

THE HEROIC WOMEN OF EARLY INDIANA METHODISM

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An account of the courageous women who played vital roles in establishing and growing Methodism in early Indiana, documenting their faith, sacrifice, and contributions to frontier Christianity.

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"Arms and the man, I sing," said the great Virgil, thousands of years ago, and all the little Virgils have been singing the man ever since. But who ever sings the woman? Occasionally a Debora or a Joan of Arc, a kind of a female monstrosity, comes to the front and receives recognition, but their conspicuousness is due more to the low level of their surroundings, than to their individual pre-eminence. They were out of their spheres in what gave them notoriety, and they have been so voted by universal consent through the ages. It was not specially to their credit that they successfully commanded armies, but it was to the unutterable shame of the men of their period that they had to, or let it go undone. No thanks to Betsey for killing the bear. She had to, or the bear would have killed the baby, but everlasting shame upon her worthless husband for making it necessary for her to do what he ought to have done. Betsey was out of her sphere when killing the bear, and so was the cowardly man when letting her do it. The great Virgil graciously introduces a Dido into his song, but he does it apologetically, and only because it was necessary in order to make a love story out of it, and all the little Virgils -- all the writers of love stories from that day to this -- have treated her in literature as if she were indispensable to point a moral or to adorn a tale, and really fit for little else -- that it was her mission to love and be loved, all of which was easy enough on her part; and that, having filled this mission, she ought to be happy and die contented, and to be held in everlasting remembrance. This outrage upon woman's rights and woman's worth has been carried so far that it has become common to assume that it is her prerogative to monopolize the love of the household -- at least to possess and manage the greater part of it; and some women have heard this so often that they more than half believe it themselves, so that from away back men, and even some women, talk of a woman's love as being a little purer and a great deal stronger than a man's love. There is not a word of truth in it. It is one of the unfounded legends which have descended through the ages, transmitted from father to son, while the mothers and daughters, all unconscious of the great wrong they suffer by it, have never denied it. It is not only false, but it is absurd. How could it be true? A man is not lovable as a woman is. How can she love him as he loves her, who is the personification and incarnation of beauty and gentleness and sweetness? That is, some are, for it must be conceded that woman is like Jeremiah's figs, the good are very, very good, while the bad are very naughty -- too bad for any use. This wrong against woman has gone even farther than that. In the battles of life, however nobly she fights them, she receives no proper recognition. The man who fights well is a hero, but the woman who fights equally well, or even better, is only a heroine. I despise the word because I detest the discrimination it implies. We do not call the devout Christian woman a saintess, nor the eloquent woman an oratrix, but the woman who excels in endurance and bravery and in the virtues that constitute a man a hero, is only a heroine, as if heroism was a manly virtue, to which woman may lay no claim. I long ago expunged it from my vocabulary. It is entirely too feminine for me. Out upon such unjust discrimination! This long and rather prosy introduction brings me to the theme of the evening -- woman the greater hero in early Indiana Methodism. You have often heard of the sacrifices and toils of the pioneer preachers. Those sacrifices and toils were great, yet many of them were of the character of those made by a young preacher in the Western Conference about

