

ON MANY TRAILS

Narrated by J. Y. F. Blake, West Pointer, Indian Fighter, Explorer and Colonel of the Irish Brigade in the Boer War

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Introductory

THIS will be no tale of cities. Over plains and mountains, even into the hidden heart of Africa, the trails will lead. Along them will be heard the shouts of men in conflict, the arguments of guns, the cries of wild animals—much of untrammled life in the wilds of nature which made the author ill content with any other.

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A line of covered prairie-wagons, drawn by mules, traveled slowly from Missouri into Northern Texas in the spring of 1856. The trail was long and dangerous. Nearly every night during the four months of the journey those in charge, a bearded plainsman and his two half-grown sons, built a barricade and stood on watch for bands of raiding Indians. They had not only themselves, their horses and their household goods to protect, but in their care, besides fifty slaves, were the six motherless children of the family, four girls, a toddling boy and a baby. The last is now Colonel J. Y. F. Blake.

On the plains of Denton County, Texas, the father drove the stakes for a new home, and established a horse- and cattle-ranch. All of the buildings were surrounded by high stockades to keep out the Comanche Indians.

After the Civil War, during which in this wild border country he had experiences such as come to few boys, young Blake became a cow-boy and a horse-breaker. At fourteen he did not know his alphabet, but his father determined to give him an education, and Colonel Thomas M. Gunter, an old friend, aided the plan by inviting the young man to come and live at his house in Fayetteville, Arkansas, where the State University was about to be opened. He made the journey of three hundred miles accompanied by his father and brothers, driving a herd of seven hundred horses.

After preliminary study the young man entered the university the first day of its existence, being one of the eight original students. He proved so promising a youth that when Colonel Gunter was elected to Congress he decided to appoint him to West Point. Until the day in 1876 when young Blake started for the military academy he had never seen a railway train. At the age of twenty-four, in 1880, he had been graduated and had

received his commission as a Second Lieutenant in the Sixth Cavalry, United States army, stationed in Arizona.

The Apaches were on the war-path, and he at once found himself in the midst of stirring adventures as an Indian fighter. Within two years General Crook put him in command of the Apache scouts connected with the army. With these he fought against Geronimo and other Chiefs in some of the hardest and most exciting Indian campaigns of the century.

But toward the end of the eighties the Indians, after years of futile fighting, wearied of the war-path and settled down quietly on the reservations, leaving for the army in Arizona no more exciting activities than those of routine post-life. The monotony of this palled upon the young man, who had experienced so much as the commander of the scouts. He was a First Lieutenant now, with a captaincy looming just ahead, but he decided to quit the army. General Miles, who had succeeded General Crook, strongly advised against this course, and the War Department at first refused to accept his resignation. But, feeling that he had repaid the country for his education at West Point, he persisted and in 1889 laid down his sword.

Blake tried business in Grand Rapids, Michigan, but discovering that nature never intended him for a business man, he went to South Africa in 1893 and organized an expedition into the far interior. It consisted of only himself and a Kafir boy, and yet these two pushed their way for a thousand miles into the wilderness of Africa. Dr. Livingstone, with a large escort of natives, had reached no farther north than the Zambesi River. Blake faced the dangers of the jungles with a boy, and reached a point over three hundred miles beyond the river.

On his return, after two years spent in the company of savages and wild animals, he barely escaped with his life in an uprising of the Zulus. He went to London in 1897, and while there wrote for "The National Review" a series of articles about the misrepresentations of the South African capitalists who were selling mining-stocks to the British public. Blake's articles made a sensation, and cost the Chartered Company, according to Cecil Rhodes, five million pounds.

Blake returned to South Africa and was in Pretoria in 1899, when a delegation came to him with the request that he help organize and take command of a brigade of Irishmen to fight the British. In four days the Irish Brigade was organized. He was the only foreigner whom Paul Kruger honored with the rank of colonel. He directed the blowing up of hundreds of miles of railroad, and led the Irishmen in all the important engagements of the Boer War.

Uprising of the Cibicus

THE spirits of the great Chiefs had not come back, as Nakadolumi the medicine-man had declared they would. The Cibicu braves were reticent to speak on such a matter; but they said to the medicine-man with their eyes: "You have lied to us."

And so one night he left the silent tepees, scattered on a slope rising to one of Arizona's barren peaks, and sought out a secret place among the cliffs. On the second day he came stalking back, with a simulated look of triumph on his wrinkled Indian face. He summoned the braves, and with the whole population of the settlement gathered round, drew himself up and spoke:

"I have talked with our fathers, with the mighty warriors of the Cibicus, whose names even, in the old days, made our enemies tremble. I asked them why they would not come back to help their children, you braves before me. Their answer has made



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me grieve. They said that the blood was sluggish in the veins of the sons they bore; that the old spirit was dead within you; that they were ashamed of their children." The medicine-man paused. His small shrewd eyes traveled slowly over the array of strong but stolid faces before him, and the braves hung their heads.

"Our great ancestors are ashamed," he went on, "because their children, warriors of the Cibicus, have allowed the white men to push them back, to put up tepees on their lands, to kill their game, to overrun their hunting-grounds. Who are these pale faces? Cannot anyone of you here who has his growth outdistance a white man on the trail? Can you not find it where he has lost it and wanders helpless to his death? Are you not as brave as he? In their hearts our Chiefs in the happy hunting-grounds know these things. They still have faith in their children; and this is what they said to me. They said that they would come back if they were not forced to see, by the presence of the pale faces, their people's shame. If you give them the old hunting-grounds as they left them, they will come. They will help you keep back the white men, and to wear many scalps. They are watching you, and waiting. I have spoken."

The medicine-man turned and strode into his tepee. The braves had straightened up. Unconsciously they had clinched their fists. They moved away slowly now; but that night a big fire blazed in the camp; tom-toms and weird chanting sounded on the thin mountain air. Indians with fantastically painted faces began to appear in the firelight and to circle around, now stealthily and slowly and now with a sort of frenzied haste, twisting their bodies and leaping wildly. The Cibicu braves were dancing the war-dance. They were preparing to drive the white men away forever.

Hurley a squaw-man told me this. He also saw to it that General Wilcox, who then, in 1881, was commander-in-chief, with headquarters at Prescott, was informed as to what was in the wind. The latter lost no time. He summoned his telegraph operator, and within an hour after the information had been first received General Carr, up at Fort Apache, was reading this message: "Proceed with all speed to the Indian settlement on Cibicu Creek and arrest the medicine-man Nakadolumi, who is stirring up trouble."

In course of the hurried preparations for the