TWO SOLDIERS.

By Capt. CHARLES KING.

CHAPTER XV.

"For heaven's sake, sir, let's get ahead to his support."

Meantime, where are the looked for supports? Lane, with wearied horses, had made the march from the railway station to the pass in a little over fourteen hours. It was 5:30 when he started and 8:15 when he unsaddled among the rocks. He had come through the blazing sunshine of the long June day; sometimes at the trot, sometimes at the lope, ofttimes dismounting and leading when crossing ridges or ravines. He was still pale and weak from his long illness, and suffering from a sorrow that had robbed him of all the buoyancy he had ever possessed. But the sense of duty was as strong as ever, and the soldier spirit triumphed over the ills of the flesh.

Noel, starting at 4:45 p. m., with horses and men fresh and eager, with a guide who knew every inch of the way, and the bright starlight to cheer his comrades, could reasonably be expected to cover the same ground in the same time; every old cavalryman knows that horses travel better by night than by day. By good rights he and his men should be at the pass at least an hour before the time set by Lane. It was only a week before that the captain had declared at the Queen City that he had never felt so "fit" in his life, and a campaign would just suit him. Things seemed to have a different color, however, as he watched the going down of the sun behind the distant Peloncillos. The words of the young infantry adjutant kept recurring to him, and he knew of old that when Lane started after Indians he was "dead sure to get 'em," as Mr. Mason was good enough to remind him.

Twice before sunset the guide had ventured to suggest a quicker gait, but Noel refused, saying that he did not mean to get his horses to the scene worn out and unfit for pursuit. Mr. Mason, who heard this, begged to remind the captain that pursuit was not the object; they were expected to get there in time to help Lane head off the attempt at further flight, and to hold the Apaches, wherever met, until the pursuing force could reach them from the north and hem them in. Noel ranked Mason only a few files, and knew well that all the regiment would side with his subaltern; so he was forced to a show of cordiality and consideration. He rode by the lieutenant's side, assuring him of the sense of strength it gave him to have with him a man of such experience. "For your sake, Mason, I wish I had been twelve hours later, so that you could have had the glory of this thing to yourself; but you know I couldn't stand it. I had to pull wires like sin to get relieved, as it was. Old Hudson, the head of the recruiting service, just swore he wouldn't let me go, because I had had good luck in the class and number of the recruits I sent him. Personally, too, I'm in no shape to ride. See how fat I've grown?"

Mason saw, but said a fifty mile ride ought not to stagger any cavalryman, hard or soft, and made no reply whatever to the captain's account of how he succeeded in getting relieved. He didn't believe a word of it.

Night came on and found them still marching at a steady walk. Halts for rest, too, had been frequently ordered, and at last Mason could stand it no longer. After repeated looks at his watch he had burst out with an earnest appeal:

"Capt. Noel, we'll never get there in time at this rate. Surely, sir, the orders you got from the general must be different from those that came to the post. They said make all speed, lose not a moment. Did not yours say so, too?"

"The general knew very well that I had marched cavalry too often not to understand just how to get there in time," was Noel's stately reply; and, though chafing inwardly, Mason was compelled to silence. Ten o'clock came, and still it was no better. Then both the lieutenant and the guide, after a moment's consultation during a rest, approached the captain and begged him to increase the gait; and when they mounted, the command did, for a while, move on at a jog, which Mason would fain have increased to the lope, but Noel interposed. Midnight, and more rests, found them fully ten miles behind the point where the guide and lieutenant had planned to be. Even the men had begun to murmur among themselves, and to contrast the captain's spiritless advance with Mr. Mason's lively methods. Two o'clock, and the Pyramid range was still far away. Daybreak came, and Mason was nearly mad with misery, the guide sullen and disgusted. Broad daylight—6 o'clock—and here at last were the Pyramid buttes at their right front, and, coming toward them on the trail, a single horseman. "It is Sergt. Luce," said some of the foremost troopers.

And Luce had a note, which he handed to Lieut. Mason; but that gentleman shook his head and indicated Noel. The captain took it in silence, opened it, glanced over the contents, changed color, as all could see, and then inquired:

"How far is it, sergeant?"

"It must be fifteen miles from here, sir. I came slowly, because my horse was worn out, and because Capt. Lane thought that I would meet the troop very much nearer the pass. It's more than fifteen miles, I reckon."

"Had the attack begun before you left?"

"Yes, sir; and I could hear the shots as I came out of the pass—hear them distinctly."

