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WEEKLY OREGON STATESMAN

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SURROUNDED BY INDIANS.

THE STORY OF A BRAVE WOMAN'S TRIAL.

A bright, warm, spring day; the sunlight streaming through the leafless branches of the huge trees; the birds taking advantage of the glorious weather to sing their loudest and sweetest songs, and all nature rejoicing in the breaking up of the long winter's sleep, and the advent of spring.

In the foreground of the scene stands the humble house of a frontiersman, a rough structure of logs and bark, in front of the door the grinning, on which the sturdy settler leans the axe that has already laid low many monarchs of the forest; against the rough unboarded walls hang the skins of animals that the skill of the hunter has captured.

At the foot of a tree immediately in front of the door two children are at play—little tots, the pride of the settler's heart—a boy of six years, and a girl a year or two younger.

Such was the scene presented at the home of Gabriel Latour, on the Pawnee river, in Western Kansas, in the spring of 1860.

Latour had followed the adventurous life of a trapper and hunter for many years, until finally, tired of roaming without any settled home, he married the daughter of a Missourian settler, "took up" a quarter section of land, and went to farming.

His wife born on the frontier, was a fit helpmeet for a man whose life must necessarily be one of hardship and privation. Marian Latour was one who could handle a rifle or a pistol as well as the implements of her household industry, and to her skill in the use of those weapons, and her own indomitable bravery must be attributed the successful issue of the siege which we were about to relate.

As the sun began to creep slowly down the West and the shadows were lengthening, Mrs. Latour came to the door to call the children to their evening meal.

Her husband had started that morning for the settlements on the Saline river, and he was not expected back till the next day.

"Come children," she called, "its time you were both inside. Come Emma—" and then the words died cold on her lips and the blood ran cold to her heart, as her eyes fell on a little crowd of bushes about a dozen yards to the rear of the tree which the children were sitting.

Did her eyes deceive her? Was that brownish-red thing she saw but a heap of the last autumn's leaves? No. Too well she knew what it was—the hideously-painted face of an Indian.

Then the natural cool courage of the woman showed itself. In the betrayed her knowledge of the presence of her savage foe, it would but precipitate the attack, which was now imminent.

Like a lightning flash she formed her plan of action, and then, stepping out from the door she went around doing some work outside just as coolly as if there wasn't an Indian within a thousand miles, but with every nerve strained to its utmost tension, and every sense on the alert for the least sign of attack.

"Come, come, children," she called, after a few moments, "the evening meal is getting cool."

The little ones ceased their play and came running toward her, and they all walked into the house.

To close and lock the heavy door, and to swing to and bar the strong shutters of the window was but the work of a moment.

Not an instant too soon was the work accomplished, as the Indians at once saw that they had been observed, and a shower of bullets and arrows were hurled against the house.

Hastily placing the children in a place of safety, the brave woman ran to the rack where the arms, always ready found, stood.

She found she had two double-barreled shot guns, a Spencer rifle, and plenty of ammunition, so that as long as she kept the Indians at a distance she was all right.

A yell from the savages startled her. Running hastily to one of the loopholes in the front of the house, she saw four of them making a rush, with the evident intention of getting up to the door before she had time to fire at them.

The shot guns were loaded with pistol bullets. Quickly running the muzzle of one of them out through the loop-hole, she took aim at the foremost Indian. A crack of the piece, and he fell dead.

The others turned and ran, but too late! Again the fatal crack of the gun, and another savage went to his happy hunting grounds. The other two succeeded in getting under cover before the heroic woman could bring the second gun to bear on them.

A howl of rage and dismay arose from the edge of the timber as the savages saw the fate of their comrades and for a long time no apparent effort was made by them to continue the fight.

She knew by the stillness that was kept by the Indians that they were getting ready some new plan for her capture.

Suddenly a thought struck her. Should they make an attack from behind the house they would be upon her before she was aware. How was she to guard against this? She could not guard both sides at once.

A bright idea flashed across her mind. The boy! She would place him as a sentry in the rear. He was old enough to understand what was wanted.

"Gabriel!" she called, "come here!" The little fellow ran from his hiding place in a corner of the room and came up to her.

"My boy, come here to this window. Do you see those woods there?" The child said he did.

"In those woods, my boy, are bad men who want to kill us. Will you watch and let me know if they try to come near the house?"

The little fellow promised obedience, and at once commenced his watch, with a look on his face that showed how much he appreciated the honor and responsibility of his position.

Then the brave woman made her preparations for what she feared would be a desperate struggle for her own life and those of her little ones.

Presently a movement on the part of her savage foes attracted her attention.

An Indian showed his head from behind one of the large logs in front of the house. Waiting for a few moments, as if to see if he was observed, he gradually moved out until his whole body was visible.