the beginning of this century. In one of his journeys alone, over the Cumberland Mountains, Bishop Asbury lost his way, and night coming on, he was about to dismount and prepare to sleep out, when he was met by a young man, a hunter, who took the tired bishop to his father's cabin and extended to the stranger the best accommodations that home in the wilderness afforded. The bishop, true to his calling, preached to the family and left an appointment for the preacher on that circuit, who soon organized a class of mountaineers, with the bishop's guide as class leader. In a short time he became a local preacher, and soon after, he was admitted into the Western Conference. A few years later at a session of the Conference, he was guest at the same house with the bishop, and while the bishop was engaged in writing, he was engaged in telling the young lady of the house how many sacrifices the itinerant had to make for the church and for Christ. In spite of his powers of abstraction, the bishop heard the preacher's story, and turning from the table, he said: "Yes, Benjamin, I can testify to the sacrifices you have made for the church. There never was a more hospitable home in the Cumberland Mountains than that you left to become an itinerant. I never slept better in my life than I slept on that bed of bear skins in your father's cabin. It was such a contrast with the accommodations I was about to prepare for in the woods alone, that I have never forgotten it -- and that corn bread baked in the ashes! And that venison! And, Benjamin, you have sacrificed all this for the church! You could not sacrifice more, for it was all you had to sacrifice -- a home in the mountains, a good gun, and a hunter's life -- all for the itineracy." And such were the sacrifices that many of the heroes made, whose fame has come down to us. They never lived as well before, never dressed as well nor fed as well, and yet their fare was not always sumptuous, nor their garments of purple and fine linen, but both food and clothing were better than the average of those to whom they preached. The story of Allen Wiley is an oft told story. We have heard of his large circuits and of his districts, extending from the Ohio at Madison, to Fort Wayne, embracing all of the present North Indiana Conference and about one-half of the Southeast, requiring him to be absent from home three months at a time; and how he studied Latin and Greek and Hebrew on horseback, or by the light of the settler's fire, or of an improvised lamp made of a saucer or scraped turnip filled with hog's lard, and with a rag for a wick. But who was Allen Wiley to begin with? What sacrifices did he make for the opportunity to study Latin and Greek and Hebrew even under these difficulties? He was an average farmer on a quarter section of only medium land in Switzerland county, living in a cabin two miles from any neighbor. By the dint of hard work, chopping or plowing by day, and burning brush, or husking corn, or making splint brooms, or pounding hominy, by night, he was succeeding in feeding his wife and Five children, and in adding a few additional acres to his cleared land every year; studying English grammar by taking his book to the field when plowing, or to the woods when chopping; and preaching acceptably as a local preacher in his own cabin, or in some neighboring cabin, on Sundays. Did it require any great heroism to exchange all these for the less laborious but more conspicuous calling of a traveling preacher, uninviting as that calling was at that period, yet furnishing opportunities for mental improvement such as his soul longed for? Nay, rather, was not he the greater hero who remained among the untitled and comparatively unknown laymen, and faithfully discharged the duties of a layman, unsupported by the up-bearing pressure which comes of fame? Allen Wiley sacrificed the hardships of a frontier farmer, with its huskings and log-rollings and house-raising, for the position of a traveling preacher, with its opportunities to study and with the best entertainment that the country afforded. But what of that wife whom he left in that cabin, two miles from any neighbor, with five small children, not one of whom was old enough to render

any aid toward the support of the family? And it was not grudgingly nor of constraint that she gave him up to the work of the ministry; but, on the contrary, knowing the desire of his heart to be wholly devoted to the ministry, she long prayed that a door might be opened to him, so that when he consented to go into the work, if his wife would consent, he was cheered onward from the first by her God-speed and prayers. Leaving the heroic husband, the growing and popular preacher, to travel long journeys, to preach to large congregations and to be caressed everywhere by loving and admiring friends, pursuing congenial studies under more favorable surroundings than his farm ever could have afforded, let us look in upon that heroic wife with her family of five children, increased ultimately to ten, and for many years almost wholly unaided by the presence or counsel of the husband, or by any considerable material aid from him. It was hers, there alone on that farm, not only to spin, and weave, and make, and mend, and cook, and wash for those children, but to train them for the church and for God. Was not she the greater hero of the two? Did not the patient endurance, which for years added new acres to the fields, as well as new children to the family, call into exercise the very highest qualities of heroism? Her door was not only always open to the wayfaring preacher, but her cabin, and later her larger frame house, was the neighborhood chapel, until, with very little help from her neighbors, she built a log chapel on her own farm for the accommodation of the church which was in her own house; and such was her fidelity and her ability as well, that those children all became religious, and three of them became able ministers of the gospel, one of them serving long and well as a professor in this university. Meanwhile she took an active part in every social enterprise of the times in the neighborhood. She attended quilting bees in the neighborhood and had them in her own cabin, and she was a ministering angel at the bedside of the sick and the dying; so taking the lead in the early temperance work, that she was the first one who dared to have a company of neighbor women without the inevitable punch and toddy. We need not detract one iota from the well-earned laurels of that great and good man, to say that the greater hero of the twain was that faithful, uncomplaining wife: and that, great as were his labors, hers were much greater, and all the more heroic because they were unobserved and unapplauded. If heroism consists in "the braving of difficulties with a noble devotion to some great cause, and a just confidence of being able to meet dangers in the spirit of such a cause," then was Mrs. Allen Wiley a hero second to none. George K. Hester is a name much revered among early Indiana preachers. Beginning only a few years later than Wiley, his manner of life was substantially the same as Wiley's -- large circuits, long rides and hard fare. He, too, was a hero. But what of that young wife, about to become a mother, who sent him with a wife's blessing to a distant circuit, not only large in extent, but embracing the hills of Crawford county and a strip along the Ohio river of nearly two hundred miles in length, inhabited by the poorest and roughest of the pioneer classes? If he was a hero to undertake such a sacrifice, what shall we call that young wife, who gave birth to her first-born during his absence, and after a few months of budding promise, during which mother-love was strongly developed, buried that child, all unsupported by the presence and sympathy of her husband; and yet, near the close of the year, when his heart began to fail and he thought of ceasing to travel, wrote to the fainting hero: "Greatly as I would rejoice if I thought you could live a located life, yet, if you can not feel clear in staying at home, and if you believe you would not be as useful as when traveling, notwithstanding the gloominess of our situation, I can not say stay. I know very well there is no earthly enjoyment for me where you do not participate; so, when you are absent, I do not look for any real happiness, whether my situation be comfortable or not. Yet I well know I can not enjoy happiness with you, except in the way of

