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CHAPTER III.—CONTINUED.

Reno was some 90 miles away, and not until late the next evening did the grays reach the lonely post. Not a sign of hostile Indian had been seen or heard, said the officer in command. Small bands of hunters were out toward Pumpkin Butte two days before. Yes, Ogallallas—and a scouting party, working down the valley of the Powder, had met no band at all, though trails were numerous. They were now patrolling toward the Big Horn. Perhaps there'd be a courier in to-morrow. Better get a good night's rest meantime, he said. But all the same he doubled his guards and ordered extra vigilance, for all men knew John Folsom, and when Folsom was anxious on the Indian question it was time to look alive. Daybreak came without a sign, but Folsom could not rest. The grays had no authority to go beyond Reno, but such was his anxiety that it was decided to hold the troop at the cantonment for a day or two. Meantime, despite his years, Folsom decided to push on for the Gap. All efforts to dissuade him were in vain. With him rode Baptiste, a half-breed Frenchman, whose mother was an Ogallalla squaw, and "Bat" had served him many a year. Their canteens were filled, their saddle-pouches packed. They led along an extra mule, with camp equipage, and shook hands gravely with the officers ere they rode away. "All depends," said Folsom, "on whether Red Cloud is hereabouts in person. If he is and I can get his ear I can probably stave off trouble long enough to get those people at the Gap back to Kearney, or over here. They're goners if they attempt to stay there and build that post. If you don't have word from us in two days, send for all the troops the government can raise. It will take every mother's son they've got to whip the Sioux when once they're leagued together."

"But our men have the new breech-loaders now, Mr. Folsom," said the officers. "The Indians have only old percussion-cap rifles, and not too many of them."

"But there are 20 warriors to every soldier," was the answer, "and all are fighting men."

They watched the pair until they disappeared far to the west. All day long the lookouts searched the horizon. All that night the sentries listened for hoofbeats on the Bozeman road, but only the weird chorus of the coyotes woke the echoes of the dark prairie. Dawn of the second day came, and, unable to bear suspense, the major sent a little party, mounted on their fleetest horses, to scour the prairie at least halfway to the foothills of the Big Horn, and just at nightfall they came back—three at least—galloping like mad, their mounts a mass of foam. Folsom's dread was well founded. Red Cloud, with heaven only knows how many warriors, had camped on Crazy Woman's Fork within the past three days, and gone on up stream. He might have met and fought the troops sent out three days before. He must have met the troops dispatched to Warrior Gap.

And this last, at least, he had done. For a few seconds after the fall of the buffalo bull, the watchers on the distant ridge lay still, except that Dean, turning slightly, called to the orderly trumpeter, who had come trotting out after the troop commander, and was now halted and afoot some 20 yards down the slope. "Go back, Bryan," he ordered. "Halt the ambulances. Notify Capt. Brooks that there are lots of Indians ahead, and have the sergeant deploy the men at once." Then he turned back and with his field glass studied the party along the ravine.

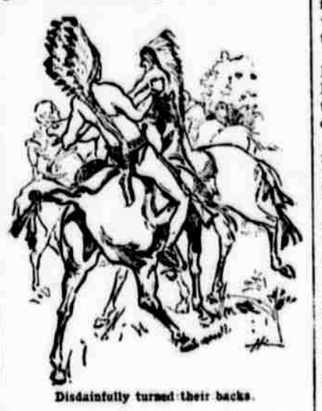
"They can't have seen us, can they, lieutenant?" muttered the trooper nearest him.

But Dean's young face was grave and clouded. Certainly the Indians acted as though they were totally unaware of the presence of troops, but the more he thought the more he knew that no big body of Sioux would be traveling across country at so critical a time (country, too, that was conquered as this was from their enemies, the Crows), without vigilant scouts afar out on front and flank. The more he thought the more he knew that even as early as three o'clock those keen-eyed fellows must have sighted his little column, conspicuous as it was because of its wagons. Beyond question, he told himself, the chief of the band or village so steadily approaching from the northeast had full information of their presence, and was coming confidently ahead. What had he to fear? Even though the blood of settlers and soldiers might still be red upon the hands of his braves, even though fresh scalps might be dangling at this moment from their shields, what mattered it? Did he not know that the safeguard of the Indian bureau spread like the wing of a protecting angel over him and his people, forbidding troops to molest or open fire unless they themselves were attacked? Did he not laugh in his ragged shirt sleeve at the policy of the white fool who would permit the red enemy to ride boldly up to his soldiers, count their numbers, inspect their array, satisfy himself as to their armament and readiness, then calculate the chances, and, if he thought the force too strong, ride on his way with only a significant gesture in parting insult? If, on the contrary, he found it weak, then he could turn loose his braves, surround, massacre and scalp, and swear before the commissioners sent out to investigate next moon that he and his people knew nothing about the matter—nothing, at least, that they could be induced to tell.

