

# WINNING AGAINST FATE

EDWARD D. CLARK

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WASHINGTON.—In the war department in Washington is a letter written by Lieut. Gen. Nelson A. Miles in praise of the deeds of five enlisted men. Gen. Miles' letter is written as simply as becomes a soldier, but it is a pulse-stirring epistle. It is probable that nowhere else in authentic history can there be found an account of a battle won by a force of men when the odds against them were 25 to 1. In no story which can be told concerning the people of the plains is there to be found a tale of greater heroism than that shown by a little contingent of enlisted men of the Sixth United States cavalry down near the Red river in Texas, in the summer of the year 1874. The Sixth cavalry has had a fighting history, but this particular story shines bright in its pages.

The Comanches, the Cheyennes and the Kiowas were on the warpath and were leaving a red trail all along the borders of western Kansas. General, then colonel, Nelson A. Miles, was ordered to take the field against the savages. His expedition fitted out at Fort Dodge and then struck for the far frontier. The combined bands of Indians learned that the troops were on their trail and they fled south to the Red river, of Texas, hotly pursued by two troops of the Sixth cavalry, commanded by Captains Biddle and Compton.

On the bluffs of the Tule river the allied braves made a stand. There were 600 warriors, all told, and they were the finest of the mounted plains Indians. The meager forces of the Sixth, under the leadership of their officers, charged straight at the heart of a force that should have been overwhelming. The reds broke and fled "over the bluffs and through the deep precipitous canyons and out on to the staked plain of Texas."

It became imperatively necessary that couriers should be sent from the detachment of the Sixth to Camp Supply in the Indian Territory. Rein-

forcements were needed and it was necessary as well, to inform the troops at a distance that bands of hostiles had broken away from the main body and must be met and checked.



The whole country was swarming with Indians and the trip to Camp Supply was one that was deemed almost certain death for the couriers who would attempt to make the ride. The commanding officer of the forces in the field, asked for volunteers and Sergt. Zacharias T. Woodall of Troop stepped forward and said that he was ready to go. His example was followed by every man in the two troops, and that day cowardice hung its head.

The ranking captain chose Woodall, and then picked out four men to accompany him on the ride across the Indian-infested wilderness. The five cavalymen went northward under the starlight. At the dawn of the first day they pitched their dog tents in a little hollow and started to make the morning cup of coffee.

When full day was come they saw circling on the horizon a swarm of Cheyennes. The eye of the sergeant told him from the movements of the Indians that they knew of the presence of the troopers and that their circle formation was for the purpose of gradually closing in to the killing.

Sergt. Woodall and his four men chose a place near their bivouac which offered some slight advantage for the purposes of defense. There they waited with carbines advanced, while the red column closed in its lines. The Cheyennes charged, and while charging sent a volley into the little prairie stronghold. Five carbines made answer, and five Cheyenne ponies carried their dead or wounded riders out of range, for in that day mounted Indians went into battle tied to their horses.

Behind the little rampart Sergt. Woodall lay sorely wounded and one man was dying. Let the letter of Gen. Miles tell the rest of the story.

"From early morning to dark, outnumbered 25 to 1, under an almost constant fire and at such a short range that they sometimes used their pistols, retaining the last charge to prevent capture and torture, this little party of five defended their lives and the person of their dying comrade, without food, and their only drink the rainwater that they collected in a pool, mingled with their own

soldiers. Heroism was the order in the old plains days.

In the White River valley of Colorado a detachment of troops was surrounded by Utes, and for four days the soldiers, starving and thirsting, made a heroic defense against the swarming reds. Relief came from Fort D. A. Russell, whence Col. Wesley Merritt led a force to the rescue in one of the greatest and quickest rides of army history.

After Merritt's legion had thrashed and scattered the Utes it was supposed that none of the savages was left in the valley. Lieut. Weir of the Ordnance corps, a son of the professor of drawing at the Military academy, was on a visit to the west, and was in the camp of the Fifth cavalry. A tenderfoot named Paul Hume had wandered out to the camp to look over the scene of the great fight. He knew Weir and he suggested a deer hunt.

The ordnance officer agreed to accompany him and off they started after having received a warning not to wander too far afield. The hunters, eager for the chase, went farther than they thought, and soon they changed from hunters to hunted.

