Paul Revere's Ride

by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Listen, my children, and you shall hear
Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere,
On the eighteenth of April, in Seventy-five;
Hardly a man is now alive
Who remembers that famous day and year.

He said to his friend, "If the British march
By land or sea from the town to-night,
Hang a lantern aloft in the belfry arch
Of the North Church tower as a signal light,—
One, if by land, and two, if by sea;
And I on the opposite shore will be,
Ready to ride and spread the alarm
Through every Middlesex village and farm
For the country folk to be up and to arm,"

Then he said, "Good night!" and with muffled oar
Silently rowed to the Charlestown shore,
Just as the moon rose over the bay,
Where swinging wide at her moorings lay
The Somerset, British man-of-war;
A phantom ship, with each mast and spar
Across the moon like a prison bar,
And a huge black hulk, that was magnified
By its own reflection in the tide.

Meanwhile, his friend, through alley and street,
Wanders and watches with eager ears,
Till in the silence around him he hears
The muster of men at the barrack door,
The sound of arms, and the tramp of feet,
And the measured tread of the grenadiers,
Marching down to their boats on the shore.

Then he climbed the tower of the Old North Church,
By the wooden stairs, with stealthy tread,
To the belfry-chamber overhead,
And startled the pigeons from their perch
On the sombre rafters, that round him made
Masses and moving shapes of shade,—
By the trembling ladder, steep and tall
To the highest window in the wall,
Where he paused to listen and look down
A moment on the roofs of the town,
And the moonlight flowing over all.

Beneath, in the churchyard, lay the dead,
In their night-encampment on the hill,
Wrapped in silence so deep and still
That he could hear, like a sentinel's tread,
The watchful night-wind, as it went
Creeping along from tent to tent
And seeming to whisper, "All is well!"
A moment only he feels the spell
Of the place and the hour, and the secret dread
Of the lonely belfry and the dead;
For suddenly all his thoughts are bent
On a shadowy something far away,
Where the river widens to meet the bay,—
A line of black that bends and floats
On the rising tide, like a bridge of boats.

Meanwhile, impatient to mount and ride,
Booted and spurred, with a heavy stride
On the opposite shore walked Paul Revere.
Now he patted his horse's side,
Now gazed at the landscape far and near,
Then, impetuous, stamped the earth,
And turned and tightened his saddle-girth;
But mostly he watched with eager search
The belfry-tower of the Old North Church,

As it rose above the graves on the hill,
Lonely and spectral and sombre and still.
And lo! as he looks, on the belfry's height
A glimmer, and then a gleam of light!
He springs to the saddle, the bridle he turns,
But lingers and gazes, till full on his sight
A second lamp in the belfry burns!

A hurry of hoofs in a village street,
A shape in the moonlight, a bulk in the dark,
And beneath, from the pebbles, in passing, a spark
Struck out by a steed flying fearless and fleet:
That was all! And yet, through the gloom and the light,
The fate of a nation was riding that night;
And the spark struck out by that steed, in his flight,
Kindled the land into flame with its heat.
He has left the village and mounted the steep,
And beneath him, tranquil and broad and deep,
Is the Mystic, meeting the ocean tides;
And under the alders, that skirt its edge,
Now soft on the sand, now loud on the ledge,
Is heard the tramp of his steed as he rides.

It was twelve by the village clock
When he crossed the bridge into Medford town.
He heard the crowing of the cock,
And the barking of the farmer's dog,
And felt the damp of the river fog,
That rises after the sun goes down.

It was one by the village clock,
When he galloped into Lexington.
He saw the gilded weathercock
Swim in the moonlight as he passed,
And the meeting-house windows, blank and bare,
Gaze at him with a spectral glare,
As if they already stood aghast
At the bloody work they would look upon.

It was two by the village clock,
When he came to the bridge in Concord town.
He heard the bleating of the flock,
And the twitter of birds among the trees,
And felt the breath of the morning breeze
Blowing over the meadows brown.
And one was safe and asleep in his bed
Who at the bridge would be first to fall,
Who that day would be lying dead,
Pierced by a British musket-ball.

You know the rest. In the books you have read,
How the British Regulars fired and fled,—
How the farmers gave them ball for ball,
From behind each fence and farm-yard wall,
Chasing the red-coats down the lane,
Then crossing the fields to emerge again
Under the trees at the turn of the road,
And only pausing to fire and load.

