ONE NIGHT.

"Well, my dear, shall we go?" There was a dreamy light in mamma's eyes and a pink flush on her cheeks, a sure sign that she was thinking of the happy, care free days when she and this friend, who was so anxious to have her present at her silver wedding, were all the world to each other. "To think that Carrie has been married twenty-five years! It does not seem possible. Dear Carrie! I wish it were so we could go."

"Why, what is to hinder us from going, pray tell?"

"Everything, John; we should have to be away at least a week, and what could we do with Sue and the house?"

I watched the light fade from her face, to be replaced by the usual care-worn expression, and vowed she should have this one pleasure her heart craved.

Now, when I undertake a thing, I accomplish it at all hazards; so in spite of mamma's protestations and misgivings I had the satisfaction of seeing her and papa en route for Brandon the next morning.

I sent for Madge, my "dear familiar," and what with our riding, visiting and entertaining company the time passed quickly. Greatly to our surprise we found ourselves elevated to the position of heroines. It was considered a wonderfully brave thing for two young girls to stay alone, of their own free will and accord, in a large house, and no protector save a cowardly negro boy and an old dog. Our house was very large, sadly deficient in looks, and we had no near neighbors—none nearer than the village, two miles distant. Dan and two servant girls, with ourselves, constituted the household.

But Madge and I at school had the reputation of fearing nothing; certainly we had not thought of fear in this case. I confess I secretly examined papa's stock of firearms after hearing the gossip, and smuggled several of the necessary nuisances into my room, besides coaxing Watch to sleep in the kitchen—to Ann's great disgust.

The week was half over when we took a fancy to drive to the village and indulge in the luxury of shopping. Madge suggested that we should call for some valuable jewelry I had left for some slight alterations.

As we entered the establishment my attention was attracted by two men who were staring at us most impudently. Mr. Ernst was an old friend of ours; we chatted with him some little time.

"So you are the head of the household, Miss Sue. I'll warrant you double lock all the doors and start at every noise in the night. Isn't it true, Miss Madge?"

Madge indignantly disclaimed such weakness on my part, assuring him that the doors had a chronic dislike to being locked, and we were strangers to anything so weak minded as fear.

"A thousand pardons! I might have known you were brave as a regiment of men. When will your father return? What! not until Saturday! Well; you are two courageous young ladies."

Just then I turned my head, and there I saw those two men seemingly absorbed in the jewels displayed in the case. Such a queer feeling crept over me. Something impelled me to boast of my skill in shooting.

"It wouldn't be safe for burglars to visit us. You know papa drilled me well in the use of firearms."

"Sure enough. He does persist in declaring you are proficient in that accomplishment. I had forgotten that. Pray don't expect me to make a raid upon your jewel casket now."

All through town these men followed us, until I grew nervous as a witch. Madge did not appear to notice them, and I was ashamed to speak of it lest she should laugh at me.

We had company until late that evening. It was 11 when the last guest departed. Madge was in the library looking for a book when I heard a stealthy step on the side porch. I flew to the door as it flashed upon me that it was unlocked. I had hardly got it fastened when I felt the knob turn softly. I ran to fasten the hall door. As I did so some one came running over the porch, up the steps of the piazza. The door was wide open. Now I distinctly remembered closing it after bidding my friends good night. My hands shook so that I could scarcely turn the key. Every moment seemed an hour to me. Stealing softly into the parlor I parted the curtains and looked out.

It was a bright, moonlight evening, and there, crouched in the corner of the piazza, right by the door, I could plainly see a man, evidently expecting some one to come to the door. I recognized him as one of the men who had annoyed me so in the village, and my heart stood still as I thought of the open door. Might not the other one have entered the house by it? I trembled from head to foot at the thought.

I glanced into the library. Madge was humming a song and looking so happy that I had not the heart to disturb her, but went quietly down to the kitchen alone, bent on arousing Watch to the emergencies of the occasion. I never knew before that the house had so many doors and so many dark nooks. At every one I expected that wretch to step out and seize me. I was sure some one was close behind me going down stairs.

My heart leaped into my mouth. But no, it was only the rustling of my dress. Watch was always my most obedient servant, and he seemed to understand what was wanted of him. The moment I opened the door out he darted with such a savage growl that I was half afraid of him myself. A series of yelps, then a scream and an oath, told me that Watch had found his game. I could hear them rushing through the shrubbery. Presently there was a great noise, more oaths, and I knew the man had fallen over the wall in the back yard, which raised it several feet from the garden.

Frightened as I was I could not help laughing. I knew Watch would be faithful, so I no longer feared the outsider.

My chief desire now was to reach my room; that had a strong lock.

"What on earth is the matter?" asked Madge.

With a laugh I bade her wait until we were in our room before she made me tell a long story.

The door was open, and as I reached the head of the stairs the moonlight showed me distinctly in the large mirror the reflection of a man hurriedly secreting himself in the wardrobe.

Frightened nearly to death I stood a moment undecided what to do. There wasn't a room in the house where we would be safe. I thought of the three revolvers hidden in the bureau and decided to "beard the lion in his den."

It happened that Madge and myself were expert in the use of the deaf and dumb alphabet; it had served us many a good turn, and I resolved it should now.

Madge was in an unusually talkative mood—talked incessantly as she unfastened her long hair. I never saw her look more lovely. I managed to attract her attention, while with my fingers I said:

"Man in the wardrobe. Saw him. Keep quiet. Three revolvers in the bureau. Guess we can take care of him."

Every particle of color left her face, but her voice did not tremble as she continued the conversation, talking brightly, just as she always did. Then, with her fingers, "What shall we do?" Aloud, "Sue, don't let us go to bed yet; this moonlight is too bewitching not to be enjoyed."

"Can you use a revolver?"

A shake of the head for answer.