duty; therefore, my dear, consult your situation, consult your feelings, but above all, consult your God. Let His holy spirit be your counselor, and I will endeavor to submit." Then, alluding to the very meager support the circuit had given -- less than ten dollars in all for the year -- she adds: "If you should conclude to quit the connection this year, I should be well pleased if you would not receive anything from the circuit, but let it be for those of our brethren who shall continue to travel." Heroic little school teacher! What did she care for a trifle like quarterage while she was able to support both herself and her husband? Of course George K. Hester did not locate after receiving that letter, and he left the quarterage for those to follow. Whether they got it or not is not now known. The next year we find her in a cabin in Jennings county, teaching school for her own support and the support of her heroic husband, and giving birth to her second son, the now venerable and talented Dr. F. A. Hester, of the Southeast Indiana Conference. George K. Hester was a great and heroic man, not only when traveling large circuits with little pay, but during a long life, in which he was even more heroic as a faithful local preacher, with no pay at all. But, tested by any human standard, that gifted and devoted wife exhibited more of the stuff that heroes are made of, than he ever had occasion to show. That he did a father's part well, none will deny, but it was chiefly the mother's hand that so trained that family of six boys that four of them became eminent and useful preachers, while the mother of the Bovard family of preachers always owned her as her spiritual mother and guide. Ah, Bene Hester was a hero! A little later, but on the Wabash instead of on the Ohio, Daniel DeMotte became a hero. He traveled large circuits, preached well, prayed well and worked well. But, after all, who was Daniel DeMotte to begin with? A fair tailor at the first, then a medium farmer, with all that being a farmer meant on the Wabash sixty years ago. But he sacrificed all that to become a traveling preacher. As a preacher he was faithful and laborious, but he never worked harder or, personally, he never fared harder as a preacher than he did as a farmer, while his sorest trials as a preacher were always alleviated by attentions that amounted in many cases almost to adoration. But what of his heroic wife and those eight children, some of them strapping boys, and, judging from the way they turned out, they were not spoiled by a disregard of Solomon's directions as to boy culture. Of her descendants there are more than sixty grand-children, and more than twenty of these are either preachers, teachers or doctors, two being missionaries in China. Of only one is there any occasion for the family to blush at the mention of his name. One, the youngest of the eight, and who promised as well in boyhood as any of them, was in his early manhood sent to -- Congress, and he was a member of that fool Indiana Senate last winter. Let me not be understood as detracting one jot from the well deserved fame of Daniel DeMotte. He was a hero among heroes fifty years ago. His circuits were large and his salaries small, but that wife, that mother, was the chief of heroes. Bishop Bowman well said of her at her funeral: "She was a woman of no ordinary character, full of faith, patient, quiet, cheerful, happy." Edwin Ray, though he died young, was a great hero. Eloquent, energetic and educated, he was second to none in everything which constituted a real hero. But when Sally Nolan, the belle of young Indianapolis, the tavern keeper's daughter, consented, at his request, to exchange her leadership of fashionable society in Indianapolis for the lot of an itinerant's wife, and to ride with him from Indianapolis to Madison on horseback to enter upon her life work, she showed a greater heroism than Edwin Ray ever did in his whole life; and when later she became his strengthening angel, when poverty and actual want stared them in the face, ministering by her heroic words when his own strong heart failed, and with her own hands making calash bonnets for her neighbors to prevent actual starvation, she became by far the more heroic of the two, displaying a