What could be his object? It was something unusual for an Indian to expose himself thus.

The solution of the puzzle came immediately. "Mamma," cried little Gabriel; "What is it, child?"

"There's one of the men coming to the house."

Then she saw at once that the appearance of the Indian in front was a ruse to attract her attention while his companions attacked the house from behind.

"Gabriel," she called hastily, come here. The boy ran over to her.

She pushed the muzzle of one of the guns through the loop-hole, and the savage immediately disappeared.

"Now, Gabriel," she said, "whenever that man shows himself you push the gun so that he can see it." The boy promised to do as he was bid.

Then the brave mother went to the back of the house.

Three Indians were slowly creeping up toward it, taking advantage of every tree, rock, or inequality of ground. They evidently intended to take her by surprise.

Determined that this time she would make every shot tell, she waited until they were within twenty yards. They were close together, and crawling up slowly.

Suddenly the muzzle of the shotgun was protruded from the loop-hole. The savages saw their mistake and turned to flee.

Too late! The sharp crack of the gun was heard, and two of them rolled over in the agonies of death.

Again the sharp crack, and the other, shot through the back as he was running away, bounded in the air like a stricken deer and fell dead in his tracks.

A loud, mournful howl was raised by the savages in the woods when they saw their comrades fall, and for nearly an hour afterward they remained perfectly quiet.

Then another and more devilish plan of operations was commenced.

Seeing that there was but little hope of getting possession of the house by means of a direct attack, without incurring a fearful loss of numbers, they put in practice one of the expedients of Indian warfare, which is the most dangerous because the hardest to combat.

An Indian suddenly appeared on the edge of the wood. In his hands he held a bow, and on its string was an arrow with a burning fire fixed on the head of it.

Mrs. Latour fixed at him with the Spencer but he drew hastily behind a tree and she missed him.

Then, before she had time to draw back and recharge her rifle, he jumped forward and discharged the burning arrow at the house.

With intense anxiety the woman watched the blazing missile as it flew through the air, and her relief was great as she saw it carried by the force of the wind away to the left of the house and fall among the trees.

Again and again the experiment was tried, but somehow without success; and the Indians showed their vexation by keeping a continual shower of bullets rattling against the house.

The shades of night were now falling. It was with a feeling of the deepest apprehension that Marian Latour saw the darkness coming on.

Under cover of the night the savages could approach quite near to the house without being discovered, and her heart there was of a weak woman being able to keep them back until morning, when she expected her husband to return.

It was only one man against at least twenty. He would have to ride back to the settlements for help, and by the time he again returned, if he was fortunate enough to escape the savages, what might not have happened?

Her reflections were cut short by a yell of savage exultation from the Indians. She looked out, but could see nothing unusual. What did it mean?

Something must have occurred to give rise to that triumphant and decisive yell. Straining every nerve, she listened with the most intense anxiety. The sound seemed to come from the roof in one corner of the building. A few minutes revealed the dreadful cause, the roof was on fire!

Already the fire began to burn through, and a red glowing spark appeared in one corner of the roof. The children began to cry piteously, as if aware of the danger in which they stood, and Mrs. Latour's heart almost failed her.

From the edge of the woods she could hear the "mournful howls of the savages," but they took care to keep out of the re-

fection of the fire, so that she had no chance for a shot. Fiercer and fiercer grew the flames. The roof, dry as tinder, speedily caught everywhere a spark dropped on it. The heat was beginning to be unbearable. Was there no hope for them?

Suddenly a strange sound mingled with the crackling of the fire.

What was it? A yell, but not from an Indian throat.

With every sense on the alert she listened.

Again the yell, and then a rattle of rifle shots, mingled with shouts and triumph and frantic howls of terror and dismay.

Running to the open window, she looked out, and could see by the light of the burning roof, the savages flying in terror across the open lot; while among them were the forms of white men cutting and shooting at the flying enemy.

Across toward the opposite woods they went, but there the Indians were met by another body of whites, and soon surrounded on all sides, after a hard fight they all fell before the deadly knives and pistols of their exasperated and relentless foes.

By this time Mrs. Latour and her children were out of the house and in the arms of the loving father and husband.

After the excitement had subsided, and the fire had been put out by the exertions of the neighbors, Gabriel told his wife how he had come to return so soon and so opportunely.

After leaving the house the day before, he rode a couple of miles, and then finding that he had forgotten one of his pistols rode back to get it.

On arriving near the house he found Indian signs. Dismounting, he crawled carefully up and saw them in ambush.

Knowing that he could do no good alone, he started as fast as his horse could go for Saline City, mustered a party and got back just in time to save his loved ones from a horrible death.

