest end of the kennel, and saw a hairy, ferocious-looking glowering in at the entrance of my hiding-place. I tried hard not to scream, and I succeeded; but in another moment I should have fainted if the face had not been taken away. To my utter astonishment, as the face disappeared, its owner said:

"I thought some one might be hiding. That's a lady's trumpery. What can it mean?"

Evidently I had not been seen, thanks to my dark dress and the gathering twilight. I breathed freely now; unless something very unforeseen occurred, I was safe.

"Some one has been, and has dropped it," a voice said quickly. "That's all on account of your cursed foolery, Dick," it went on angrily. "Why couldn't you stop at the door, as I told you?"

"Well, let's do something now," the third said, anxiously, "or we shall be having some one here."

The three men then went back into the house again, and I could hear them speaking in low tones; presently the voices grew louder, and they were evidently quarreling. In another minute they came out again, and from what I could hear, they began to search in the farm-buildings and out-houses for the owner of the muff.

"There's no one here," at last one called out. "They must have gone away again. Go to the gate, Bill, and see if any body is coming that way."

After a moment, Bill returned to the other two, who were now standing talking in low whispers at the back of the kennel, and said:

"No, there's no one coming." And my heart sank as I thought how long it would be before succor could arrive.

"The fellow's late," one of the others said, after a minute or two; "but we had better be on the watch now. Mind, both of you, that he's down from his gig before he sees us."

They walked away along the line of house toward the other entrance by which Mr. Johnson would come; and I, thinking they had gone to take up their hiding-place, put

my head cautiously out of the mouth of the kennel, and looked round.

Surely I could reach the house without being seen, I thought, and if I could but reach the big, ruinous drawing-room, which commanded a view of the fields the farmer would cross, I might be able to warn him from the fate which awaited him. I must warn him if I could, it was too horrible that another murder should be committed.

I was out of the kennel and in the kitchen before I recollected that I should have to pass close to the murdered women before I could gain the door leading into the hall, which I must cross to gain the drawing-room. I shuddered as I passed the dead and drew near to the horrible scene; but, to my utter surprise and no little terror, Mrs. Johnson had vanished! The dark gleaming pool of blood and the dead dog were still there, but the huddled up bundle of clothes was gone.

What had they done with it? In spite of the urgent necessity there was for immediate action, I stood motionless for a minute, hesitating to cross the dimly-lighted hall. Suppose it should be there. I had never seen death before, and the thought of again seeing the dead woman looking so ghastly and horrible with that great gaping wound across her throat, was at that moment more terrible to me than the thought of her murderer's return.

While I stood hesitating, a shadow passed across the first window, and looking up quickly, to my horror I saw the three men in another moment pass the second window.

I had no time for thought. In another minute they would be in the kitchen. I turned and fled down the passage and across the hall, rushing into the first open door, which happened to be the drawing-room door, and instinctively half closed it behind me as I had found it. Then I glanced wildly round the bare empty room in search of shelter.

There was not a particle of furniture in the room, and it was quite empty except for some apples on the floor, and a few empty hampers and sacks at the further end. How could I hide?

I heard the footsteps crossing the hall, and then, as they came nearer, with the feeling of desperation I sped noiselessly across the room, laid down flat behind the hampers, and as the door opened, threw an empty sack over me. I felt I must be discovered, for my head was totally uncovered; and I watched them fascinated, breathless, from intense terror. They walked to the window, saying, "We shall see better here," and looked out, presently all exclaiming together, "He's coming now; that black spot over there," and, without glancing in my direction, they left the room again. I was safe, but what could I do to save the farmer? Surely Charlie must be coming with help now, but would he be in time? I must try and save him, with the conviction that impressed itself upon me in a lightning thought, and as it crossed my mind I sprang to the window. All thought of self vanished, and with the urgency of what I had to do, I was only eager—nervously, frantically eager—to save the farmer's life.

They say that mad people can do things which seem impossible to sane ones, and I must have been quite mad with terror and fright for the next few minutes.

Seven feet below me, stretching down the slope of the hill, was the garden, now lying in long polished ridges, with the frozen snow on the top of each of them, and at the bottom of the garden was a stone-wall four feet high. Beyond this, as far as the eye could reach, extended the snow-covered fields, and coming along the cart-road to the left was Mr. Johnson in his gig.