heroism which is not one whit abated as she waits for the summons to call her from labor to reward. Joseph Tarkington was a hero, but when Maria Slawson, that was, mounted her horse with her bridal outfit on her back and in her saddle-bags for a bridal tour from Switzerland county to Monroe, through the hills of Brown county -- when she rode all day in the rain, and sat up all night in a salt boiler's shanty with nothing to eat but one biscuit in twenty-four hours, she displayed the material that heroes are made of, and yet there were many experiences no less trying than this, for that heroic woman to pass through in those days -- such as her heroic husband never had to encounter. Henry S. Talbott was one of the best preachers of his period, and one of the most heroic. Unlike most of his contemporaries he left a lucrative and promising business when he entered the traveling connection. He was a physician with a profitable practice and a promising future when he heroically forsook all for the special privations of an itinerant's life as it was sixty years ago, and he heroically discharged the duties of the calling for nearly a half century. But what of that wife, left almost alone much of her time, with the cares and responsibilities of ten children upon her hands? A section of her experience, and the fortitude with which she bore it, would read like a fairy tale to this generation, and she yet lives to bless her household and the world with the sweetness of sanctified heroism. And what is true of these is true of the whole family of preachers' wives of that heroic period of Methodism. They were called to endure the greater hardships and to bear the greater burdens, and they bore them heroically. The husband in his rounds may sometimes have had to share with his people in their destitution, but, personally they shared also in their abundance. The best bed in the best cabin of the settler was at his command, and the best food of the fattest larder of the neighborhood was set before him, and this was often both abundant and luxurious. Besides this, he was the centre of a large social influence, receiving attentions and admirations which greatly alleviated every discomfort, while the wife was often alone in a remote cabin, or at best in such a house as happened to be unoccupied in some half-deserted village, and could be rented cheap for a parsonage. There she was surrounded by her family of half-fed and half-clothed children, with none of the alleviations which made her husband's life not only bearable but often enjoyable. It is no exaggeration to say that the wives of our early preachers often suffered for want of nourishing food, while, when on his circuit, the husband had abundance. Besides this there was the absence of almost every domestic and social comfort which the annual and long moves necessarily implied, and yet in mentioning the heroes of early Methodism in Indiana these are seldom referred to. They were in all cases the greater heroes. But these heroic wives and their heroic husbands were not the only heroes of that period, nor the greatest. We are so accustomed to sing praises to those who are conspicuous because of accidental position, that we fail to remember that in the humblest private in the ranks is often to be found every element that constitutes the real hero, and who is all the more worthy of recognition because never recognized. Allen Wiley was never as great a hero in his after life as he was those years in which he added the unrequited labors of a faithful and laborious local preacher to the work of a diligent farmer. He became more conspicuous but never greater. Among the real heroes of that heroic period were the Culls, the Conwells, the Bariwicks, the Swartzes, the Brentons, the Morrrows, and hundreds like them, who did not merely supplement the labors of the traveling preachers, but who often led the way. Three-fourths of the early societies in Indiana were organized by local preachers, a class of heroic men who never figured in Conferences, and whose names are not mentioned among the heroes of the period, but who, on the contrary, were often held in light esteem by their traveling contemporaries because they were not in the regular work,