A young lieutenant of the Fifth cavalry, William H. Hall, now stationed in Washington with the rank of brigadier general, was ordered to take a party of three men with him and to make a reconnaissance, for it suddenly became the thought of the commanding officer that there might be savages lurking about. Hall and his men struck into the foothills and circled the country for miles. In the middle of the afternoon they heard firing to the right and front. It was rapid and sharp, and Hall led his men straight whence it came.

Rounding a point of rocks the troopers saw at a little distance across an open place in the hills a band of Utes in war paint and feathers. There were 35 of the reds, all told, and they were firing as fast as they could load and pull trigger in the direction of a small natural fortification of boulders a quarter way up the face of a cliff.

From the rocks came a return fire so feeble that Hall knew there could not be more than two men behind the place of defense. In a trice he thought of Weir and Hume, and he believed that

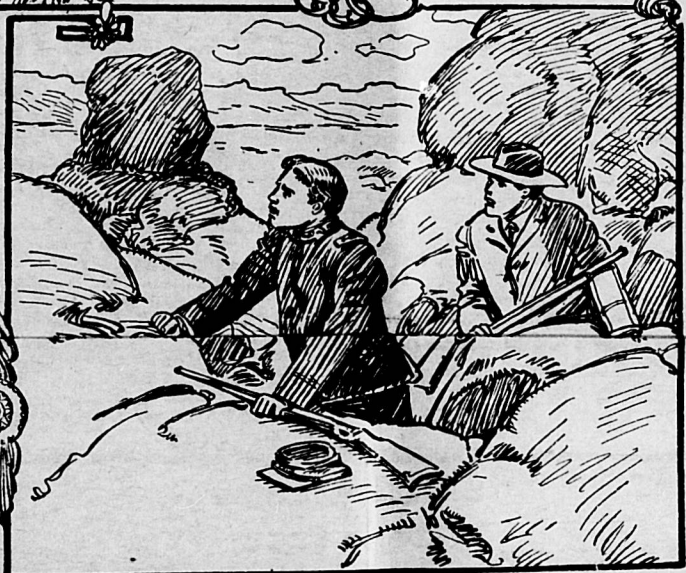


they were the besieged, and subsequent events proved that he was not in error.

Suddenly the Utes took to shelter behind the rocks which were scattered in the open. They had lost one man from the fire of the besieged. They were afraid to charge, knowing that to sweep up that slope, even with only two rifles covering it, meant death for several of their band.

Hall led his men to a position on the flank of the savages and sent in four shots. The bullets were the first notice that the reds had that they had two parties to deal with. They changed their position again in a twinkling, and located themselves so that they were under cover from both directions, but they sent a volley in the face of the little detachment that had ridden in to the rescue.

To charge the enemy with his three men meant certain death to Hall and his troopers. The lieutenant



tion prompt us to recognize, but which we cannot fitly honor."

When night came down over the Texas prairie the Cheyennes counted their dead and their wounded and then fled terror-stricken, overcome by the valor of five American soldiers in the old plains days.

ant thought quickly. He believed that if Weir and Hume could reach him, that the party of six, together, might make a retreat back to the camp, holding the pursuing reds in check. It was a desperate chance, but better than staying where they were to starve and thirst or to be surprised and killed in a night rush of the savages.

Weir and Hume heard the shots of the troopers and knew that help, though it was feeble, was at hand. They saw the hovering smoke of the carbines, and thus located exactly the position of the troops. They started to do what Hall thought they would do. They made a dash for some rocks 20 yards nearer their comrades than were those behind which they were hiding.

The cavalry lieutenant knew that the path of Weir and Hume would be bullet-spattered all the way, and that if they escaped being killed it would be because of a miracle. Then this strapping lieutenant did something besides think. The instant that Weir and his comrade made their break from cover, Hall stood straight up and presented himself a fair and shining mark for the Ute bullets.

The reds crashed a volley at him, ignoring Weir and Hume. The shots struck all around Hall, making a framework of spatters on the rock at his back, but he was unhurt, and Weir and his comrade were behind shelter at the end of the first stage of their journey.

Hall dropped back to shelter and then in a moment, after Weir and Hume had a chance to draw breath for their second dash, he stood up once more, daring the death that seemed certain. The hunted ones struck for the next spot that offered shelter the instant that the Ute rifles spat their volley at the man who was willing to make of himself a sacrifice that others might live. Hall came through the second ordeal of fire unhurt, and once more he dropped back to shelter to prepare for the third trial with fate.

