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VOL. II.—No. 61.

FEBRUARY 26, 1881.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]

A BRAVE WOMAN.

A TRUE STORY.

NEARLY a century ago, when West Virginia, thinly settled and cleared, was a favourite fighting ground of the Indian tribes, there lived near the Kanawha Falls a settler of Dutch extraction named Van Bibber, a man of some note and distinction in those early times. His homestead stood below the Falls, and opposite to it, on the other side of the river, was an overhanging rock of immense size, jutting out about a hundred feet over the seething whirlpool caused by the Falls, and rising to nearly one hundred feet above the water. This rock was once the scene of a remarkable adventure, which exhibits what woman's love will give her courage to achieve for the defence and rescue of those to whom she is united in the tenderest bonds of affection.

Van Bibber was one day returning from an expedition into the dense forest on the



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“AMID THE SHOWER OF ARROWS AND SHOT.”

opposite side of the river to his home, when he unfortunately crossed the path of a party of Indians returning from some distant fray, and dressed in the full glories of the warpath—paint, feathers, and wampum. A moment more and they were in hot pursuit after him, and the settler, though possessed of great agility and being a swift runner, found himself unable to gain the banks of the river before the flying steps of the savages had enabled them to double on him; and, cutting off all approach to the water, he was driven to the summit of the overhanging rock, where, by the aid of his rifle, he kept the enemy for a few moments at bay.

He stood up bravely in full view of the savages both above and below, who yelled with triumph at the prospect of his speedy capture. Across the river before him lay his home; and as he looked he saw his wife emerge from the house, startled by the noise, with her babe nestled in her arms. She stood as if petrified with terror and amazement; helpless, as he thought, to render assistance. Suddenly, borne upon the light breeze, to his ear came the clear tones of her voice. "Leap into the water and meet me!" And, laying her babe on the grass, she flew to the little landing, seized the oars, and sprang into the skiff alone. Well for her that her arms were strong, and that so many of their hours had been passed on the sunny river, which flowed with hundreds of eddies in its rapid current past the walls of their home.

There is no indecision or weakness in the steady, firm stroke of the oars which bears her rapidly on her dangerous course. Her husband must be rescued, and there is no human arm but hers to save him. Nerved by love to double exertion, the brave woman steadily nears the middle of the river.

"Drop lower, wife."

"Lower yet," and with the last words Van Bibber sprang from the crag, and descended like an arrow into the water.

With every pulse beating wildly, the devoted wife rested on her oars to see him rise to the surface, while her frail canoe danced like a cork on top of the swirling waves. Ages seemed to pass in that awful suspense. Had the fall injured him? Had he struck the boulders which lay, as she well knew, in multitudes under the water, carried down from the Falls above? Would he never rise? Her eyes tried in vain to penetrate the depths of the water, and in an agony she swept the canoe still further down the stream. A moment more and his head rose suddenly near her, and all her mind was directed to helping him to climb into the shelter of the canoe, amid the shower of arrows and shot which the baffled Indians poured upon their escaping foe.

No word was exchanged between them; though her husband was rescued, they had not yet reached the opposite shore, and the brave woman saw that, after the perilous leap and the sudden immersion into the ice-cold water, Van Bibber was more dead than alive. Everything depended on her strength being maintained till she could attain the bank, and with a heart which almost stood still with fear, the devoted wife bent once more to the oars with her whole powers of mind and body. God be thanked! She was successful; and after their desperate adventure the exhausted husband and wife landed on the spot whence she had started on her perilous voyage, where the babe still lay, crowing and laughing, in the last rays of the afternoon sun.

Two or three neighbours, who had been gathered by the report of the rifles, pulled the canoe to the sands and helped to lift Van Bibber to his feet. He could not walk, so they laid him on the green sward by his babe, and falling down by his side in her

utter exhaustion and thankfulness, the over-excited nerves of the woman found vent in a wild and uncontrolled fit of weeping.

"Just what any other woman would have done," says some young reader, with a little air of surprise and disdain.

Exactly so, my dear; but then you see another woman might have cried at the wrong time—before, instead of after, the event narrated in my story; and then Van Bibber would never have been rescued from his deadly peril, and the baby might never have lived to be a grandfather, and have related the story as I have told it to you.

And if you ever go there, they will show you the jutting crag, which is called "Van Bibber's Rock" to this day.

D. DE B.

ABOUT BIBLE CLASSES.