though often in labors quite as abundant as the most laborious of these. As she is the greatest of heroes as well as the best of wives who faithfully discharges the duties of a step-mother, under the burning criticisms of intermeddlers, not to mention the too frequent ingratitude of the immediate beneficiaries of her care, so the local preacher who is faithful to his calling, notwithstanding unfriendly criticisms and conspicuous ingratitude, is to be ranked as the greatest of heroes. And of such there were many in the early years of Indiana Methodism. But even these were not the greatest heroes of early Indiana Methodism. The exigencies of the period developed a class of heroes without whose part the labors of the Wileys, the Stranges and the Armstrongs could not have been any more than the achievements of the Grants and the Shermans and the Washingtons in the military could have been without the burden-bearings of the heroic private soldier. Was it nothing heroic to open the cabin of the settler for preaching, month after month, for years, and not merely to prepare it for the meeting, but to put it in living order after the meeting was over, and then to feed the preacher, and often a half dozen neighbors who were always ready to accept a half invitation to dine with the preacher, without ever suggesting that a good way to enjoy that luxury would be to invite the preacher to eat at their own table? And yet the men who did this year after year are hardly mentioned, even as an appreciable force in the history of early Methodism, much less as heroes of no low grade. The preacher who preached in that cabin and ate at that table has been duly canonized, but the man who made that preaching possible at a sacrifice of time and money, and of domestic comfort which money can not measure, has generally been regarded as under unspeakable obligations to the preacher and to his neighbors for being counted worthy to do and to suffer such things for the church. But the demands upon these for heroic living did not cease with the removal of the preaching from their cabins to the school house, or to the church when built. To the end of their lives their houses and barns were always open to Methodist preachers, whether they were their pastors or were strangers. It was sufficient that they came in the name of a Methodist preacher. These heroes were not always the richest men of their several neighborhoods, nor of the church, but, honoring God with their substance they not only prospered in worldly goods, but as a rule they gave to the church and to the world a race of stalwart Christian men and women, who, following in the footsteps of their fathers, felt it a pleasure to do for the church. Three-fourths of the early students of this University came from homes that had been open to the early traveling preachers, and the generation of preachers and the preachers' wives just passing away was recruited almost wholly from them, and the later generations of students and preachers, and preachers' wives, not to mention the men who are foremost in all honorable callings, are largely the grand-children and great-grand-children of these same devoted heroic men. Indelibly engraven upon the tablet of my memory is one such cabin, which in many respects represents hundreds. In 1840, among the hills of Dearborn county, on my first round on the Rising Sun circuit, I preached at it. The congregation was composed of primitive country people, mostly dressed in homespun. I had never seen one of them before, but the entire class had turned out to hear the new boy preacher, filling every chair, even the one behind which I was to stand, and every bench that had been provided was full, and the sides of each of the two beds in the room, and some were standing. Among these was a gawky youth, about twenty years of age, green -- that is, immature -- in appearance, and dressed in store clothes. I noticed that after meeting, with a great many others, he stayed to dinner. Later on I learned that he was a son of the heroic man and woman whose house had been open for years for preaching and for the entertainment of preachers, and that he was at that time studying law in Wilmington, which accounted for his

wearing store clothes. Years passed, and that green boy ripened and developed, and he went out into the world to become a Circuit Judge, a State Senator, a Supreme Judge, and he has been for nine years the honored Dean of the School of Law in De Pauw University. But the opening of their doors for preaching was not all. Sometimes these same heroes would entertain an entire quarterly meeting, and a great part of a camp-meeting when it was expected that tent-holders would feed all who were not tent-holders. Was not he a hero who would, year after year, not merely kill the fatted calf for a quarterly or camp-meeting, but the yearling, and provide as liberally of other things required for entertaining the guests and their horses, and yet keep open house, day and night, for the gratuitous entertainment of preachers? No traveling preacher ever displayed greater heroism than these truly great men, and yet they were not the greatest heroes of that heroic age. Such sacrifices as they made from year to year are not to be lightly esteemed, yet the supplying of the larder and of the crib was the smallest part of the sacrifice required for such an offering to the Lord. Was the cooking for twenty to fifty at a quarterly or camp-meeting, or the care of the guests whom the open house invited, to be counted as second to any work done for the church? Let it be borne in mind that these demands were made before the introduction of cooking stoves and other appliances for making housekeeping easy. The meals for those quarterly meetings were cooked by the open fireplace, before and over a huge log fire, often without the aid even of a crane, and at the camp-meeting by the side of a big log used as a kitchen. Looking back through the years, and having been in position to observe every type of church work, and every class of church workers, from the early bishops on their long horseback tours; and the early presiding elders, going the rounds of their large districts; and the early circuit riders, preaching twenty-five to thirty times every four weeks, and traveling hundreds of miles on each round; and the early local preachers, with their gratuitous work, often without even thanks, and the large-hearted men who not only contributed of their substance toward the payment of salaries and such benevolences as were then required, but who provided liberally and cheerfully, also, for the entertainment of these bishops, and elders, and preachers, I am prepared to say that the very highest and purest type of heroism ever displayed in early Methodism in Indiana was shown by the women who set the tables and cooked the food and prepared the beds for these wayfaring men. And their name was legion. Every circuit had one or more, though unavoidably and without rivalry some one easily ranked all contemporaries of any given neighborhood, and some, from position as well as real merit, acquired almost a national reputation, so that a strange preacher or a bishop would be directed, when hundreds of miles distant, to what were known as "Methodist taverns," by the way. The presiding elder, before leaving home for a series of quarterly meetings, always mapped out his journey with reference to these "taverns," and the retiring preacher gave a list of them to his successor with the plan of his circuit, and a long horseback journey to conference was always arranged so as to strike one of these at or about noon or night, and as they were not always located with reference to such emergencies, this very often made an extra dinner or extra supper, or an early or late breakfast, a necessity, imposing an amount of extra labor upon the generous housewife that few are now aware of, and which tested her heroism as a face to face encounter in battle tests the heroism of the soldier. To call the roll of these heroes would be impossible, yet some so stand out in the unwritten history of Indiana Methodism that I can not avoid the mention of Mrs. John Wilkins, of Indianapolis, whose hospitable door was always open to the Methodist preachers of that heroic period, whether they came as bishops, or elders, or circuit riders, and her central position made her house almost an open one. Mrs. Isaac Dunn, at Lawrenceburg; Mrs.