One moment more Dean watched and waited. Two of the Indians in the line were busily reloading their guns. Two others were aiming over the bank, for, with the strange stupidity of their kind, the other buffalo, as when startled by the shot, had gone or sought safety in flight, but were now sniffing the odor of blood on the tainted air and slowly, wonderingly drawing near the stricken leader as though to ask what ailed him. Obedient and docile the Indian ponies stood with drooping heads, hidden under the shelter of the steep banks. Nearer and nearer came the big black animals, bulky, stupid, fatuous; the foremost lowered a huge head to sniff at the blood oozing from the shoulder of the dying bull, then two more shots puffed out from the ravine, the huge head tossed suddenly in air, and the ungainly brute started and staggered, whirled about and darted a few yards away, then plunged on its knees, and the next moment, startled at some sight the soldier watchers could not see, the black band was seized with sudden panic and darted like mad into the depths of the watercourse, disappeared one moment from sight, then, suddenly reappearing, came laboring up the hither side, straight for the crest on which they lay, a dozen black, bounding, panting beasts thundering over the ground, followed by half a dozen darting Indian ponies, each with his lithe rider scurrying in pursuit.

"Out of the way, men! Don't fire!" shouted Dean. And, scrambling back toward their horses, the lieutenant and his men drew away from the front of the charging herd, invisible as yet to the halted troop and to the occupants of the ambulance, whose eager heads could be seen poked out at the side doors of the leading vehicle, as though watching for the cause of the sudden halt.

And then a thing happened that at least one man saw and fortunately remembered later. Bryan, the trumpeter, with jabbing heels and flapping arms, was tearing back toward the troop at the moment at the top speed of his gray charger, already so near that he was shouting to the sergeant in the lead. By this time, too, that veteran trooper, with the quick sense of duty that seemed to inspire the wartime sergeant, had jumped his little column "front into line" to meet the unseen danger; so that now, with carbines advanced, some thirty blue jackets were aligned in the loose fighting order of the prairies in front of the foremost wagon. The sight of the distant officer and men tumbling hurriedly to one side, out of the way presumably of some swiftly-coming peril, acted like magic on the line. Carbines were quickly brought to ready, the gun locks crackling in chorus as the



Disdainfully turned their backs.

horses pranced and snorted. But it had a varying effect on the occupants of the leading wagon. The shout of "Indians" from Bryan's lips, the sight of scurry on the ridge ahead brought the engineer and aid-de-camp springing out, rifle in hand, to take their manly part in the coming fray. It should have brought Maj. Burleigh too, but that appropriately named noncombatant never showed outside. An instant more and to the sound of rising thunder, before the astonished eyes of the cavalry line there burst into view, full tear for safety, the uncouth, yet marvelously swift-running leaders of the little herd. The whole dozen came flying across the sky line and down the gentle slope, heading well around to the left of the line of troopers, while sticking to their flanks like red nettles half a dozen warriors rode like the wind on their nimble ponies, cracking away with revolver or rifle in savage joy in the glorious sport. Too much for Burleigh's nerve was the combination of sounds, thunder of hoofs and sputter of shots, for when a cheer of sympathetic delight went up from the soldier line at the sight of the chase, and the young engineer sprang to the door of the ambulance to help the major out, he found him a limp and ghastly heap, quivering with terror in the bottom of the wagon, looking for all the world as if he were trying to crawl under the seat.

CHAPTER IV.

Away to the left of the little command tore the quarry and the chase. Out on the rolling prairie, barely four hundred yards from where the ambulance and mules were backed into a tangle of traces and whiffletrees and fear-stricken creatures, another buffalo had dropped in a heap; a swarthy rider had tumbled off his pony, cut a slash or two with ever-ready knife, and then, throwing a bead-bedizened left leg over his eager little mount, had gone lashing away after his fellows, not without a jeering slap at the halted soldiery. Then, in almost less time than it takes to tell it, the pursued and pursuers had vanished from sight over a low ridge a mile to the north. "Only a hunting party!" said one of the nervous recruits, with a gulp of relief. "Only a hunting party," gasped Burleigh, as presently he heaved himself up from the floor, "and I thought I'd never find that damned gun of mine. All this fuss for nothing!" he continued, his lips still blue and quivering. "That green youngster up there in front hasn't learned the first principles of plainscraft yet. Here, Brooks," he added, loudly, "it's high time you were looking after this sub of yours," and Brooks, despite his illness, was indeed working out of the back door of his yellow trundle bed at the moment, and looking anxiously about. But the engineer stood pale and quiet, coolly studying the flustered growler, and when Burleigh's shifting eyes sought that young scientist's face, what he read there—and Burleigh was no fool—told him he would be wise to change the tune. The aid had pushed him in front of the troop and was signaling to Dean, once more in saddle and scanning through his glass the big band afar down the valley.