So through the night rode Paul Revere;
And so through the night went his cry of alarm
To every Middlesex village and farm,—
A cry of defiance and not of fear,
A voice in the darkness, a knock at the door,
And a word that shall echo forevermore!
For, borne on the night-wind of the Past,
Through all our history, to the last,
In the hour of darkness and peril and need,
The people will waken and listen to hear
The hurrying hoof-beats of that steed,
And the midnight message of Paul Revere.

Give Me Liberty Or Give Me Death

Patrick Henry, March 23, 1775

No man thinks more highly than I do of the patriotism, as well as abilities, of the very worthy gentlemen who have just addressed the House. But different men often see the same subject in different lights; and, therefore, I hope it will not be thought disrespectful to those gentlemen if, entertaining as I do opinions of a character very opposite to theirs, I shall speak forth my sentiments freely and without reserve. This is no time for ceremony. The question before the House is one of awful moment to this country. For my own part, I consider it as nothing less than a question of freedom or slavery; and in proportion to the magnitude of the subject ought to be the freedom of the debate. It is only in this way that we can hope to arrive at truth, and fulfill the great responsibility which we hold to God and our country. Should I keep back my opinions at such a time, through fear of giving offense, I should consider myself as guilty of treason towards my country, and of an act of disloyalty toward the Majesty of Heaven, which I revere above all earthly kings.

Mr. President, it is natural to man to indulge in the illusions of hope. We are apt to shut our eyes against a painful truth, and listen to the song of that siren till she transforms us into beasts. Is this the part of wise men, engaged in a great and arduous struggle for liberty? Are we disposed to be of the number of those who, having eyes, see not, and, having ears, hear not, the things which so nearly concern their temporal salvation? For my part, whatever anguish of spirit it may cost, I am willing to know the whole truth; to know the worst, and to provide for it.

I have but one lamp by which my feet are guided, and that is the lamp of experience. I know of no way of judging of the future but by the past. And judging by the past, I wish to know what there has been in the conduct of the British ministry for the last ten years to justify those hopes with which gentlemen have been pleased to solace themselves and the House. Is it that insidious smile with which our petition has been lately received? Trust it not, sir; it will prove a snare to your feet. Suffer not yourselves to be betrayed with a kiss. Ask yourselves how this gracious reception of our petition comports with those warlike preparations which cover our waters and darken our land. Are fleets and armies necessary to a work of love and reconciliation? Have we shown ourselves so unwilling to be reconciled that force must be called in to win back our love? Let us not deceive ourselves, sir. These are the implements of war and subjugation; the last arguments to which kings resort. I ask gentlemen, sir, what means this martial array, if its purpose be not to force us to submission? Can gentlemen assign any other possible motive for it? Has Great Britain any enemy, in this quarter of the world, to call for all this accumulation of navies and armies? No, sir, she has none. They are meant for us: they can be meant for no other. They are sent over to bind and rivet upon us those chains which the British ministry have been so long forging. And what have we to oppose to them? Shall we try argument? Sir, we have been trying that for the last ten years. Have we anything new to offer upon the subject? Nothing. We have held the subject up in every light of which it is capable; but

it has been all in vain. Shall we resort to entreaty and humble supplication? What terms shall we find which have not been already exhausted? Let us not, I beseech you, sir, deceive ourselves. Sir, we have done everything that could be done to avert the storm which is now coming on. We have petitioned; we have remonstrated; we have supplicated; we have prostrated ourselves before the throne, and have implored its interposition to arrest the tyrannical hands of the ministry and Parliament. Our petitions have been slighted; our remonstrances have produced additional violence and insult; our supplications have been disregarded; and we have been spurned, with contempt, from the foot of the throne! In vain, after these things, may we indulge the fond hope of peace and reconciliation. There is no longer any room for hope. If we wish to be free-- if we mean to preserve inviolate those inestimable privileges for which we have been so long contending--if we mean not basely to abandon the noble struggle in which we have been so long engaged, and which we have pledged ourselves never to abandon until the glorious object of our contest shall be obtained--we must fight! I repeat it, sir, we must fight! An appeal to arms and to the God of hosts is all that is left us!