"May I inquire what the news is, captain?" said Mr. Mason, riding up to his side.

"Well," was the reply, "Lane writes that he has headed the Apaches, and that he is just moving in to the attack."

"Will you permit me to see the note, sir?" said Mason, trembling with exasperation at the indifferent manner in which it was received.

Noel hesitated: "Presently—presently, Mr. Mason. We'll move forward at a trot, now."

Sergt. Luce reined about, and, riding beside the first sergeant of K troop, told him in low tones of the adventures of the previous day and night, and the fact that the Apaches were there just north of the pass and in complete force. The result seemed to be, as the word was passed among the men, to increase the gait to such an extent that they crowded upon the leaders, and Noel, time and again, threw up his hand and warned the men not to ride over the heels of his horse.

Seven o'clock came, and still they had not got beyond the Pyramids. Eight o'clock, and they were not in sight of the pass. Nine o'clock, and still the gorge was not in view. It was not until nearly ten that the massive gateway seemed to open before them, and then, far to the front, their eager ears could catch the sound of very sharp and rapid firing.

"My God!" said Mason, with irrepressible excitement, "there's no question about it, captain, Lane's surrounded there! For heaven's sake, sir, let's get ahead to his support."

"Ride forward, sergeant," said Noel to Luce, "and show us the shortest way you know to where Capt. Lane has corraled his horses—I don't like the idea of entering that pass in column, Mr. Mason. The only safe way to do it will be to dismount and throw a line of skirmishers ahead. If Lane is surrounded the Apaches undoubtedly will open fire on us as we pass through."

"Suppose they do, sir; we've got men enough to drive them back. What we want is to get through there as quickly as possible."

But Noel shook his head, and, forming line to the front at a trot, moved forward a few hundred yards, and then, to the intense disgust of Mr. Mason, ordered the first platoon dismounted and pushed ahead as skirmishers. Compelled to leave their horses with number four of each set, the other troopers, sullenly, but in disciplined silence, advanced afoot up the gentle slope which led to the heights on the right of the gorge.

Not a shot impeded their advance; not a sound told them that they were even watched. But far up through the pass itself the sound of sharp firing continued, and every now and then a shrill yell indicated that the Apaches were evidently having the best of it.

Again Mason rode to his captain. "I beg you, sir," he said, "to let me take my platoon, or the other one, and charge through there. It isn't possible that they can knock more than one or two of us out of the saddle; and if you follow with the rest of the men they can easily be taken care of." But Noel this time rebuked him.

"Mr. Mason, I have had too much of your interference," he said, "and I will tolerate no more. I am in command of this troop, sir, and I am responsible for its proper conduct."

And Mason, rebuffed, fell back without further word.

The pass was reached, and still not a shot had been fired. Over the low ridge the dismounted troopers went, and not an Apache was in sight. Then at last it became evident that to cross the stream they would have to ford; and then the "recall" was sounded, the horses were run rapidly forward to the skirmish line, the men swung into saddle, the rear platoon closed on the one in front, and cautiously, with Mason leading and Noel hanging back a little as though to direct the march of his column, the troop passed through the river and came out on the other side. The moment they reached the bank Mason struck a trot without any orders and the men followed him.

Noel hastened forward, shouting out, "Walk, walk." But, finding that they either did not or would not hear him, he galloped in front of the troop and sternly ordered the leaders to decrease their gait and not again to take the trot unless he gave the command.

Just at this minute, from the heights to the right and left, half a dozen shots were fired in quick succession; a trooper riding beside the first sergeant threw up his arms, with the sudden cry: "My God! I've got it!" and fell back from the saddle. Noel at the same instant felt a twinge along his left arm, and, wheeling his horse about, shouted: "To the rear! to the rear! We're ambushed!" And, despite the rallying cry of Mason and the entreaties of the guide, the men, taking the cue from their leader, reined to the right and left about and went clattering out of the pass.

More shots came from the Apaches, some aimed at the fleeing troop and others at the little group of men that remained behind; for the poor fellow who had been shot through the breast lay insensible by the side of the stream, and would have been abandoned to his fate but for the courage and devotion of Mason and two of the leading men. Promptly jumping from their horses, they raised him between them, and, laying him across the pommel of one of the saddles, supported by the troopers, the wounded man was carried back to the ford, and from there out of harm's way.