"I ought to write half a dozen letters. If you are not sleepy I will write; you can read, you know."

"But you did not tell me what that fearful hubbub was."

I told her the whole story, laughing as I told it and making her laugh.

"I tell you what it is, Sue; I saw two men in the village"——

"Why, Madge, did you notice them, too?"

"Yes; but, provoking thing, you never let on that you saw them, so I didn't dare say a word about them. I was sure, though, that they were going to give us a call."

"Well, Watch will teach them to consider their ways and be wise; they won't dare come again to-night."

All the time I was racking my brain for a plan whereby we might escape the danger. Finally I settled upon this; we must have Ann with us—she was a host in herself.

At 3 o'clock the stage passed along with passengers for the early train. We must manage until then and get assistance from the stage.

This I imparted to Madge; she volunteered at once to call Ann. Kissing me quietly she glided away.

Ah me! such long minutes as those were while I was alone with that wardrobe. Once the door opened a wee bit, then closed again. Would they never come? Maybe they had deserted me. Just then Madge appeared, and holding her watch before me showed me she had been gone only five minutes.

Ann came soon, making a great racket, as she always did.

"'Deed and she wasn't going to stay down there! What with the beast of a dog and Jenny's snoring she couldn't sleep a wink."

We teased her, and had as much fun to all appearances as we would have had under the most favorable circumstances.

Only 12 o'clock!

"I shall be gray as a rat if this monotony continues much longer," telegraphed Madge.

As for me, I had a perverse desire to drop to sleep.

Madge commenced reading aloud. I yawned so ominously that, frowning savagely upon me, she tossed the book across the room.

As minute after minute passed, with no sign of life within the wardrobe, Ann's face settled into incredulity, and I fully expected she would investigate matters for herself. One o'clock.

Out stepped our man with a gallant bow.

"Excuse me, ladies, but your wardrobe is uncomfortable, and as you seem determined to sit up all night I couldn't afford to wait longer."

Ann walked to the door, locked it and pocketed the key.

There was an instantaneous display of firearms.

"You see we are prepared for you," said I.

He turned pale, and, being himself unarmed, was for a moment completely nonplused.

Don't think he had very much faith in our ability to use our weapons, for he did not hesitate to rush at Ann with a chair, evidently intending to make our number one less. By this time my nerves were perfectly steady, and I gave him a gentle "reminder" in the arm, so that he was in a measure helpless.

I don't like to think of the hours that followed. The fellow was a coward, and yet he kept us on the alert all the time. We insisted persuasively upon his confining himself to one corner of the room, but we could not prevent him from hurling at us every available thing within his reach. A cologne bottle was aimed at my head with precision. A scream from Madge warned me, and throwing up my arm to ward it off I received an ugly cut in the wrist. Nothing more serious happened.

By and by his curiosity overcame him, and he gruffly questioned us, asking how we knew he was in the house, how long we had known it, closing his cross-examination by pointing at Ann and graciously inquiring "how that old fool came to blunder up there."

"You're deep ones," was his comment.

Holding up a bottle of chloroform he said admiringly:

"There's the thing that would have quieted you down if you'd have given me half a chance!"

Half after two.

Madge looked at me, and simply saying, "You need Ann more than you do me," unfastened the door and disappeared.

I believe the house was haunted. At any rate, dozens of times I heard mysterious footsteps upstairs, downstairs, everywhere. Verily a whole legion of spirits must have been abroad.

I could not keep still. My nervous promenade up and down the room attracted the man's attention. He laughed tauntingly, and complacently informed me that it was "his opinion I'd give out pretty soon."

Ann watched me anxiously, knowing that my slender stock of strength was almost exhausted.

Away off I caught the rumble of the stage.

Ann read the news in my face and grew jubilant.

Nearer and nearer it came. Soon I could hear voices in the yard. A short delay and the door opened noiselessly, admitting half a dozen men.

I have a faint remembrance of being led from the room—of hearing Madge and myself lauded to the skies for bravery. Then there was a blank.

When I became conscious Madge and a stranger were with me. I remembered having seen him directing the arrangements which were made for the disposal of the prisoner.

Proud Madge, who had a haughty contempt for tears, was crying nervously, just like any other woman.

Meeting my gaze the gentleman smilingly said:

"You are Miss Sue Banks, I am sure."

Slightly amazed I acknowledged my name.

"Have you not heard your Cousin Will speak of Harry Nelson? I am he."

Impulsively I sprang up, and grasping both his hands commenced to say —I don't know what, for suddenly I found I was "acting the weeping willow," as Madge used to say.

I had heard Harry Nelson's praises sung constantly for the last three years, and as I was Will's favorite cousin I did not doubt but that Mr. Nelson was pretty well acquainted with me.

He left the next afternoon, returning in the evening with Aunt Julia and Will, so we really had an enjoyable time to the end of the week.

I shall not tell all that happened before papa and mamma returned. This much you may know. Harry was in the library with papa a long time the day they came home, and I found Madge wearing an elegant ring on the "engagement finger."

She said apologetically:

"Will and I have known each other so long."

Never mind what became of the two villains—I have not seen them since that night. If you would like to hear this same story "with variations" you have only to visit our village. Before you have been there a day you will have heard it half a dozen times.—C. C. O'Connor in New York News.

"What is the poet's saying? 'Conscience doth make cowards of us all?'"

"Yes."

"If that were true, Bronson, what a hero you'd be!"—Chatter.

To Escape a Tornado.

Gen. W. E. Hazen says you can escape a tornado, as you see the funnel advancing, by running to the north or northwest of it. On the east and south of it there are indrafts extending quite a distance.—Philadelphia Record.

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VOL. IV. ANDOVER, ALLEGANY COUNTY, N. Y., OCTOBER 29, 1890. NO. 10

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