

SEVENTEENTH THOUSAND.

NOBLE DEEDS

OF

AMERICAN WOMEN;

WITH

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

OF SOME OF THE MORE PROMINENT.

EDITED BY

J. CLEMENT.,

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY

MRS. L. H. SIGOURNEY.

Such examples should be set before them as patterns for their daily imitation.
Locke

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MARGARET CORBIN.

Where cannon boomed, where bayonets clashed,
There was thy fiery way.

SARA J. CLARKE.

An act similar to that recorded of Mrs. Pitch at the battle of Monmouth, was performed by Margaret Corbin at the attack on Fort Mifflin. Her husband belonged to the artillery; and, standing by his side and seeing him fall, she unhesitatingly took his place and heroically performed his duties. Her services were appreciated by the officers of the army, and honorably noticed by Congress. This body passed the following resolution in July, 1779:

“Resolved,—That Margaret Corbin, wounded and disabled at the battle of Fort Mifflin, who she heroically filled the post of her husband, who was killed by her side serving a piece of artillery do receive during her natural life, or continuation of said disability, one-half the monthly pay drawn by a soldier in service of these States; and that she now receive out of public stores, one suit of clothes or value thereof in money.”

Resolved at 7 o'clock

222 Pioneer Mothers of America

latter years of her life." Her age as given above was an error which was corrected by the citizens of Carlisle who erected a headstone over her grave in 1876, giving the correct dates. The inscription is as follows:

MOLLIE MCAULEY
Renowned in History as
"MOLLIE PITCHER,"
The Heroine of Monmouth,
Died, January, 1832.
Aged 78 years.

"All day the great guns barked and roared;
All day the big balls screeched and soared;
All day, 'mid the sweating gunners grim,
Who toiled in their smoke—shroud dense and dim,
Sweet Molly laboured with courage high,
With steady hand and watchful eye,
Till the day was ours, and the sinking sun
Looked down on the field of Monmouth won,
And Molly standing beside her gun.

"Now, Molly, rest your weary arm!
Safe, Molly, all is safe from harm.
Now, woman, bow your aching head,
And weep in sorrow o'er your dead.

"Next day on that field so hardly won,
Stately and calm stands Washington,
And looks where our gallant Greene doth lead
A figure clad in motley weed—
A soldier's cap and a soldier's coat
Masking a woman's petticoat.

He greets our Molly in kindly wise;
And bids her raise her tearful eyes;
And now he hails her before them all
Comrade and soldier, whate'er befall,
And since she had played a man's full part,
A man's reward for her loyal heart!
And Sergeant Molly Pitcher's name
Be writ henceforth on the shield of fame!

"Oh, Molly, with your eyes so blue!
Oh, Molly, Molly, here's to you!
Sweet honour's roll will aye be richer
To hold the name of Molly Pitcher."

Laura E. Richards.

Margaret Cochran Corbin

Another woman, whose patriotism led her into active participation in the Revolutionary struggle, was Margaret Cochran Corbin, who was born in Western Pennsylvania, November 12, 1751. During one of the marauding expeditions of the Indians, her father, John Cochran, was killed and her mother was carried away. Margaret and her brothers were living at the home of a maternal uncle at the time and never heard from the mother again except when, a few years later, an old hunter and trapper told them that he had seen the mother among the Indians about one hundred miles west of the Ohio river.

The uncle made every effort to find his sister, but never found trace of her. In 1772, Margaret was married to John Corbin, who at the beginning of the Revolutionary War enlisted in the First Artillery of Pennsylvania and was accorded the privilege of having his young wife accompany him.

The First Artillery was a part of the six regiments which the Committee of Safety of the Colony of Pennsylvania turned over to the Continental Congress for the national defence. They were at the disastrous battle of Long Island and soon after were at Fort Washington when that stronghold was taken by the Hessians after a determined resistance. It was at this attack upon Fort Washington that John Corbin was killed by a shot through the head while serving his gun. His wife, who was near him at the time, was half crazed with grief. They were known as a very affectionate couple and the young wife, a rather shy and retiring person, was devoted to her husband. There was no one to take his place at the gun, which he had been firing, and the commander gave orders that it be drawn back out of the way. Judge of his surprise when a wild-eyed and weeping young

woman, with hair flying, rushed up and besought him not to remove the gun. "I know all about it," she said. "Jack has shown me. Let me fire it." The officer consented gladly and, with a coolness and desperation that surprised her comrades, she served the gun for several hours until she herself was severely wounded and was carried to the rear and cared for with all the rude skill that the times and the occasion afforded. Her pathetic story, the skill and fortitude which she showed under the most trying circumstances, won for her the sympathy of officers and men alike, and, after the fort was taken, she was allowed to pass out as one of the non-combatants.

A statement of her case was laid before the authorities at Philadelphia, and her native State made prompt provision for her. A little later the executive council called the attention of Congress to her, and that body took action June 29, 1779, by ordering "that the case of Margaret Corbin, who was wounded and utterly disabled at Fort Washington, while she heroically filled the post of her husband, who was killed by her side, serving a piece of artillery, be further recommended to the Board of War,

this council being of the opinion that notwithstanding the ratings which have been allowed her she is not provided for as her helpless situation really requires."

A few days afterward Congress resolved, "That Margaret Corbin, wounded and disabled, while she heroically filled the post of her husband, who was killed by her side, while serving a piece of artillery, do receive during her natural life, or continuance of such disability, one-half the pay drawn by a soldier in the service of these States, and that she now receive out of the public stores one suit of clothes or the value in money."

Her name again appears in the public archives on the roll of the invalid regiment when it was discharged in April, 1783. At the close of the war, Margaret Corbin was awarded a pension by the State of Pennsylvania which continued until her death in 1800.

De Lancey, in his description of the capitulation of Fort Washington, wrote enthusiastically of the action of Margaret Corbin as follows: "The deed of Augustina of Aragon, the Maid of Zaragoza, was not nobler, truer, braver than that of Margaret Corbin of Pennsylvania."

It was a peculiar coincidence that both Mary Hays and Margaret Corbin should have come from Pennsylvania, that the husbands of both should have been artillerymen enlisted at about the same time, and that both rose to the occasion when the opportunity came to perform a heroic though unusual service for their country.

Sarah Bradlee Fulton

A Boston woman whose name has been written in Revolutionary history along with those of Paul Revere and Dr. Warren, and to whom Washington and La Fayette did signal honour was Sarah Bradlee Fulton, sometimes called the "Mother of the Boston Tea-party."

Mrs. Fulton was a militant patriot, which was to have been expected, coming as she did from the patriotic family of Bradlees of the patriotic old town of Dorchester, which in later days was to be swallowed up in the greater city of Boston. Her father and grandfather were prominent citizens of the rugged and self-reliant kind that New England was fashioning out of the raw and unyielding material that kingly oppression and religious intolerance had driven to her stern and rockbound coast. A slight evidence