By this time Noel, at full gallop, had gone four or five hundred yards to the rear, and there the first sergeant—not he—rallied the troop, reformed it, counted fours, and faced it to the front.

When Mason returned to them, leading the two troopers and the dying man, his face was as black as a thunder cloud. He rode up to his captain, who was stanching with a handkerchief a little stream of blood that seemed to be coming down his left arm, and addressed to him these words:

"Capt. Noel, there were not more than six or eight Apaches guarding those heights. There was no excuse in God's world, sir, for a retreat. I can take my platoon and go through there now without difficulty, and once again, sir, I implore you to let me do it."

Noel's reply was: "I have already heard too much from you today, Mr. Mason. If I hear one more word you go to the rear in arrest. I am wounded, sir, but I will not turn over this command to you."

"Wounded be hanged! Capt. Noel, you've got a scratch of which a child ought to be ashamed," was the furious reply, upon which Noel, considering that he must at all hazards preserve the dignity of his position, ordered Lieut. Mason to consider himself in arrest. And, dismounting, and calling to one or two of the men to assist him, the captain got out of his blouse and had the sleeve of his undershirt cut off, and then, in full hearing of the combat up the pass, proceeded to have a scratch, as Mason had truly designated it, stanched and dressed.

Meantime, the troop, shamefaced and disgusted, dismounted and awaited further developments. For fifteen minutes they remained there, listening to the battle a mile away, and then there came a sound that thrilled every man with excitement—with mad longing to dash to the front; there came crashes of musketry that told of the arrival of strong re-enforcements for one party or another—which party was soon developed by the glorious, ringing cheers that they well recognized to be those of their comrades of Greene's battalion.

"By heavens!" said Mason, with a groan, "after all, we have lost our chance! It's Greene, not old K troop, that got there in time to save them."

The looks that were cast towards their new captain by the men, standing in sullen silence at their horses' heads, were not those that any soldier would have envied.

Directing the first sergeant to talk halt a dozen troopers and feel their way cautiously to the front and ascertain what that new sound meant, the rest of the men meanwhile to remain at ease, Noel still sat there on the ground, as though faint from loss of blood. The bleeding, however, had been too trifling to admit of any such supposition on the part of those who had been looking on. The cheering up the pass increased. The firing rapidly died away. Soon it was seen that the first sergeant was signaling, and presently a man came riding back. The sergeant and the others disappeared, going fearlessly into the pass, and evidently indicating by their movements that they anticipated no further resistance. The arriving horseman dismounted, saluted the captain, and reported substantially that the pass was now in possession of Maj. Greene's men, and that the Apaches were in full flight towards the south, some of the troops pursuing.

Then at last it was that the "mount" was sounded by the trumpeter, and half an hour afterwards—full three hours after they should have been there—Capt. Noel, with K troop, arrived at the scene. Lane, faint from loss of blood, was lying under a tree; four of his men were killed; one of the helpless recaptured women had been shot by an Indian bullet; five more of the "Devil's own D's" were lying wounded around among the rocks. Desperate had been the defense; sore had been their need; safe, thoroughly safe, they would have been had Noel got there in time, but it was Greene's battalion that finally reached them only at the last moment. And yet this was the thrilling announcement that appeared in The Queen City Chronicle in its morning edition two days afterwards:

"Gallant Noel! Rescue of the Indian Captives! Stirring Pursuit and Fierce Battle with the Apaches!

"A dispatch received last night by the Hon. Amos Withers announces the return from the front of Capt. Noel, who so recently left our midst, with a portion of his troop, bringing with him the women and children who had been run off by the Apaches on their raid among the ranches south of their reservation. The captain reports a severe fight, in which many of the regiment were killed and wounded, he himself, though making light of the matter, receiving a bullet through the left arm.

"While the rest of the command had gone on in pursuit of the Apaches the captain was sent by the battalion commander to escort the captives back to the railway.

"This dispatch, though of a private character, is fully substantiated by the official report of the general commanding the department to the adjutant general of the army. It reads as follows:

"'Capt. Noel, of the Eleventh cavalry, has just reached the railway, bringing with him all but one of the women and children whom the Apaches had carried off into captivity. The other was shot by a bullet in the desperate fight which occurred in San Simon Pass between the commands of Capts. Lane and Noel and the Apaches, whose retreat they were endeavoring to head off. Greene's battalion of the Eleventh arrived in time to take part; but on their appearance the Apaches fled through the mountains in the wildest confusion, leaving much of their plunder behind them.

