

# Acton Free Press.

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AD SAVAGE  
OPTICIAN

### JUST BEFORE THE BATTLE, MOTHER

Just before the battle, mother, I am thinking most of you,  
While upon the field we're watching with the enemy in view—  
Comrades brave are round me lying, filled with thro's of home and God;  
For well they know that on the morrow some will sleep beneath the sod.

Chorus:  
Farewell, mother, you may never press me to your heart again,  
But, oh, you'll not forget me, mother, if I'm numbered with the slain.  
Oh, I long to see you, mother, and the loving ones at home,  
But I'll never leave our banner, till in honor I can come.  
Tell the traitors all around you that their cruel words we know  
In every battle kill our soldiers by the help they give the foe.  
Hark! I hear the bugles sounding—"It's the signal for the fight!"  
Now may God protect us, mother, as He ever does the right.  
Hear the "Battle Cry of Freedom," how it swells upon the air—  
Oh, yes, we'll rally round the standard, or we'll perish nobly there.

### Metha's Night Run on Black Meteor

DENNIS H. STOVALL

METHA COOPER perched on a high stool behind the little delivery window of the Three Pines post office, looked up at the clock and saw it was six thirty—time to close till the evening mail came in from Boulder. She was in the act of lowering the shutter when there came a heavy step at the front door. She paused a moment, peering through the window to see who the belated person might be. Duak was already settling over the Cascades, in whose shadows the hamlet of Three Pines nestled.

In the dim light the girl distinguished the tall form, the silvery hair, and the weather-bronzed but kindly face of Major Ryan. In a moment his keen gray eyes were twinkling through the wicket close into the face of Metha.

"The roustabout called for your mail this afternoon, Major," the girl informed pleasantly, as if anticipating his question.

"I know," Major Ryan answered quickly. "I am not after my mail—not yet. I merely wanted to tell you—" He ceased speaking, for just then there came the trample of boots at the door. The Major

devotion and big-bearded spirit of Major Ryan, the man who had always proved himself a friend of the family. It was the Major who had helped them when they first came into the Cascades. During the long illness of the father he proved himself the friend in need. In the shock of calamity, and in the after struggle with poverty, he was still the true friend and helper. It was he who had secured for the boy and girl the little post office at Three Pines; though it was the mother who had been named as the postmistress, it was Metha and Wallace who made out the records, cared for the mail, and looked after the wants of the patrons.

As Metha heard the oft-repeated story, there came to her mind a picture of that uncouth mountain rider who had entered the post office close upon the heels of Major Ryan. Her shames grew, and she completed her supper before her brother had finished. Both Wallace and his mother looked up apprehensively when Metha rose from the table.

"I'm going out in the cool air awhile," she said simply, as she turned toward the rear door.

"I'm just a little anxious about you, Giddle," her mother confessed gravely.

"Not! Not! Don't you worry!" Metha said. "I'm not sick—and I'll soon be all right!"

Out in the refreshing air of the early evening, fragrant with its balsam of fir and pine, and spiced with the mountain ozone, she did feel better. Night had dropped over the Cascades—a night of velvety blackness, softly lighted with stars. Lamps glowed like fireflies from cabin windows, and a spirit of peace brooded over the little hamlet. Under the laurel trees of their back yard Metha stood silently, with bare head and uplifted face. She had made no sound, and when she first came out the muffled noises of the town came to her as one harmonious note, low and tender. But soon a discordant note reached her, and she lifted herself quickly.

Not twenty yards away two men were untying a pair of saddle ponies that had been standing at the hitching-rack. One was talking, not loud, but in a voice she could distinctly hear—a voice that made her instantly attentive because she recognized it as that of the stranger who had entered the office close behind Major Ryan.

"It's all right," Metha heard him say. "It will be in tonight. The gal says about nine."

"Then we'll have to get a move on if we meet Dick on the other side of the divide. The Gap is the best place to do the job."

The two men sprang into their saddles. As the thumping of hoofs on the hard road died away a full understanding of the men's design came to her. She felt certain that these two men, with a third, were planning to break through the divide at night.