COOK can talk about cooking better than the first and deepest Hebrew and Greek scholar in the land, so can a shoemaker about leather, so can a carpenter about wood; therefore if a Bible class teacher, of some fifteen years' standing, begins to talk about

Bible classes, she certainly has a right to think she may have a little to say to the point. The writer has kept Bible classes with considerable success for the period above named, and so she is going to-day to tell our girls something about it.

In the first place, then, Bible class

teaching is most decidedly woman's work; that is why we would make it a subject for our girls to think about; the ladies in a town or village have generally more time to give to it than the gentlemen, and it is an undertaking which needs the whole endeavour of heart and head. Yes, the whole endeavour; for the reading and understanding of God's Word is what Bible classes have in hand, and we must give so high a task our very best energies for its highest achievements. If the Bible class is for men or boys, women make the best Bible class teachers; the roughest navvy, or miner, or farm labourer is singularly susceptible to the influence of a gentle, graceful-mannered, cultivated Christian lady. It seems that the very contrast of her whole personality to his own has a strange, wonder-working spell in it that touches and stirs the very depths of his rude nature; but we will say more about this by-and-by.

Now let me tell a few of my own experiences to encourage those who would like to enter into the good work. When I first began to keep a Bible class it was on a cold, wintry, Sunday morning; the sky looked dark and cheerless, and a dull, grey mist hung in the air, and hid the distant hills, and my own frame of mind and feeling corresponded very much to the colouring of the November day; a class of the kind, such as I wanted to open for men and lads, had never been held before in our parish, and I had but faint hopes that it would gain popularity even with a few. It was the Master's work, however, and so I

went bravely forward. That first morning five met around me, and three out of the five, at least, were heavy and unsympathetic enough; still, as I have said, it was only what I had expected, and I resolved not to be stopped by this apparent failure, so next Sunday my five and I were together again with our Bibles in our hands. Months went by; the spring flowers smiled, and the summer sun laughed, and the red gold of autumn came and went in the woods; November was come again, and I was sitting in my class-room now with twenty-five instead of five around me. To-day this same class counts its seventy members.

How the class has thus multiplied and widened, its teacher cannot say in words that will bring forward any single, distinct, special reason; no doubt the increase has come from several causes at once. A lively, attractive manner with the men has, of course, something to do with it; a lady who keeps a Bible class must, if she wishes for success, throw herself into the daily lives and modes of thinking of her pupils, and try to understand their temptations, which are so different from her own, and sympathise warmly with all their joys and sorrows. Doing this will put heart and animation into her face and voice, without any effort on her part; charm of manner will, as it were, come naturally to her, and certainly her own character will open and soften as she goes on in this direction; a selfish, self-absorbed woman, hedged around with narrow, hard prejudices, can never, with any well-founded hope of good results, take the teacher's chair in a Bible class meeting.

The Bible class pupils themselves also do much towards enlarging their class; once get firm hold of a single workman in a shop or a factory, or on a farm, or down in a mine, and his comrades will sooner or later be almost sure to follow him to the Bible class, one or two at a time. The one man, with better thoughts and purer feelings, is like the little leaven which leavens the whole mass. He tells of what he hears in class-hours while he plies his handicraft; as the light of the Lord of Life grows brighter and stronger within him he burns to let others know the good tidings. Men talk, too, always freely and readily, and listen as well, while they are at work, and so they speak much of all they hear at the Bible class. Their companions come with them at first out of curiosity, and then, with God's blessing, with the Power that is from above helping mightily, as it always does help in all work done faithfully in the Master's Name, something better than curiosity will follow, and bind him with tender, yet unbreakable, cords to his seat there in that room where the Holy Word is read and explained. Above all, prayer, earnest prayer, will fill to overflowing the Bible class, and constantly must the Bible class teacher be upon her knees, in earnest and strong supplication for more and more to be led, by her humble means, into the Good Shepherd's fold; and most assuredly will the joyous sight of well-filled benches gladden her eyes.

One great and indispensable requisite for Bible class teaching is some knowledge of Eastern ways and customs, which will serve to illustrate and make clear certain passages in Scripture that are, otherwise, dim and strange and unnatural to the illiterate English mind. Another faculty to be diligently cultivated by the Bible class teacher, and one that will make her lessons especially interesting and attractive, is the faculty of holding up before her pupils vivid pictures of places or scenes. The men, as they sit around her, should see the blue waters of the Sea of Galilee glistening in the glorious Eastern sunshine as the Lord trod its shores, or Nazareth nestling like a white dove in its green, upland valley, or the procession of the bride-