

The part that the woman of pioneer days played in the great drama of American history has in many instances been touched on but lightly. The subject, Pioneer Women, was treated interestingly in the address of Mrs. Lyman A. Strong, of which the following is a part:

ADDRESS BY MRS. STRONG.

What of the women of pioneer days—they seem to have been forgotten, so little is written now of their noble deeds and dreadful sacrifices for their loved ones. A few, perhaps, have received the notice due, but what is that in comparison with the pages devoted to the men of pioneer times?

Shall we let the block house, as being the only surviving witness of the horrors of those times, tell us a little story of personal experience and observation?

And this is what it says to us—"in this peaceful spot I trust to have come to rest until the end of my days, and as it is ever with the old, comes back to me the memory of other days."

My first recollections are of opening my eyes on a vast forest surrounded by lurking dangers, seen and unseen. Many friends flocked about me, and together we braved the frightened dangers we knew were in store for us. Days and nights there were when was heard the growl of the bear, the snarling cry of the wolf and the screech of the wildcat; but sure of safety from all these fierce creatures, we slept in peace until high over all sounded the blood curdling war whoop of the dreaded Indian. Then wild confusion reigned. Did these pioneer women sit down and weep, or were they up and doing? Busy hands, with incredible speed, loaded heavy guns and many times, with steady aim sighted and killed the invader. Wounds were dressed with gentle hands and breaking hearts, for, perhaps, mangled and dead by her side lay her dearest, and in her heart the fear of her own dreadful fate. If, in the providence of God, she was spared to see the breaking of day end the horrors of the night and returned to her cabin what comfort had she there to rest her tired frame and anxious mind. There was the breakfast to prepare for famished men and children; a dead log in a cold fireplace to coax with infinite patience into flame—not the quick heat of the gas jet at her instant convenience. Water must be had only by a rush to the spring with danger at every step—not had as now in steady stream by the turn of the hand. Corn must be sent on the back of a horse to the rude, little mill and quickly returned in meal for the great Dutch oven will be heated and ready for the unbaked staff of life, for no cart with tinkling bell will stop before her door to hand out the brown loaf; and when the dreaded night appears, no dazzling light illumines her home with the magic touch of a button, but only a little pan with a lump of grease and rag for wick, giving about as much light as a lightning bug, must suffice for her work on the spinning wheel. Her "club" was composed of a distaff and flax and her "prize" a fine hank of yarn which, when knitted with tired fingers, furnished the family with necessary footwear for the hard winter season. Every article of clothing was spun, woven and made by the mother's own hand.



MRS. LYMAN A. STRONG.