



BY CAPTAIN CHARLES KING, U.S.A. COPYRIGHT, 1893 BY CHARLES KING.

"Somebody signaled out on the plain. It's probably they. Look out for Moreno now. Don't let him or anybody through that door."

"Ah, blow and be d—d to ye!" muttered Feeny. "There's no answer from here ye'll get this night. Watch out now. Some of 'em will try to crawl up after a little."

"But nearly five minutes passed without any sign of sound. Then closer in a horse snuffed and snorted. A coarse Mexican voice muttered a savage oath. Feeny, crouching low, darted into the darkness in the direction of the sound. Plummer and Harvey would have restrained him, but it was too late. He was gone before either could speak. Then a latch creaked and snapped behind them, and slowly and cautiously the wooden shutter began to open outward. In an instant Harvey had raised his rifle and struck the reconnoitering board a fierce blow with the butt. The door flew back, crashing in violent contact against the grizzled pate of Moreno himself, who, with a howl of mingled rage and anguish, fell back from the aperture.

"Open that again, and I'll blow your head off, you scoundrel!" growled Harvey. "Don't you dare show your face outside your room. Every man has orders to shoot you on sight, if that's any comfort to you."

Only for a second had the old Mexican's head appeared, only an instant had he for plea or protestation, but that instant had served to show a narrow streak of light from the room within, and this mere crack revealed to the watchful eyes out upon the plain the position of the ranch—possibly told them something more, for in less than half a minute two horsemen came looping up into the darkness and cantering fearfully toward them. Plummer, as he was, old Plummer's nerves gave a twitch as sharp and stern, young Harvey challenged.

"Halt there! Who are you? Halt! or we fire."

"Friends," shouted one voice, "Americans," the other, as promptly the order to halt was obeyed, the trained horses going almost on their haunches under the cruel force of the huge Mexican bit.

gong on within. The travelers' room and the barroom ports, however, were low and large, and all the rooms were spacious. The bar of course, being the dining as well as drinking room, carried off the honors in point of size. This, too, was furnished with an opening into the corral, but Feeny's first thought on reaching his comrades was to barricade.

Springing into the walled inclosure and bidding Harvey watch while the others worked, he had soon succeeded in logging a score of big barley sacks into the interior and piling them into breastworks at the three doors, the one opening into the corral being provided in addition with a high traverse to protect its guard against shots that might come through from Moreno's room. All this was accomplished amid the fusillade begun by the assailants in hopes of terrorizing the defense before venturing to closer quarters. Like famous Croghan of Fort Stephenson, Feeny had kept up a fire from so many different points as to impress the enemy with the idea there were a dozen men and a dozen guns where there was in reality only one, and even the temptation of that vast sum in the paymaster's safe was not sufficient to nerve the followers of Morales to instant attack.

The valor and vigor of the defense and the appalling death of one of their leaders had so unnerved them that Pasqual himself, raving, imploring, threatening by turns, was unable to urge them to close quarters. "Most men are cowards in the dark" is a theory widely believed in. Indians certainly are only brave against defenses weakly men and children at such a time. Not until the firing had ceased and it was evident that the defenders had retired to the shelter of the ranch, and then only very slowly and cautiously, would these brigands of the desert be induced to resume their stealthy approach. For fully half an hour there was a lull in the fight, and then, guided by the light of the lantern, the two of the stouter hearted knaves approached the western wall and held a brief consultation with the rascally owner.

Rage at the death of their leader's brother and ally, the thirst for vengeance and the hope of securing such rich booty—all were augmented by Moreno's fiery assurances and encourage-



At the door he met their devoted brother.

ment. All the soldiers were gone, he said, except the "pig of a sergeant" and two drugged and senseless swine. Somebody among them was wounded. There were only three, possibly four, left. Let his compuncions make combined attack, two or three through in the corral, and the same number from the south front at once, and beyond doubt the cursed Yankees would succumb. Then no quarter, no quarter for the men. His connection with the outlaw band was now known, and these witnesses must be put to death. Then—the paymaster's safe could readily be battered open, then there was the mint of money to be divided among the victors, they away to Sonora with their spoil and with old Harvey's beautiful daughter. What ransom would he not be willing to pay—that proud, disdainful father! Was ever luck so great? But haste! haste—no moment could be lost. They must act at once.

And so Morales hurried to station and instruct his men. Prowling like coyotes through the darkness and at respectful distance from the guarded end of the corral ranch, half a dozen of the number crept into the corral. Others were distributed over the southern front. Three of the lighter and more slender of the band were "hoisted" through the high west window into Moreno's domain. Then through the middle room they made their way, where sat the woman, weeping, and moaning over the body of the outlaw leader, where, hiding under the bed, shivering and praying, crouched the sonneteer, her daughter, and then, barefooted, they crept into the room adjoining the bar and listened, breathless, to the low toned instructions of the veteran sergeant. From without no glimmer of light could guide the assailants or help them in their aim. The black apertures of the doorways were poor marks for night shooting, and the more enterprising and adventures, crawling like snakes to reconnoiter, were soon able to report that most scientifically had the defense thrown up their breastworks.