They tell us, sir, that we are weak; unable to cope with so formidable an adversary. But when shall we be stronger? Will it be the next week, or the next year? Will it be when we are totally disarmed, and when a British guard shall be stationed in every house? Shall we gather strength by irresolution and inaction? Shall we acquire the means of effectual resistance by lying supinely on our backs and hugging the delusive phantom of hope, until our enemies shall have bound us hand and foot? Sir, we are not weak if we make a proper use of those means which the God of nature hath placed in our power. The millions of people, armed in the holy cause of liberty, and in such a country as that which we possess, are invincible by any force which our enemy can send against us. Besides, sir, we shall not fight our battles alone. There is a just God who presides over the destinies of nations, and who will raise up friends to fight our battles for us. The battle, sir, is not to the strong alone; it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave. Besides, sir, we have no election. If we were base enough to desire it, it is now too late to retire from the contest. There is no retreat but in submission and slavery! Our chains are forged! Their clanking may be heard on the plains of Boston! The war is inevitable--and let it come! I repeat it, sir, let it come.

It is in vain, sir, to extenuate the matter. Gentlemen may cry, Peace, Peace-- but there is no peace. The war is actually begun! The next gale that sweeps from the north will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms! Our brethren are already in the field! Why stand we here idle? What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!

The Wolf & the House Dog

Aesop for Children, page 83

There was once a Wolf who got very little to eat because the Dogs of the village were so wide awake and watchful. He was really nothing but skin and bones, and it made him very downhearted to think of it.

One night this Wolf happened to fall in with a fine fat House Dog who had wandered a little too far from home. The Wolf would gladly have eaten him then and there, but the House Dog looked strong enough to leave his marks should he try it. So the Wolf spoke very humbly to the Dog, complimenting him on his fine appearance.

"You can be as well-fed as I am if you want to," replied the Dog. "Leave the woods; there you live miserably. Why, you have to fight hard for every bite you get. Follow my example and you will get along beautifully."

"What must I do?" asked the Wolf.

"Hardly anything," answered the House Dog. "Chase people who carry canes, bark at beggars, and fawn on the people of the house. In return you will get tidbits of every kind, chicken bones, choice bits of meat, sugar, cake, and much more beside, not to speak of kind words and caresses."

The Wolf had such a beautiful vision of his coming happiness that he almost wept. But just then he noticed that the hair on the Dog's neck was worn and the skin was chafed.

"What is that on your neck?"

"Nothing at all," replied the Dog.

"What! Nothing!"

"Oh, just a trifle!"

"But please tell me."

"Perhaps you see the mark of the collar to which my chain is fastened."

"What! A chain!" cried the Wolf. "Don't you go wherever you please?"

"Not always! But what's the difference?" replied the Dog.

"All the difference in the world! I don't care a rap for your feasts and I wouldn't take all the tender young lambs in the world at that price." And away ran the Wolf to the woods.

There is nothing worth so much as liberty.

Molly Pitcher:
The Brave Gunner of the Battle of Monmouth
by Kate Dickinson Sweetser

"Oh, but I would like to be a soldier!"

The exclamation did not come from a man or boy as might have been expected, but from Mary Ludwig, a young, blue-eyed, freckled, red-haired serving-maid in the employ of General Irving's family, of Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Molly, as they called her, had a decided ability to do well and quickly whatever she attempted, and her eyes of Irish blue and her sense of humor must have been handed down to her somewhere along the line of descent, although her father, John George Ludwig, was a German who had come to America with the Palatines.

Having been born in 1754 on a small dairy farm lying between Princeton and Trenton, New Jersey, Molly's early life was the usual happy one of a child who lived in the fields and made comrades of all the animals, especially of the cows which quite often she milked and drove to pasture. Like other children of her parentage she was early taught to work hard, to obey without question, and never to waste a moment of valuable time. In rain or shine she was to be found on the farm, digging, or among the live stock, in her blue-and-white cotton skirt and plain-blue upper garment, and she was so strong, it was said, that she could carry a three-bushel bag of wheat on her shoulder to the upper room of the granary. This strength made her very helpful in more than one way on the farm, and her parents objected strongly when she announced her determination to leave home and earn her living in a broader sphere of usefulness, but their objections were without avail.