### DIG IN

You may not be able to count your bank balance in more than three figures, but if you have a reputation for honesty and real business courage you will get there. "The conies are a feeble folk, yet they make their houses in the rocks." This war has shown what a small armed force, properly entrenched, can do against overwhelming numbers. The man who digs himself in behind good business methods, overlasting industry and unwavering fidelity to principle will outlast most of the big guns of modern business warfare. There are a lot of people who start in business with the rush and noise of a "Jack Johnston," but end in a thud and flare of mud. There is nothing to beat trench warfare in business, although an occasional rush may add territory and prestige.—Solomon in Shoe and Leather Journal.

crest was reached. Here the girl lightened on the rain. There was treacherous ground ahead—where the trail hung like a narrow cliff. A misstep would hurl horse and rider into the abyss.

But at this height shadows disappeared and the sky broadened to a wide canopy. "Half the distance," murmured the girl. Again she chirped, and the dangerous ground past, the horse swept over the divide.

A cold chill struck the girl's white face. It was the breath of night coming down from the snow-covered slopes of the high Cascades. Metha buttoned her coat more closely and glanced up at her time dial again.

Another word to the faithful broncho—another stroke of affection on the west, hot neck—another burst of speed—and a cluster of lights twinkled ahead. "Red Rock!" The words shot from between the girl's lips. A moment later the bright spots, awesoming long feathery beams through the darkness, curved gracefully down the road and came to a halt. It was the motor stage stopping at the post office.

Meteor, on the main highway now, was running like the wind. The last half-mile covered, he clattered up to the long, low building where the motor car stood. Dripping with perspiration, snorting, his head tossing, he halted with slouched haunches and trembling legs while the girl dropped a limp from the saddle. She staggered, gained control of herself, and rushed forward.

The driver gazed at her through hideous goggles. A moment later and he had received the warning. The U. S. mail, of hinders or delay west of the divide, of the timely

### HEARLY TEN

When a body comes to be nearly ten, Ah! Lull sorts of troubles beset her then. As least, if the body happens to be The eldest of all in the family, Whose mother's at work the whole of the day;  
And I'm that body, I may as well say!  
There isn't a baby in all our crowd Who's nearly as pretty, or half as sweet As our little Sally; but oh, dear me! It's strange how heavy that baby can be. And Tommy's a wonderful boy, I know; But sometimes that child does bother me so!

It's "Hush-a-bye, baby," and off she goes; But, if I put her down, that baby knows. And, as soon as she's really fast asleep, Then down on the floor our Tommy will creep.  
And it's—"Don't wake baby, be quiet, be!" Oh—"Tommy, you'll pull that cat's tail in two!"  
But, perhaps, when a body's worn out Her dear little mother will come in sight. Then it's—"Polly, my pet, what should I do. If I hadn't a good little girl like you?"  
And, somehow, a body feels glad just then She's a grown-up girl of nearly ten.  
—Cassell's Little Folks.

### TWENTY YEARS AGO

From the Issue of the Free Press of Thursday, Aug. 19th, 1897

Weather cool and pleasant. Civic holiday next Monday.

The framework of the large six story addition to the works of The Acton-Tanning Co. has been raised.

Electric lights is within the possibilities for Acton in the near future.

Rev. Father Halcy has arranged for his annual picnic to take place in the park on Civic Holiday. A big afternoon of sports is promised and a concert in the park in the evening.

The handicap bicycle race was run in connection with the Sons of Scotland Garden Party. The race was five miles, the course was one lap around the park course, out to the fourth line and return and finish with another lap over the track. Ten contestants entered, seven finished. They were—R. M. McDonald, E. J. Francis, E. W. Pearson, James Barry, E. J. Moore, Thos. Lee, A. E. Moore. James Barry finished in 18 1/2 minutes.

Flushed with success the local ball players are apt to imagine that Acton never has had such a team before, but in the Free Press of Sept. 3rd, 1875, is recorded: The ball team play with Fergus on Monday, Harrison on Tuesday, Listowell on Wednesday, Lucknow on Friday and Brussels on Saturday.

The following gentleman composed the team: Fred H. Storey, A. E. Nicklin, Tom Kennedy, James H. Nicklin, Isaac Francis, J. A. Speight, David McJackee, Jacob Dempsey, Davo Lighthouse and Angus Cameron.

BORN  
In Georgetown, on Wednesday, 15th August, to Mr. and Mrs. F. J. Har-

### RED FUTURE