Caleb A. Craft, at Rising Sun; Mrs. Charles Basnett, at Madison, and Mrs. Roland T. Carr, at Rushville. But I can not name them all. There were thousands of them. They bore the very heaviest burdens of their times; and yet, outside of the little family circle that knew what was involved in their toils and sacrifices, no one ever seemed to care for them or sympathize with them. The men who received these hospitalities were rated as the heroes, while what these women did or suffered was counted of little worth, or certainly only as commonplace; yet they were the greater heroes by far, if for no other reason, yet, because their labors were even harder than the labors of others, and quite as essential to results, and wholly without compensation -- even the moral compensation which comes from realizing that the eyes of approbation are upon you -- the only eye that seemed to see them was the eye of the Father in Heaven. It took the stuff that heroes are made of to endure all this, yet they endured it for years and until the necessity for such service had passed. Merely as a specimen of this line of service, let me lift the curtain and introduce you to the inner life of one of these heroes as I knew it for fifty years or more. We are familiar with the deeds of those who have been voted the heroes of early Methodism, but no one has ever told what were the sacrifices and hardships of the heroic women, whose time and strength were devoted to the same cause, in a less conspicuous way. While Indiana was yet a Territory, and her one-roomed house, with a half-story above, was yet unfinished, and while the Indian reservation, yet inhabited by the Delawares, was less than two miles distant, and no Methodist preaching had yet been established in Brookville, my mother opened her doors to the transient preacher and for prayer-meetings, then for class-meetings and for preaching, and thus she entered upon her life work, and for more than fifty years those doors stood open to Methodist preachers. Was it any inferior heroism which would prepare that single room, at once parlor and bed-room and kitchen, for prayer-meetings, and then, after the meeting was over, clean up after the filthy tobacco chewers who not only defiled the floor, but sometimes, from sheer devilishness, would besmear the walls? Later, and when an addition was built to the house, the best room was specially fitted up for a preacher's room, with its bed, and table, and chair, and fire-place, and then another bed was added, because one bed, though carrying double, was often insufficient for the demands. That room was never occupied for twenty-five years by any member of the family, for it could never be certain, even at bed time, that some belated traveler would not call for entertainment before morning. A panorama of that heroic woman's work for twenty-five years would give new ideas to many of this generation of the demands made upon the women of that heroic period, and how they were met. For many years either Bishop Soule or Bishop Roberts, or both, were frequent guests, going to or returning from one of their Conferences, and Presiding Elders Griffeth, and Strange, and Wiley, and Havens, for twenty years never stopped in Brookville with any other family, whether attending our own quarterly meetings or passing through to some other; and for more than twenty years the bi-weekly rounds of the circuit preacher never failed to bring a guest, while the junior preacher, always an unmarried man, made it his headquarters, and spent his rest weeks in that preachers' room. There John P. Durbin studied English grammar without a teacher, and Russel Bigelow, and John F. Wright, and James B. Finley were frequent guests. The new preacher, with his family, always stopped with us until some house somewhere on the circuit could be rented, for it was before the days of parsonages, and preachers moving through to their circuits stayed over night, and often over Sunday, with their hired team and all. This, too, at a period when in addition to the duties of housewifery as now understood, spinning, and weaving, and knitting, and making, and milking, and churning constituted no small item of