The wife of General Irving, of French and Indian war fame, came to Trenton to make a visit. She wished to take a young girl back to Carlisle with her to assist in the work of her household, and a friend told her of Molly Ludwig. At once Mrs. Irving saw and liked the buxom, honest-faced country girl, and Molly being willing, she was taken back to the Irvings' home. There she became a much respected member of the family, as well as a valuable assistant, for Molly liked to work hard. She could turn her hand to anything, from fine sewing, which she detested, to scrubbing floors and scouring pots and pans, which she greatly enjoyed, being most at home when doing something which gave her violent exercise. Meals could have been served off a floor which she had scrubbed, and her knocker and door-knobs were always in a high state of polish.

But though she liked the housework which fell to her lot, it was forgotten if by any chance the General began to talk of his experiences on the battlefield. One day, when passing a dish of potatoes at the noon meal, the thrilling account of a young artilleryman's brave deed so stirred Molly's patriotic spirit that she stood at breathless attention, the dish of potatoes poised on her hand in mid-air until the last detail of the story had been told, then with a prodigious sigh she proclaimed her fervent desire to be a soldier.

The General's family were not conventional and there was a hearty laugh at the expense of the serving-maid's ambition, in which Molly good-naturedly joined. Little did she dream that in coming days her wish was to be fulfilled, and her name to be as widely known for deeds of valor as that of the artilleryman who had so roused her enthusiasm.So wholesome and energetic in appearance was Molly that she had many admirers, some of them fired with a degree of practical purpose, beyond their sentimental avowals. Molly treated them one and all with indifference except as comrades until John Hays, the handsome young barber of the town, much sought after by the girls of Carlisle, began to pay her attention, which was an entirely different matter. Molly grew serious-minded, moped as long as it was possible for one of her rollicking nature to mope—even lost her appetite temporarily—then she married the adoring and ecstatic Hays, and gave her husband a heart's loyal devotion.

Of a sudden the peaceful Pennsylvania village was stirred to its quiet center by echoes of the battle of Lexington, and no other subject was thought of or talked about. All men with a drop of red blood in their veins were roused to action, and Hays was no slacker. One morning he spoke gently to his wife, with intent to hurt her as little as possible.

"I am going, Molly," he said; "I've joined the Continental army."

Then he waited to see the effect of his words. Although he knew that his wife was patriotic, he was utterly unprepared for the response that flamed in her eager eyes as she spoke.

"God bless you!" she exclaimed; "I am proud to be a soldier's wife. Count on me to stand by you."

And stand by she did, letting no tears mar the last hours with him, and waving as cheerful a farewell when he left her as though he were merely going for a day's pleasuring. From the firing of the first gun in the cause of freedom her soul had been filled with patriotic zeal, and now she rejoiced in honoring her country by cheerfully giving the man she loved to its service, although she privately echoed her wish of long ago when she had exclaimed, "Oh, how I wish I could be a soldier!"

Like a brave and sensible young woman, Molly stayed on with the Irvings, where she scrubbed and scoured and baked and brewed and spun and washed as vigorously as before, smiling proudly with no sharp retort when her friends laughingly predicted that she "had lost her pretty barber, and would never set eyes on him again." She was too glad to have him serving his country, and too sure of his devotion, to be annoyed by any such remarks, and kept quietly on with her work as though it were her sole interest in life.

Months went by, and hot July blazed its trail of parched ground and wilted humanity. One morning, as usual, Molly hung her wash on the lines, then she took a pail and went to gather blackberries on a near-by hillside. As she came back later with a full pail, she saw a horseman, as she afterward said, "riding like lightning up to General Irving's house." Perhaps he had brought news from her husband, was her instant thought, and she broke into a run, for she had received no tidings from him for a long time, and was eager to know where he was and how he fared. She had been right in her instinct, the messenger had brought a letter from John Hays, and it contained great news indeed, for he wrote:

"When this reaches you, take horse with bearer, who will go with you to your father's home. I have been to the farm and seen your parents, who wish you to be with them now. And if you are there, I shall be able to see you sometimes, as we are encamped in the vicinity."

Molly might have objected to such a peremptory command, but the last sentence broke down any resistance she might have shown. Hastily she told Mrs. Irving of the letter and its tidings, and although that lady was more than sorry to lose Molly at such short notice, she not only made no objections to her departure, but helped her with her hurried preparations and wished her all possible good fortune.