I threw open the window, making noise enough to alarm the men if they heard it, and sprang on to the window-ledge, and then, tearing off my jacket, threw it on the ground, and shutting my eyes, jumped down. The high jump hurt my wrists and uncovered feet dreadfully, but I dare not stop a moment. I rushed down the garden, tumbling two or three times in my progress, and when I came to the wall, scrambled over it head foremost. The farmer was just opening the gate of the field I was in, and I made straight toward him, trying to call out. But I could not utter a word; so I flew across the snow, dashed through the brook, careless that the bridge was a few feet further down, and when I rushed up to Mr. Johnson's side, I could only throw up my arms and shriek out "Murder!" just as a loud report rang out through the frosty air, and I fell forward on my face.

"And were you hurt?" I asked, as she paused.

"Yes, a little. Look, here is the scar," and she raised the flowing fold of tulle from her soft white arm, and pointed to a white oval-shaped scar.

"And Mrs. Johnson?" I asked.

"The girl's face became very grave."

"She was quite dead. The men had put her under the dresser, which explains why I did not see her as I passed through the kitchen, and the poor husband went away directly afterward. The whole house is uninhabited now. Nobody will leave there, and of course it is said to be haunted. I have never been there since that day, and I think I shall never dare to go there again."

The girl stopped for the gentleman had just come from the dining-room, and one, tall and black bearded, who had been pointing out to me by his hostess as the Squire of Stapleford, and Cicely Miles's betrothed, now came up to her, and laying his hand on her white shoulder with an air of possession, said tenderly, "What makes you look so flushed, Cissy? Have you been transgressing again?"

"Yes, Robert. Mrs. Saunders asked me, to tell Mr. Dacre," she answered.

"And you will be ill for a week in consequence. I shall ask Mr. Dacre to write the story, to save another repetition of it. You know we wish you to forget all about it, dearest."

"It was too horrible for that," she said, dimly. And then the Squire turned to me and made the request, of which this tale is the fulfillment.

THAT OUR LIVES MAY BE RIGHT, we are to put our hearts under right influences; and this can be done in almost numberless ways.

WOOD-SAWYER'S SOLILOQUY.—"Of all the saws I ever saw to saw with, I never saw a saw to saw as this saw saws."

Three Nights in a Robber's Den.

BY ARTHUR ANCHUT.

I had left Rocky Steep behind me, and we proceeded at a rapid rate in the direction of Rathstone, which place I expected to reach at nightfall, when upon turning a bend in the road, I came upon a weary-looking and gray old man. He was plodding slowly along, a bundle hanging on a stick slung over his shoulder, a slouched, weather-stained, felt hat covered his gray head, and tattered garments clinging mercifully around his shrunken and attenuated body.

As I approached he turned his head and cast a sharp and grey eye upon me, run it quickly over my horse and person; and then, as if fearing his scrutiny would be detected, he turned away his eyes and plodded slowly on. In a moment I had reached his side, and looking down at I checked my steed to a walk, I saluted him with:

"A good day, friend. Have you traveled near a score of miles since sunrise, a good step for an old man like me to do, stranger," and he looked up at me, frankly with a peculiar smile on his dark and withered face.

"You must have moved at a sharper gait than that to cover so much ground," I answered.

"Neither slower nor faster, stranger; steady walking makes its mark. Why don't you buckle your girth, stranger?"

I looked down as he spoke, but from my position could not see the difficulty he mentioned.

"Wait a bit and I'll fix it."

I drew up my horse, and he, laying down his stick and bundle in the road, approached my animal, and grasping my girth proceeded to fumble around it. Suddenly he grasped me by the ankle, and with a mad wrench and a heave, hurled me from the saddle; then springing upon my breast, grasped me by the throat and sought to throttle me. I now knew he was not the character he pretended to be.

Through a trill surprised, I did not for a moment lose my presence of mind. I gathered all my powers for a struggle, which, to me, was for life or death, for well I knew that the villain with whom I was engaged, was one of the many assassins that frequented the deserted back roads with which the outskirts of Jersey then abounded.

I had in my saddle bags and about my person a large amount of bank notes and gold placed in my hands as collector of the house of Stenworth & Co. I was likewise well armed for the present my arms were useless. I therefore held out plenty of inducements to robbers, and one, at least seemed determined to profit by it.

Our struggle for a few moments was fierce and wild. The robber seemed possessed with demon strength, and he used it with reckless ferocity; but the assassin fought for gain—for life. He was over-matched, for with a herculean force I hurled him over, and forcing my neck with a mad effort from his clenched hands, I placed my hand upon his face, planted my knee upon his breast, and then seizing him by the neck, I threw him upon the hard, rocky road, stunning him instantly.