"'It is impossible as yet to give accurate accounts of the killed and wounded, but our losses are reported to have been heavy.'

"How thoroughly have the predictions of The Chronicle with regard to this gallant officer been fulfilled! To his relatives and his many friends in our midst The Chronicle extends its most hearty congratulations. We predict that the welcome which Capt. Noel will receive will be all that his fondest dreams could possibly have cherished."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

THE HOG FAMILY.

Some Plain Talk to the Fellow Who Is Numerous in This Broad Land.

The Hog family is not American, nor is it by any means peculiar to this country. The Lady Mavourneen who said with enthusiasm that she could travel without insult from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and that every American of the other sex seemed to make himself her protector said only what is generally true of the American. He is naturally courteous and invincibly good natured. Indeed, it is his good nature which has permitted the family Hog to develop to such proportions. A man enters a hotel "as if it belonged to him." Will he not be forced to pay for his accommodation—and roundly? Shall he not take his ease in his inn? Is he not willing to settle for all the food, drink, comfort, trouble that he may require or occasion? Shall he put himself out for others? If number one does not look out for itself who will look out for it?

And to all this Jonathan good naturedly assents. If number one takes more than his share of the sofa Jonathan moves up. If number one puts his feet on a chair, Jonathan does not stare. If number one still more grossly demonstrates his porcine lineage, Jonathan dislikes to make trouble—until number one comes to despise those whom he insults, and plainly expects every circle to bow to the sovereignty of selfishness. This is a fatal form of good nature, but it has a not unkindly origin. It springs from a social condition in which everybody is expected to help everybody else, because everybody needs help as in a frontier community. Indeed, in many a rural neighborhood still this spirit of lending a hand is supreme. Everybody expects to submit to inconvenience, because he knows that he will require others to submit.

But these refinements of mutual dependence must not be allowed to justify the outrages of selfishness. The passenger in the boat or the train who occupies more than his seat, who sits in one chair, covers another with his feet and a third with his bundles, and smokes, and widely squirts tobacco juice around him until his vicinity is not "a little heaven," but another kind of "h" below, is a public pest and general nuisance, for whose punishment there should be a common law of procedure. But this can be found only where there is a common contempt and resolution which will deprive him of his ill gotten seats in the first place, and make him feel, in the second, the general scorn of his neighbors.

But as we are told constantly and correctly that we are a reading people, it is through reading that the members of the family which is hostis humani generis will learn that they are the most detestable and detested of the great families of the race. You, sir, whose eyes are skimming this page, and who never give your seat to a woman in the elevated car "on principle"—the principle being either that a woman ought not to get into a crowded car, knowing that she will put gentlemen to inconvenience; or that the company ought to forbid the entry of more passengers than there are seats; or that first come should be first served; or that number one, having paid for a seat, has a right to occupy it; or whatever other form the "principle" may assume—you are one of the host against whom the crusade is pushed. Thou art the—well, for the sake of euphony we will say man, but it is not man that is in the mind of your censors.

Or you, madam, who enter the railroad car with an air of right, and a look of reproval at every man who does not spring to his feet, and who settle yourself into the seat offered you without the least recognition of the courtesy that offers it—for you it would be well if the urbane mentor of another day were still here, who, having given his seat to a dashing young woman who seemed unconscious of his presence, looked at her until she impatiently demanded if he wanted anything, and he responding said blandly, "Yes, madam; I want to hear you say thank you."

Both this sir and madam may learn from the daily papers as from this page that even in a car where they recognize no acquaintance a cloud of witnesses around hold them in full survey, and whatever the fashion or richness of their garments, and however supercilious their air, perceive at once whether they belong to the family of ladies and gentlemen, or to that of Charles Lamb's "Mr. H." Thackeray's hero could not have been more aghast to see his divine Ottilia consume with gusto the oysters which were no longer fresh than Romeo to learn by his Juliet's question to that urbane mentor of other years that his mistress must be of kin to the unmentionable family.—George William Curtis in Harper's Magazine.

Bad Spelling No Disgrace.

It cannot properly be said to be disgraceful to a person not to know how to spell correctly, unless the defect can be shown to have come of the abuse of faculties and opportunities which if fairly improved would have enabled the orthographic delinquent to spell with accuracy. And after all Dr. Franklin used to maintain that what are called the worst spellers are frequently the best, inasmuch as they spell nearest to the dictates of common sense and the accepted pronunciation of words.—New York Ledger.