In less time than it takes to tell it, Molly had "unpegged her own clothing from the lines," then seeing they were still wet, she made the articles into a tight bundle which she tied to the pommel, the messenger sprang into the saddle, with Molly behind him, and off they started from the house which had been Molly's home for so long, journeying to the farm of her childhood's memories.

Although she missed the kind-hearted Irving family who had been so good to her, it was a pleasure to be with her parents again, and Molly put on her rough farm garments once more, and early and late was out among the cattle, or working in the fields. And she had a joyful surprise when her husband paid her a flying visit a few days later. After that, he came quite frequently, though always unexpectedly, and if proof was wanting that she was the kind of a wife that John Hays was proud to have his fellow-soldiers see, it lies in the fact that he allowed Molly to visit him in camp more than once. She saw him at Trenton, and at Princeton, before the Continental army routed the British there, on January 3, 1777.

In order to surprise the three British regiments which were at Princeton at that time, General Washington, Commander-in-chief of the Continental force, quietly left Trenton with his troops, and crept up behind the unsuspecting British at Princeton, killing about one hundred men and taking three hundred prisoners, while his own losses were only thirty men. Then, anxious to get away before Lord Cornwallis could arrive with reinforcements for the British, he slipped away with his men to Morristown, New Jersey, while the cannon were still booming on the battle-field, their noise being mistaken in Trenton for thunder. With the Continental troops went John Hays, gunner, and as soon as Molly heard of the engagement, and the retirement of General Washington's troops, she hastened to the field of action to seek out any wounded men whom she could care for or comfort in their last hours. Picking her way across the littered field, she brought a drink of water here, lifted an aching head there, and covered the faces of those who had seen their last battle. As she passed slowly on, she saw a friend of her husband's, Dilwyn by name, lying half buried under a pile of debris. She would have passed him by but for a feeble movement of his hand under the rubbish, seeing which, she stooped down, pushed aside his covering, and felt for his pulse to see whether he were still alive. As she bent down her quick eye saw a cannon near where the wounded man lay, a heavy, cumbersome gun which the Continentals had evidently left behind as being of a type too heavy to drag with them on their hasty march to Morristown. Beside the cannon Molly also saw a lighted fuse slowly burning down at one end. She had a temptation as she looked at the piece of rope soaked in some combustible, lying there ready to achieve its purpose. She stooped over Dilwyn again, then she rose and went to the cannon, fuse in hand. In a half-second the booming of the great gun shook the battle-field—Molly had touched it off, and at exactly the right moment, for even then the advance guard of Lord Cornwallis and his men was within range!

At the sound of the cannon they halted abruptly, in alarm. The foe must be lurking in ambush dangerously near them, for who else would have set off the gun? They spent an hour hunting for the concealed Continentals, while Molly picked Dilwyn up and laid him across her shoulder as she had carried the wheat-bags in childhood, and coolly walked past the British, who by that time were swarming across the battle-field, paying no attention to the red-headed young woman carrying a wounded soldier off the field, for what could she have to do with discharging a gun!

Molly meanwhile bore her heavy burden across the fields for two miles until she reached the farm, where she laid the wounded man gently down on a bed which was blissfully soft to his aching bones, and where he was cared for and nursed as if he had been Molly's own kin. When at last he was well again and able to ride away from the farm, he expressed his admiration for his nurse in no measured terms, and there came to her a few days later a box of fine dress goods with the warmest regards of "one whose life you saved." As she looked at the rich material, Molly smoothed it appreciatively with roughened hand, then she laid the bundle away among her most cherished possessions, but making use of it never entered her mind—it was much too handsome for that!

Every hour the British troops were delayed at Princeton was of great advantage to the Continental forces, and by midnight they had come to the end of their eighteen-mile march, to their great rejoicing, as it had been a terrible walk over snow and ice and in such bitter cold that many a finger and ear were frozen, and all had suffered severely. The men had not had a meal for twenty-four hours, had made the long march on top of heavy fighting, and when they reached their destination they were so exhausted that the moment they halted they dropped and fell into a heavy sleep.