In a few moments I had him securely bound, and slinging him across the saddle, I mounted behind, and rode as rapidly as my burden would permit, in the direction of Rathstone. I was anxious to reach that place, for there I had agreed to meet a few friends—gay boys—with whom I had promised to spend a portion of my time before I should return to New York.

I had proceeded, however, but a few miles when the sky grew dark and I heard the low rumbling of distant thunder. In a few moments large drops of rain came pattering down, and the trees that lined the roadside swayed heavily in the breeze. A great storm was coming on. I looked round for a place of shelter, and began to debate within myself whether or not I should give liberty to my prisoner, I desisted, standing from the road a quarter of a mile distant, a very straggling looking dwelling, and in that direction I turned my weary beast.

The storm was now at its height, and the rain was pouring fiercely down as my horse galloped his way through the fast increasing rivulets. In a few moments I had arrived near the house, the appearance of which nearly induced me to continue my journey. The coming darkness, however, determined me; so turning to the door I dismounted, and lifting my prisoner to the ground—the rain had now revived him—I knocked lustily for admittance.

While waiting I looked about me at the bleak and dismal prospect. The house, or tavern as it proved to be, was old and weather-stained, some distance from the road, half surrounded by broken and rotten trees. On one side a steep ledge of rock, which cast a deep gloomy shadow upon the tavern, on the other dark lonesome woods. Ere I could notice more the door opened, and a most villainous looking personage appeared. When he looked upon my prisoner he started and turned deadly pale; and as I turned to the robber and looked into his face, I found him gazing at the man in the doorway and talking with his eyes. No tongue spoke plainer. A shudder passed through me. I was firmly convinced that the robber and landlord both understood and knew each other. However, I gave no sign to indicate my suspicion, but turned to the man in the tavern and said:

"I desire accommodations here until the storm is over, and secure quarters for this man, who sought my life but a short time since. He is a robber, and I demand your assistance in securing him."

"All right, stranger; ye can have it, and shelter, too, if ye pay for it."

"That I intend to do," said I, entering the tavern, leading my prisoner.

The room in which I found myself was long and narrow, with a counter at one end, behind which were a few black bottles which I supposed contained liquor of different kinds.

There was likewise a good fire blazing on the open hearth, fed by shrubby and rotten branches, around which were seated three men each holding a tin-cup, two of which contained rum. The third, having disposed of his was now proceeding to tin-bar. These men all seemed to have been gambling, for the cards still lay upon the table, which was drawn in close proximity to the fire.

They gave a start of surprise as I appeared in company with the robber, but soon recovered themselves, looked at each other and grinned broadly. Again I gazed at the robber, and found the same talking expression in his eyes. It now struck me for the first time that I was in a robber's den.

As this conviction came upon me, I felt for a moment like retreating to the door, mounting my horse and making the best of my way from the place. But this action I felt, on reflection, would tend to preclude matters for I felt if the robbers knew my suspicions, they would not allow me to leave the place alive. So putting as good a face upon the affair as I could, I pulled up a chair to the fire, and ordering supper for both myself and prisoner, proceeded to dry my saturated garments by the cheerful blaze.

In a few minutes it was ready—a coarse and homely meal, yet tempting to a hungry man. Having disposed of the edibles, I determined to be shown to a room. The landlord led the way, and leaving the prisoner in charge of the men below I quickly followed. I now felt firmly convinced that by a strange accident, he was in the hands of his comrades, and would soon be at liberty and ready to take summary vengeance on me for the treatment he had received.

The rascally looking landlord, having pointed to my room, lit a bit of candle, and proceeded back to the tap-room.

I entered the chamber, and after closing the door and carefully locking it set down my bundle upon a wretched table standing in one corner of the room.

The room was very poor. The walls were bare, also the floor. An old rickety bedstead occupied one corner of the chamber, on which was a flat, hard looking bed, with a very dirty counterpane. A cracked glass hung above the table, and that with the articles above mentioned, was all that the room contained.

I looked around the apartment in vain for a chair. Not finding one, I sat down upon my bed, and meditated upon my position. My first action was to examine my weapons, consisting of a revolver, bowie knife and a small pistol—highly valued as a present—which was very useful, and was never known to miss fire. These I found to be all right and then returned them to my pockets.