From group to group fitted Pasqual. At his shrill battery all hands were to rush simultaneously to the attack, firing no shot for fear of hitting one another, but with pistol in one hand and the long, deadly knife in the other close at once upon the defenders, leap over their barriers and overwhelm them in the dark interior. In three minutes the signal would be given. He himself would lead the dash of the party within the corral. Pasqual was shrewd enough to know that there was only one doorway instead of two there would be better chance of dislodging the bullets. But keen eyes and ears and wit were there alert. Feeny and Harvey well knew that this was but the lull before the storm.

"Lay low, boys, and be ready. Shoot the first man that shows," was the last caution old Plummer heard before the bursting of the tempest. All on a sudden a wild cry went up in the corral. All on a sudden from north and south the assailants dashed forward with answering yell. In an instant the dark apertures flashed their lightning, and rifle and revolver shots rang on the still night air. Harvey's old Springfield barked like a six pounder. Two of the assailants on the south side went down in the dust, face foremost, the others swerved, broke and

scattered for shelter. Pasqual Morales, leading his men close under the north wall, made a pantherlike spring for the crest of the barley parapet and was saved from instant death when he fell by being dragged feet foremost, with a Colt's 44 tearing through his thigh. In vain Morales's squad fired shot after shot through the wooden door. Their bullets buried themselves deep in the improvised traverse, but let no drop of blood, while two return shots scattered the attack with the splinters from the heavy panels. Pleading, raging, maddened, Morales learned that the dash had failed and that two of his most daring men, the two Americans who had ridden forward to personate protectors and who had led the rush in the southern front, were knocked out of the fight.

And then it was that the inhuman brute gave the order to retire to lodges. A mass of flames, spreading rapidly westward. The stout adobe wall separating the ranch proper from the sheds would protect the occupants from direct contact with the flames, but what could save the roof? Stretching from wall to wall were the dry, resinous pine logs that formed the basis of the bulky structure. Over these the lighter boards of pine and over all, thickly piled, dry as bone and inflammable as tinder, heap on heap of brush. Once this was fairly ablaze the hapless occupants of the rooms beneath might as well be under the grating of some huge furnace.

High in air shot the leaping flames. Far and wide over the desert spread the lurid glare. Screaming with terror, the women of Moreno's household were already dragging into the corral their few treasures, rushing back for each raiment as they could save. Far over at the corral gate, where the bullets of the besieged could not find them, Pasqual Morales and his exulting band were gathered, the chief lying upon his scrape, with bloody bandages about his leg, his followers dancing about him in frantic glee, all keeping carefully out of range of the black doorways, yet three or four crack shots lay flat in the sands, their rifles covering the now glaring fronts of the threatened rancho, ready to shoot down, Indianlike, the wretched garrison when driven out.

It was at this juncture that from somewhere in the middle room, behind Moreno's heavy door, a voice was heard: "Hand out the safe. Hand out your money now, and we'll leave you in peace. Every man of us will ride away, and you can come out as soon as we are gone. Answer for you have no time to lose."

"Answer him, you!" shouted Feeny to Mr. Dawes. "Send a shot through and hit him if you can."

But before the clerk could drop the fan with which he was striving to revive his fainting chief, the young fellow from Harvey's party, he who was stationed at the north door and had been so fortunate as to shoot Morales himself, now suddenly sprang from his covert, and placing the muzzle of his Henry rifle close to the door deliberately popped three shots in quick succession through the splintering woodwork, and in the confusion and dismay which resulted was able to leap nimbly into his corner again before the answering shots could come.

"Take that for your answer!" shouted Feeny again, "you black hearted, black lilled thief, and take this, too, bad scum to ye! Every dollar of that money's in greenbacks that'll burn as nix as tizzies, and if you want it come and get it now. 'Tis you that's got no time to lose. Come and get it, I say, for be the soul of St. Patrick you'll never have another chance. Just as sure as ye let that fire reach this ranch and burn those young laddies—old Harvey's daughters that never did ye a scurvy loss to contemplate. Ramon shot dead. Pasqual crippled and the two 'gringos,' the daring, enterprising leaders of the attack, painfully wounded, one probably mortally so. And now, with his flames lighting up the whole valley between the Piescho

Mr. Albert Favorite, of Arkansas City, Kas., wishes to give our readers the benefit of his experience with colds. He says: "I contracted a cold early last spring that settled on my lungs, and had hardly recovered from it when I caught another that hung on all summer and left me with a hacking cough which I thought I never would get rid of. I had used Chamberlain's Cough Remedy five or six times, but with no success, and concluded to try it again. When I had got through with one bottle my cough had left me, and I have not suffered with a cough or cold since. I have recommended it to others, and all speak well of it. 50 cent bottles for sale by D. J. Humphrey."

1894 FEBRUARY 1894. Su. Mo. Tu. We. Th. Fr. Sa. 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28

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The report that Archbishop Ireland is to succeed Mr. Sullivan as the pope's legate in this country and that Mr. Sullivan is to be recalled was officially denied at the residence of the legate in Washington.

The West Superior (Wis.) chamber of commerce offers \$50,000 for the Corbett-Jackson fight.

Hon. John McBride, president of the United Mine Workers of America, says that the direct cause of the Pittsburgh mining riots was starvation.

Public debt increase during January, 1894, \$8,890,000.

Northwestern threshing machine men have organized at Minneapolis for mutual protection.

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