While they were marching toward Morristown, Lord Cornwallis was rushing his troops on to New Brunswick to save the supplies which the British had stored there. To his great relief he found them untouched, so he gave up the pursuit of Washington's fleeing forces, and the Continental army, without resistance, went into winter quarters at Morristown, as their Commander had planned to do. While John Hays, with the American army, was following his Commander, Molly, at the farm, had become the proud mother of a son, who was named John Hays, Jr., and who became Molly's greatest comfort in the long months when she had no glimpse or tidings of her husband. Then came news—General Washington's troops were again on the march, passing through New Jersey toward New York. There would be a chance to see her husband, and Molly determined to take it, whatever risk or hardship it might entail, for not only did she long to see Hays, but she could not wait longer to tell him of the perfections of their son. And so Molly went to the scene of the battle of Monmouth.

It was Sunday, the 28th of June, 1778, a day which has come down in history, not only because of the battle which marks its date, but because of its scorching heat. The mercury stood near the 100 mark, and man and beast were well-nigh overcome.

History tells us that the British had remained at Philadelphia until early in June, when they had evacuated that city and crossed the Delaware River on June the eighteenth, with an intention to march across New Jersey to New York. Having heard of this movement of the British, General Washington, with a force nearly equal to that of the enemy, also crossed into New Jersey, with the purpose of retarding the British march and, if opportunity offered, bring on a general engagement. By the 22d of June the whole of the American force was massed on the east bank of the Delaware in a condition and position to give the enemy battle. Despite some opposition on the part of General Lee and other officers, Lafayette and Greene agreed with General Washington in his opinion that the time to strike had come, and soon orders were given which led to the battle of Monmouth.

Lafayette was detached with a strong body of troops to follow up the British rear and act, if occasion presented. Other riflemen and militia were in advance of him and on his flanks, making a strong body of picked troops. To protect his twelve-mile baggage-train from these troops, Sir Henry Clinton placed them with a large escort under Knyphausen, while he united the rest of his force in the rear to check the enemy, if they came too close. The distance between Knyphausen's force and that which brought up the rear suggested the idea to Washington to concentrate his assault on the rear force, and to hasten the attack before the British should reach the high ground of Middletown, about twelve miles away, where they would be comparatively safe.

At once General Lee was sent forward to join Lafayette, with instructions to engage the enemy in such action as was possible until the remainder of the troops should arrive. Lee carried out his part of the command in such a half-hearted way as to bring severe censure on him later, and when General Greene arrived on the scene of action, Lee and his men were in retreat.

A sharp reproof from General Washington brought Lee partially to his senses; he turned about and engaged in a short, sharp conflict with the enemy, and retired from the field in good order. At that time Greene's column arrived, and as a movement of the British threatened Washington's right wing, he ordered Greene to file off from the road to Monmouth and, while the rest of the army pushed forward, to fight his way into the wood at the rear of Monmouth Court-House. Greene was obeying orders when, foreseeing that by the flight of Lee Washington would be exposed to the whole weight of the enemy's attack, he suddenly wheeled about and took an advantageous position near the British left wing.

As he hoped, this diverted the enemy's attention from the fire of the American army. A furious attack followed, but was met by a cool resistance which was the result of the army's discipline at Valley Forge.

The artillery of Greene's division, well posted on a commanding position, was in charge of General Knox, and poured a most destructive fire on the enemy, seconded by the infantry, who steadily held their ground. Repeated efforts of the British only increased their losses.

Colonel Monckton's grenadiers, attempting to drive back the American forces, were repulsed by General Knox's artillery with great slaughter. A second attempt was made, and a third, when Colonel Monckton received his death-blow and fell from his horse. General Wayne then came up with a force of farmers, their sleeves rolled up as if harvesting, and they forced the British back still farther, leaving the bodies of their wounded and dead comrades on the field.

Through the long hours of the desperate fighting on that June day, the mercury rose higher and higher, and many of the men's tongues were so swollen with the heat that they could not speak, and they fell exhausted at their posts. Seeing this, Molly, who was with her husband on the field of battle, discovered a bubbling spring of water in the west ravine, and spent her time through the long hours of blistering heat tramping back and forth carrying water for the thirsty men, and also for her husband's cannon. She used for her purpose "the cannon's bucket," which was a fixture of the gun of that time, and she told afterward how every time she came back with a brimming bucket of the sparkling water, the men would call out:

"Here comes Molly with her pitcher!"

As the battle grew fiercer and her trips to the spring became more frequent, the call was abbreviated into, "Molly Pitcher!" by which name she was so generally known from that day that her own name has been almost forgotten.