I was about to throw myself upon the bed, as I had no intention of undressing, when my attention was attracted by a quick flash of a lamp before my window. I looked out and beheld two men entering the stable and in a moment more they appeared leading my faithful animal. One of the parties holding the horse was the robber whom I had just captured.

My suspicions were thus practically demonstrated.

The time for action had now come. What course should I pursue? In a moment my mind was made up. I could not get to my horse without detection, and could not leave my room except by dropping from the window, or passing from it into the tap room below—both of which places of egress would render my detection certain. I determined, therefore, to remain, and holding, as I did, the lives of seven men in my hands, I made up my mind to sell my own as dearly as I could. The first thing I did was to barricade the door. For this purpose I used the bed, which was easily and silently wheeled from its corner. Having fixed it as firmly in that position as I could I secured the windows and then cast myself down upon my hard couch to wait the issue of events.

The night crept rapidly on. Soon the full round face of the moon came up gradually, and the sky, peeped in at the window, as it cast its broad white reflection upon the floor, the walls and everything around it. It was a propitious sign, for my candle was flickering in the socket, and as the moonlight appeared it fell spluttering from its place. My room was light as day, and I thanked God that if I must fight to defend myself, I could at least see the persons whom I had to contend with.

One, two and three hours passed away, and no noise broke the heavy, burdensome stillness of that night of terror. I lay restless and weary upon the bed, I felt that I was verging into midnight, and knew if I was attacked at all it would be at that time.

I was about to rise from my bed and walk about the floor, when I heard the stairs creaking beneath heavy steps; then came a pause; then suppressed whispering; then the walking was resumed. In a few minutes it had reached the door—a hand was laid gently on the latch—it was turned—a pressure was made against it—it resisted—the hand was taken away and the whispering resumed. After a short time I heard the noise—the insertion of a key in the lock but it was not opened, and I waited. They pulled it out and inserted something else. In an instant the lock flew back with a loud noise, and the door was pushed in. It opened about a quarter of an inch, and then struck the bed; it was pressed again—the bed still resisted. Disguise was useless. With loud curses the robbers threw themselves against the door and forced it open several inches.

Now or never was the time for action, I sprang on my knees to the side of the bed next the door and presented my revolver to the opening and cried:

"Badge another inch this way and you die!"

I spoke in a cool determined tone; and the robbers knew that death was in it, for they retreated from the door and paused a little way off in whispered conversation. They seemed at last to arrive at some conclusion, for I heard one of them run rapidly down the stairs. In a little while he returned, and I wondered what they were about to do.

In a moment I received a most practical answer, for with one swift and furious bound with an axe, or other hammer-like instrument, the door was battered in, the splinters flying in all directions.

My position on the bed was now rendered insecure. I sprang to the floor just in time to avoid the axe, which had been aimed at me by one of the enraged robbers, and in return I let fly the hammer of my revolver and brainied him on the spot. The battle now commenced in earnest, and I well knew it was my life or theirs. I therefore dropped upon my knees, that I might not be made a target by the robbers, and thus shielded partly by the bed, I waited for further action.

I eyed keenly the place made in the broken door, determined to fire at the first that made its appearance; at the same time to exercise the greatest care with my shots, which if I expended uselessly would render my capture sure, as I had no more ammunition. I had one great advantage and that was, if the robbers were bold enough to attack me in the room, they must climb over the bed, doing which they would place their lives in imminent if not certain danger. The robbers seemed to understand, for they hesitated a long time before proceeding further.

At last they moved away, and seemed to have wisely concluded to let me alone for the time, for, after a whispered conversation, they went slowly down the stairs, and in a little while all was still. I waited patiently to see if the attack would be resumed. An hour passed—then two, three; and at last the gray streaks of dawn appeared, and the warm sun soon arose in all its bright glory, finding me pale, haggard, and worn from my terrible vigil.

Two hours dragged on. I waited, every minute expecting the appearance of the robbers. They came not, and I began to wonder what their intentions regarding me. It was noon, still no one came; it was past the noon hour, and still it was silent as before. At times I could hear a low talking, which came to my ears from the yard. What in the name of Heaven, did they intend doing? Ha! The thought passed through my brain like a bullet of fire—they were going to starve me out!