The Ute chieftain was alive by this time to the situation. He ordered his braves to fire, the one-half at Hall and the other half at the two who were now to run death's gantlet.

Hall stood up. Weir and Hume dashed out. The reds divided their fire. Hall stood unhurt. Weir and Hume dropped dead within ten yards of the man who would have died for them.

Hall led his men back over the track that they had come, holding the Utes at bay. Aid came near the end of the perilous trail. Lieut. Hall is now in the military secretary's department at Washington with the rank of a brigadier general. His men told the story of that day in the White River valley, and a bit of bronze representing the medal of honor is worn by the veteran in recognition of a deed done for his fellows.

A woman never gets old enough not to think it isn't a shame for a woman who is as old as somebody else to dress the youthful way she does.—New York Press.

## NEW STRENGTH FOR WOMEN'S BACKS.

### How to Make a Bad Back Better.

Women who suffer with backache, bearing down pains, dizzy spells, and that constant feeling of dullness and tiredness, will find hope in the advice of Mrs. Mary Hinson of 21 Strother St., Mt. Sterling, Ky. "Had I not used Doan's Kidney Pills, I believe I would not be living today," says Mrs. Hinson. "My eyesight was poor, I suffered with nervous, splitting headaches, spots would dance before my eyes and at times I would be so dizzy I would have to grasp something for support. My back was so weak and painful I could hardly bend over to button my shoes and could not get around without suffering severely. Doan's Kidney Pills helped me from the first, and I continued until practically well again."

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### MISSED IT.



Aunt—Well, Johnny, I suppose you had a nice sojourn in the country? Johnny—Um, well, I had lots of nice apples an' peaches an' watermelons an' things, but I guess them sojourn things wasn't ripe yet.

A New One About Napoleon. A "new" story about Napoleon is necessarily doubtful; the probability is that it is simply so old that it has been forgotten. However, here is one that Arthur M. Chuquet prints in L'Opinion as never before published. It relates to Napoleon and Blucher.

The emperor received the general at the castle of Finkenstein, while he was preparing for the siege of Danzig. He drew him to a window in an upper story and paid him compliments on his military gifts, and Blucher, going away delighted, described the interview to his aide-de-camp. "What a chance you missed!" exclaimed the latter.

"You might have changed the whole course of history."

"How?" "Why, you might have thrown him out of the window."

"Confound it!" replied Blucher. "So

### From Overhead.

A canary hung directly over the big square table in the Hungarian restaurant.

"Once," said a woman who was dining there, "the bottom dropped out of the cage, the bird flew at the orchestra yonder, and we had bird seed in our soup. It was awful."

"That reminds me," said the cross-eyed man, "of one time when we were having a little game of poker on the B. & O. You know how those trains roll. Well, just about the middle of the game down came all the grips and dress suit cases straight into the kitty and broke up the game. Money flew everywhere. We got so mixed we couldn't tell which had won or where the money was that whoever had won it won. Talk about bird seed!"

The board of agriculture, industry and commerce has been granted leave to establish a factory to manufacture authentic weights and measures for uniform use throughout the empire of China.

### THE DOCTOR'S WIFE Agrees with Him About Food.

A trained nurse says: "In the practice of my profession I have found so many points in favor of Grape-Nuts food that I unhesitatingly recommend it to all my patients."

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Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.

Down on the Farm. New Arrival—What time do the summer boarders begin to thin out down here? Farmer Ryetop—Wall, neighbor, they get thinner and thinner every week until about the last of September they are so thin they cut the hammocks through and then we ship them back to town.—Chicago News.

Mr. Rockefeller advises young men to read the "Life of Amos Lawrence," and does not add parenthetically, "If Doctor Elliot includes it in his shelf of books."

### Fall Song.

Farewell, mah honey, de summe ahm gwine, De peach tree's bahe and de melon vine dyin', En de 'I folks am toddlin' back to school. Down in de woods de dry lebes scatch, En de jay buhd soun's his mounhful call; But, cheeh up, man, Br'er Possum's gittin' fatteh, En it's hurrah, mah honey, foh de fall.

If these amateurish aviators want to watch real soaring, just let them take a look at beef prices.

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