Higher and higher rose the sun in a cloudless sky, and up mounted the mercury until the suffering of the soldiers in both armies was unspeakable, although the British were in a worse state than the Americans, because of their woolen uniforms, knapsacks, and accoutrements, while the Continental army had no packs and had laid off all unnecessary clothing. Even so, many of both forces died of prostration, despite Molly's cooling drinks which she brought to as many men as possible. John Hays worked his cannon bravely, while perspiration streamed down his face and heat blurred his vision. Suddenly all went black before him—the rammer dropped from his nerveless hand, and he fell beside his gun. Quickly to his side Molly darted, put a handkerchief wet with spring water on his hot brow, laid her head on his heart to see whether it was still beating. He was alive! Beckoning to two of his comrades, Molly commanded them to carry him to the shade of a nearby tree. And soon she had the satisfaction of seeing a faint smile flicker over his face as she bent above him. At that moment her keen ears heard General Knox give a command.

"Remove the cannon!" he said. "We have no gunner brave enough to fill Hays's place!"

"No!" said Molly, hastening to the General's side and facing him with a glint of triumph in her blue eyes. "The cannon shall not be taken away! Since my brave husband is not able to work it, I will do my best to serve in his place!"

Picking up the rammer, she began to load and fire with the courage and decision of a seasoned gunner, standing at her post through long hours of heat and exhaustion. When at a late hour the enemy had finally been driven back with great loss, and Washington saw the uselessness of any renewal of the assault, General Greene strode over to the place where Molly Pitcher was still manfully loading the cannon, and gripped her hand with a hearty:

"I thank you in the name of the American army!"

One can fancy how Molly's heart throbbed with pride at such commendation, as she picked her way over the bodies of the dead and wounded to the spot where her husband was propped up against a tree, slowly recovering from his prostration, but able to express his admiration for a wife who had been able to take a gunner's place at a moment's notice and help to rout the British.

"That night the American army slept upon their arms; Greene, like his Commander, taking his repose without couch or pillow, on the naked ground, and with no other shelter than a tree beneath the broad canopy of heaven. But this shelter was not sought, nor sleep desired, until every wounded and hungry soldier had been cared for and fed with the best food the camp could supply. Rising at dawn, Washington found the enemy gone! They had stolen silently away with such rapidity as would, when their flight became known, put them beyond the chance of pursuit—and so the American army had been victorious at Monmouth, and Molly Pitcher had played an important part in that victory."

She, too, had slept that night under the stars, and when morning came she was still in the dusty, torn, powder-stained clothing she had worn as cannonier, and afterward while working over the wounded. Her predicament was a bad one when a messenger arrived from General Washington requesting an interview with her. She, Molly Pitcher, to be received by the Commander-in-chief of the American forces in such a garb as that! How could she make herself presentable for the interview? With her usual quick wit, Molly borrowed an artilleryman's coat, which in some measure hid her grimy and torn garments. In this coat over her own petticoats, and a cocked hat with a feather, doubtless plucked from a straying hen, she made no further ado, but presented herself to Washington as requested, and from the fact that she wore such a costume on that June day has come the oft-repeated and untrue story that she wore a man's clothing on the battlefield.

General Washington's eyes lighted with pleasure at the sight of such a brave woman, and he received her with such honor as he would have awarded one of his gallant men. Molly was almost overcome with his words of praise, and still more so when he conferred on her the brevet of Captain, from which came the title, "Captain Molly," which she was called by the soldiers from that day. General Washington also recommended that she be given a soldier's half-pay for life, as a reward for her faithful performance of a man's duty at the battle of Monmouth.

That was enough to make John Hays, now completely recovered from his prostration, the proudest man in the army; but added to that he had the satisfaction of seeing Molly given a tremendous ovation by the soldiers, who cheered her to the echo when they first saw her after that fateful night. To cap the climax, the great French General Lafayette showed his appreciation of her courage by asking Washington if his men "might have the pleasure of giving Madame a trifle."

Then those French officers who were among the American regiments formed in two long lines, between which Captain Molly passed in her artilleryman's coat, cocked hat in hand, and while lusty cheers rang out, the hat was filled to overflowing with gold crowns.

And so it was that Molly Pitcher, a country girl of New Jersey, played a prominent part in the battle of Monmouth and won for herself an enviable place in American history.