The fearful thought nearly unnerved me. I leaned against the wall as the idea came upon me. Now for the first time I experienced the pangs of hunger. I had eaten but little the previous day; it was now verging into night, and I had tasted nothing, and another night of terror was approaching. I stood looking from the window, thus thinking, and noticed the growing darkness. A great storm was rising, for the sky was growing very dark, and masses on masses of great clouds began gathering in the northwest, and a strong wind was blowing. Soon the rain began falling; it made my heart beat heavily and slow for I was alone and nearly helpless. My room was very dark, for I had no moon to cheer me as on the last night. All was darkness and apprehension. At times the lightning would flash in the window, illuminating for a time around; then again all would be dark and still. I stood at the window listening, straining my sense of hearing to catch above the din of the storm the sound of approaching footsteps—for I thought that, at times, I could discern amid the thickness, the forms of my enemies, crouched beneath the bedstead or climbing over it upon me.

It was a night of horror. Certain death stared me to the face—a dreadful death, for I knew they would fearfully avenge their slaughtered comrade who fell before my revolver at the second attack upon the door. And I stood trembling and thinking upon the fate in store for me.

At last, overcome by my loneliness, exhausted and hungry, I determined to sell my life as dearly as possible, and rather than be starved out I would meet them boldly—by fighting or make my escape. I turned out of this idea, I slowly raised my window and looked out upon the storm and darkness. One look convinced me that by the window escape was hopeless, for on the threshold of the stable were seated two men, with a lantern before them, carefully shielding from the storm. From the small, red fire that would brightly glimmer every second, I knew they were smoking. The other two, then, must be sleeping while these two remained on watch.

I was fast growing reckless and desperate. I knew that by another day I should be starved out, and that would be an easy captive; I therefore looked upon the storm and darkness, for a moment, raised my revolver, took deliberate aim at one of the robbers, and fired. He bounded from his seat and fell down a corpse. Then the door of the tavern opened, and the landlord and two other robbers rushed confusedly out. I could hardly see them in the darkness, but I had still four shots in my revolver, not counting my pocket pistol and bowie-knife, and I determined to try another. Straining my eyes and pointing my revolver, I fired—a low cry, loud curses and exclamations, and all was still. I would now have dropped from the window, but I well knew they stood in the doorway of the tavern, and if I did so I would be killed. I paused. The night passed slowly away; the storm began to subside. I stood at the window, my face burning hot, my limbs cold and shivering. The morning peeped in to cheer me, and again I thanked God. Bang! the window glass fell in my face with a crash—a bullet whistled past me. My shadow had been seen, but I was unharmed. I retreated to another corner of the apartment and crouched down, for I was weak and sinking fast. I waited the approach of morning.

Morning at last dragged itself in; the sun arose and pointed its beams through my broken window. I crept forward to warm myself in its reflections, still crouching down with my hands elapsed about my knees. My lips were now parched and dry, and I shook as though with an ague fit; my revolver dropped from my hands for they were hot and trembling. I crawled to the window. Raising myself I looked out and saw some thinblessful of water in the worn creases of the window ledge; I sucked it in and once more crawled to my "sunny reflection." I had that day a presentiment that night would end my suffering—whether by death or escape I could not tell—but I felt it was so.

Did I before have any doubt as to the intentions of the robbers, it was no longer questionable. That they had determined to starve me out was now certain. Nearly the whole day I heard nothing, except now and then the closing of a door, or the loud tones of parties in conversation; but even this incidental noise soon ceased, and all was still as the grave. All this time I felt myself growing weaker. Hunger gnawed unceasingly at my bowels, and my thirst unquenched for nearly three days, became so intense that my tongue rattled against my teeth and the roof of my mouth like a dried bone.

My agony was fearful, but I bore up against it with all my powers of mind and body; still I felt myself failing fast, and I knew that my end was near.

Noon had long passed, and night—the third night—was again approaching. Oh

what agony I experienced as I saw the sun sinking fast from my sight! I arose from my crouching position, and moved noiselessly to the window to wet my dry lips and tongue on the damp board. While there I looked out, and away off on the long road leading to the tavern I beheld two horsemen. On, on they came at a rapid pace, facing directly for the robbers' den. I pulled out my handkerchief and waved it widely in the air. The horsemen saw it, while I, like the condemned wife of Bluebeard, still waved my flag, and felt that my time of deliverance was near.

The clattering of the wheels in front of the tavern brought forth the landlord, and he held the horses while the riders leaped to the ground—the very men I promised to meet at Rathstone—the "gay dogs" mentioned in the early part of my narrative.