UNITED STATES MAIL. OREGON.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT. WASHINGTON, SEPT. 1, 1876.

Proposals will be received at the Contract Office of this Department until 3 o'clock P. M. of November 24th, 1876, to be decided by the 25th, for carrying the mails of the United States from January 1st 1877, to June 30th 1878, on the following routes in the State of Oregon, and by the schedule of departures and arrivals herein specified, viz:

4117 From Oswego to Portland, 7 miles and back, three times a week. Leave Oswego Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday at 8 a. m. Arrive at Portland by 10 a. m. Leave Portland Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday at 1 p. m. Arrive at Oswego by 3 p. m. Bond required with bid, \$1,000.

4122 From Riverside by Clatskanie, Thursday, and Saturday at 8 a. m. Arrive at Oswego by 3 p. m. Bond required with bid, \$1,000.

4123 From Riverside by Clatskanie, Thursday, and Saturday at 8 a. m. Arrive at Oswego by 3 p. m. Bond required with bid, \$1,000.

4124 From Astoria, by Clatskanie, Jewell, Clatskanie, Miletawa, and Gales Creek, to Forest Grove, 71 miles and back, once a week. Leave Astoria Thursday at 6 a. m. Arrive at Forest Grove Saturday by 1 p. m. Leave Forest Grove Monday at 12 m. Arrive at Astoria Wednesday by 7 p. m. Bond required with bid, \$1,000.

4125 From Astoria, by Clatskanie, Jewell, Clatskanie, Miletawa, and Gales Creek, to Forest Grove, 71 miles and back, once a week. Leave Astoria Thursday at 6 a. m. Arrive at Forest Grove Saturday by 1 p. m. Leave Forest Grove Monday at 12 m. Arrive at Astoria Wednesday by 7 p. m. Bond required with bid, \$1,000.

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FARMS FOR SALE.



JONES AND PATTERSON, COMMERCIAL HOTEL BLOCK, SALEM.

Offer for Sale, at very low prices, the following desirable property, to which they invite the careful attention of buyers.

FARM AND STOCK LANDS.

No. 228. 435 acres, 16 miles S. E. of Salem, in T. 8 S., R. 1 W. House and barn, 50 acres in cultivation, 130 acres susceptible of cultivation; 135 acres timber pasture. Price \$5000. Easy terms.

No. 246. 420 acre farm, 5 miles east of Silverton, in Marion county, farm house one and one-half stories; 4 rooms; frame barn, 18x28 feet, 60 acres of orchard; 60 acres in cultivation; balance meadow and brush; several springs of water; soil red loam, very dark; productive, raises the wheat, and is good grass land, and a good range for stock. Price, \$10,000. Cash, balance in one and two annual payments, with interest at 10 per cent. per annum.

No. 241. 260 acre farm 9 miles S. E. of Salem, in Marion county, and adjoining the Daniel Delaney claim on the south; 1 dwelling house, 5 rooms; and one-story house, 2 good barns; 8 to 10 acres of orchard; 200 acres in cultivation; 26 acres of prairie; 60 acres in meadow; balance brush and timber lands; 60 acres of meadow on the farm; two good springs of water; several good springs; the soil is red loam, and the bottom land is black loam. This is a very choice farm, located near the O. & C. R. R., and about two and a half miles from Turner's station. Price, \$12,000. Terms, one-third cash, balance in three equal annual payments, with interest at 10 per cent.

No. 242. 850 acre farm 10 miles S. E. of Salem, in Marion county, and adjoining the Daniel Delaney claim on the south; 1 dwelling house, 5 rooms; and one-story house, 2 good barns; 8 to 10 acres of orchard; 200 acres in cultivation; 26 acres of prairie; 60 acres in meadow; balance brush and timber lands; 60 acres of meadow on the farm; two good springs of water; several good springs; the soil is red loam, and the bottom land is black loam. This is a very choice farm, located near the O. & C. R. R., and about two and a half miles from Turner's station. Price, \$12,000. Terms, one-third cash, balance in three equal annual payments, with interest at 10 per cent.

No. 243. 850 acre farm, 10 miles south of Salem, and near the O. & C. R. R., and only about three miles from Turner's station. Frame house, 6 rooms; 2 barns, one of them new; 3 acres in orchard; 200 acres in cultivation; 26 acres of prairie; 60 acres in meadow; balance brush and timber lands; 60 acres of meadow on the farm; two good springs of water; several good springs; the soil is red loam, and the bottom land is black loam. This is a very choice farm, located near the O. & C. R. R., and about two and a half miles from Turner's station. Price, \$12,000. Terms, one-third cash, balance in three equal annual payments, with interest at 10 per cent.

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