

blade, cried out in those deep and guttural tones that bandits forever are supposed to employ in moments of ungovernable fury:

“Ha! villain, is it thus I find thee? Darest thou brave me to my face and steal my bride? And didst thou think, base ruffian, that thou couldst escape the terrible vengeance of Daring Dick, the outlaw of Woodchuck Hollow? Villain prepare to die!”

While giving expression to these ferocious sentiments the sword of the irate Zeb was describing circles of light round about the head of our Napoleon, who, still kneeling upon the kitchen hearth and too much paralyzed with terror to utter a sound, could only gaze at his executioner with eyes made eloquent with awful woe and stretch his imploring hands for mercy towards the features of his bandit rival. Truly it seemed that the last hour had come to our Napoleon. The villain Zeb was clearly enraged enough, and his mind had become so nearly unhinged by the ferocious tales of blood that had formed his mental stimulus for years that he was really now but little short of insane with fury and desire for revenge, and it appeared only too probable that he would put his terrible threat into execution and decapitate his rival forthwith.

But Miss Theo thought otherwise. Most girls on beholding the awful form of the bandit Zeb, suddenly dash through the kitchen window, would have uttered one despairing shriek of dismay and then tumbled to the kitchen floor in a faint. But Theo did not do as most other girls. On the contrary, she did not utter a sound, but leaping from her chair, seized the large old-fashioned fire shovel, and stood ready for action. And just at the moment when the terrible sword of the outlaw had described a circle of such unusual height that it completely wrecked a pole of dried apples that hung against the kitchen ceiling and brought the whole crashing to the hearth, Theo swooped down upon the would-be murderer and with one magnificent sweep of her shovel, brought him clattering to the kitchen floor with a shock that shook the farmhouse. To bind the prostrate Zeb with a clothes line and next to dash a pail of water over the white face of Napoleon, who had fainted clear away from fright upon the kitchen hearth, was for the nimble Theo but the work of a moment. Theo at length stood up panting, but victorious, and took a survey of the ruins. In the midst of an indiscriminate litter of dried apples, fire shovel, sword, pistols and other bandit material, lay the prostrate forms of both her lovers, apparently floating about in a pond of water. The scene was