It is of little importance to us that when the war was over, Molly with her husband and child lived quietly in Carlisle, John Hays going back to his trade, Molly doing washing and enjoying her annuity of forty dollars a year from the government...

Ours it is to admire the heroic deeds of Molly Pitcher on the battle-field, to thrill that there was one woman of our country whose achievements have inspired poets and sculptors in the long years since she was seen

loading, firing that six-pounder,—

when, as a poet has said,

Tho' like tigers fierce they fought us, to such zeal had Molly brought us
That tho' struck with heat and thirsting, yet of drink we felt no lack;
There she stood amid the clamor, swiftly handling sponge and rammer
While we swept with wrath condign, on their line.

At Freehold, New Jersey, at the base of the great Monmouth battle monument are five bronze tablets, each five feet high by six in width, commemorating scenes of that memorable battle. One of these shafts is called the "Molly Pitcher," and shows Mary Hays using that six-pounder; her husband lies exhausted at her feet, and General Knox is seen directing the artillery. Also forty-three years after her death, on July 4, 1876, the citizens of Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, placed a handsome slab of Italian marble over her grave, inscribed with the date of her death and stating that she was the heroine of Monmouth.

In this, our day, we stand at the place where the old and the new in civilization and in humanity stand face to face. Shall the young woman of to-day, with new inspiration, fresh courage, and desire to better the world by her existence, face backward or forward in the spirit of patriotism which animated Molly Pitcher on the battlefield of Monmouth? Ours "not to reason why," ours "but to do and die," not as women, simply, but as citizen-soldiers on a battlefield where democracy is the golden reward, where in standing by our guns we stand shoulder to shoulder with the inspired spirits of the world.

Molly Pitcher stood by her gun in 1778—our chance has come... Let us not falter or fail in expressing the best in achievement and in womanhood.

America: A Prophecy – Preludium
by William Blake

The shadowy daughter of Urthona stood before red Orc.
When fourteen suns had faintly journey'd o'er his dark abode;
His food she brought in iron baskets, his drink in cups of iron;
Crown'd with a helmet & dark hair the nameless female stood;
A quiver with its burning stores, a bow like that of night,
When pestilence is shot from heaven; no other arms she need:
Invulnerable tho' naked, save where clouds roll round her loins,
Their awful folds in the dark air; silent she stood as night;
For never from her iron tongue could voice or sound arise;
But dumb till that dread day when Orc assay'd his fierce embrace.

"Dark virgin," said the hairy youth, "thy father stern abhorr'd;
Rivets my tenfold chains while still on high my spirit soars;
Sometimes an eagle screaming in the sky, sometimes a lion,
Stalking upon the mountains, & sometimes a whale I lash
The raging fathomless abyss, anon a serpent folding
Around the pillars of Urthona, and round thy dark limbs,
On the Canadian wilds I fold, feeble my spirit folds.
For chaind beneath I rend these caverns; when thou bringest food
I howl my joy! and my red eyes seek to behold thy face
In vain! these clouds roll to & fro, & hide thee from my sight."

Silent as despairing love, and strong as jealousy,
The hairy shoulders rend the links, free are the wrists of fire;
Round the terrific loins he siez'd the panting struggling womb;
It joy'd: she put aside her clouds & smiled her first-born smile;
As when a black cloud shews its light'nings to the silent deep.

Soon as she saw the terrible boy then burst the virgin cry.

“I know thee, I have found thee, & I will not let thee go;
Thou art the image of God who dwells in darkness of Africa;
And thou art fall'n to give me life in regions of dark death.
On my American plains I feel the struggling afflictions
Endur'd by roots that writhe their arms into the nether deep:
I see a serpent in Canada, who courts me to his love;
In Mexico an Eagle, and a Lion in Peru;
I see a Whale in the South-sea, drinking my soul away.
O what limb rending pains I feel. thy fire & my frost
Mingle in howling pains, in furrows by thy lightnings rent;
This is eternal death; and this the torment long foretold.”

The stern Bard ceas'd, asham'd of his own song; enrag'd he swung
His harp aloft sounding, then dash'd its shining frame against
A ruin'd pillar in glittring fragments; silent he turn'd away,
And wander'd down the vales of Kent in sick & drear lamentings.