domestic affairs, and usually without the intervention of the modern appliance called "help." To these were to be added a quarterly meeting once a year for a circuit that embraced nearly half of the present Connersville district, when for years no other door was opened to entertain a single one of those who came from all parts of the circuit, and a camp-meeting once a year, with all the burdens that old-fashioned camp-meetings fastened upon tent-holders. But this was not all -- it was hardly half. For a decade or more after the opening of the "New Purchase," not a week passed that some one, purporting to be a Methodist preacher, did not claim the rites of hospitality as he was going from Ohio or Kentucky to the "New Purchase" to enter land or to see the country. These, with an eye to economy, always inquired for the next "Methodist tavern," and they never failed to avail themselves of the information obtained. In many respects these were sometimes burdensome. They were not only strangers, but they were traveling on business purely secular, and they were often irregular and called at unseasonable hours. One of these calls I had occasion to remember. It was in the summer of 1825, and before the days of lucifer matches. If the fire died out, there was no starting another without getting a live coal from some neighbor. Such a calamity had occurred at our house, and I was dispatched to the nearest neighbor's for a coal, only to return with the intelligence that her fire was out, too. "But why did you not go to the next neighbor?" asked my mother. "Go, and keep on going, till you get what you go for," was the command, and I went. The next day was wash day, and the family dinner had been served, and the dishes put away, and the wash tub resumed, when two strange preachers rode up and asked for dinner. What was to be done? In addition to the hindrance in washing, there was not a crust of bread in the house, and even if the travelers had time to wait, there was no time to spare from washing to bake bread. In the emergency I was dispatched to the nearest neighbor to borrow a loaf, but her cupboard was bare, too. Remembering the instructions, "Keep going until you get what you go for," I started at double quick to the next neighbor, and to the next, and the next, for three-quarters of an hour. I must have zig-zagged several miles, only to return with the sad news that there was not a loaf of bread in the town. Meanwhile my mother had taken in the situation, and when I got home exhausted and disgusted, the travelers were eating their dinner, a skillet full of biscuits having been baked at short notice. Soon they were on their horses, and the work at the wash tub was resumed. Though the occasion was a trying one, not a word of murmur escaped the lips of that heroic woman, for she endured as seeing the Invisible. Was she not a hero? During those years of special hardships, my mother had the companionship and aid of a younger sister, a bright, red-headed girl, as fleet of foot as the mountain gazelle, with a voice, at least to me, as sweet as the melody of angels. Through the misty past of more than sixty years, there comes the memory of several incidents illustrative of both her moral and physical heroism. On one occasion, not unlike that just referred to, she was called to set aside her spinning-wheel just when the weaver was clamoring for the yarn which was to go into the beautiful home-made flannel, from which her new Sunday dress was to be made, and which she had promised to furnish that day. More than an hour of precious time had been consumed when she resumed her spinning, striking up in her inimitable treble: "And let this feeble body fail." Young as I was, I had sympathized with her in her loss of time, feeling that at least on that occasion it was an imposition that entire strangers should call at that unreasonable hour for a dinner, because they could get it free, but her heart seemed to be in the song, and as she whirled the wheel still more vigorously, and stepped mere rapidly, as if to make up lost time, she came to "In hope of that immortal crown,

I now the Cross sustain:

And gladly wander up and down,

And smile at toil and pain."It seemed to my childish imagination that she was triumphing over her difficulties and defying toil and pain, with words specially adapted to her "up and down," the to and fro movement in spinning. It was an exhibition of moral heroism, not often surpassed by martyr or confessor. But she was a physical hero as well. I saw her tested once at a camp-meeting, when she was about twenty years of age. My father had invited a number of young men, who were standing around, to eat dinner at his table on Sunday. Already more than fifty had eaten. When these young men were seated her eye caught one, to whom she walked without consulting any person, and laying her hand upon his shoulder, she said in a distinct voice: "Sir, you can not eat dinner at this table. You were with that crowd of rowdies last night that held a mock sacrament with whisky, and if you do not leave in a second, I'll help you leave." One glance at her eye was sufficient, and he left at once. The deed was the more heroic because the unfortunate youth belonged to a family that was much respected. The great fighting preacher, Havens, never displayed more heroism in any of his encounters with the roughs of that period. That heroic girl became a mother afterwards, and she communicated to her children the same high purpose of life. She, though a widow, gave her eldest son to her country, and his blood was the very first to fatten the soil of West Virginia in the late war, and her second son, under difficulties and discouragements that would have appalled any one but a hero, was wisely trained in head and heart, and she gave him to De Pauw University in the person of your gifted and honored red-headed Vice-President. Others may sing the man, but give me the loftier theme, the heroic women of early Indiana Methodism.

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