"Take my horse, sir," said the sergeant, dismounting, and the officer thanked him and rode swiftly out to join the young commander at the front. Together they gazed and consulted and still no signal came to resume the advance. Then the troopers saw the staff officer make a broad sweep with his right arm to the south, and in a moment Dean's hat was uplifted and waved well out in that direction. "Drop carbine," growled the sergeant. "By twos again. Incline to the right. Damn the Sioux, I say! Have we got to circle five miles around their hunting ground for fear of hurting their feelings? Come on, Jimmy," he added to the driver of the leading wagon. Jimmy responded with vigorous language at the expense of his leading mules. The quartermaster and engineer silently scrambled in; the ambulance started with a jerk and away went the party off to the right of the trail, the wagons jolting a bit now over the uneven clumps of bunch grass.

But once well up at the summit of the low divide the command reined in for a look at the great Indian cavalcade swarming in the northeastward valley, and covering its grassy surface still a good mile away. Out from among the dingy mass came galloping half a dozen young braves, followed by as many squaws. The former soon spread out over the billowy surface, some following the direction of the chase, some bounding on southwestward as though confident of finding what they sought the moment they reached the nearest ridge; some riding straight to the point where lay the carcasses of the earliest victims of the hunt. Here in full view of the soldiery, but vouchsafing them no glance nor greeting whatever, two young warriors reined in their lively ponies and disdainfully turned their backs upon the spectators on the divide, while the squaws, with shrill laugh and chatter, rolled from their saddles and began the drudgery of their lot—skinning and cutting up the buffaloes slaughtered by their lords.

"Don't you see," sneered Burleigh, "it's nothing but a village out for a hunt—nothing in God's world to get stampeded about. We've had all this show of warlike preparations for nothing." But he turned away again as he caught the steady look in the engineer's blue eyes, and shouted to his more appreciative friend, the aid-de-camp: "Well, pardner, haven't we fooled away enough time here, or have we got to await the pleasure of people that never saw Indians before?"

Dean flushed crimson at the taunt. He well knew for whom it was meant. He was indignant enough by this time to speak for himself, but the aid-de-camp saved him the trouble.

"I requested Mr. Dean to halt a few moments, Burleigh. It is necessary I should know what band this is, and how many are out."

"Well, be quick about it," snapped the quartermaster. "I want to get to Reno before midnight, and at this rate we won't make it in a week."

A sergeant who could speak a little Sioux came riding back to the camp, a grin on his sun-blistered face. "Well, sergeant, what'd he say?" asked the staff officer.

"He said would I plaze go to hell, sor," was the prompt response.

"Won't he tell who they are?"

"He won't, sorr. He says we know widout askin', which is thrue, sorr. They're Ogallallas to a man, barrin' the squaws and pappooses, wid ould Red Cloud himself."

"How'd you find out if they wouldn't talk?" asked the staff officer, impatiently.

"'Twas the bucks wouldn't talk—except in swear wurruds. I wasted no time on them, sorr. I gave the first squaw the last hardtack in me saddle-bags and tould her was it Machpealota, and she said it was, and he was wid Box Karesha—that's ould Folsom—not six hour ago, an' Folsom's gone back to the cantonment."

"Then the quicker we skip the better," were the aid-de-camp's words. "Get us to Reno fast as you can, Dean. Strike for the road again as soon as we're well beyond their buffalo. Now for it! There's something behind all this bogus hunt business, and Folsom knows what it is."

And every mile of the way, until thick darkness settled down over the prairie, there was something behind the trooper cavalcade—several somethings—wary red men, young and wiry, who never let themselves be seen, yet followed on over wave after wave of prairie to look to it that no man went back from that column to carry the news of their presence to the little battalion left in charge of the new post at Warrior Gap.

It was the dark of the moon, or, as the Indians say, "the nights the moon is sleeping in his lodge," and by ten p. m. the skies were overcast. Only here and there a twinkling star was visible, and only where some trooper struck a light for his pipe could a hand be seen in front of the face. The ambulance mules that had kept their steady jog during the late afternoon and the long gloaming that followed still seemed able to maintain the gait, and even the big, lumbering wagon at the rear came briskly on under the tug of its triple span, but in the intense darkness the guides at the head of the column kept losing the road, and the bumping of the wagons would reveal the fact, and a halt would be ordered, men would dismount and go bending and crouching and feeling their way over the almost barren surface, hunting among the sage brush for the double furrow of the trail. Matches innumerable were consumed, and minutes of valuable time, and the quartermaster waxed fretful and impatient, and swore that his mules could find their way where the troopers couldn't, and finally, after the trail had been lost and found half a dozen times, old Brooks was badgered into telling Dean to let the ambulance take the lead. The driver shirked at once.

"There's no tellin' where we'll fetch up," said he. "Those mules can't see the trail if a man can't. Take their harness off and turn 'em loose, an' I suppose they can find their way to the post, but sure as you turn them loose when they've got somethin' on 'em, or behind 'em, and the doggone cussedness of the creatures will prompt them to smash things."

(To Be Continued.)

They have a right to censure, that have a heart to help. The rest is cruelty, not injustice.

Poker and Politics.

"Charley, dear," said young Mrs. Torkins, "I hope you are not departing from the precepts of our forfathers and allowing yourself to be dazzled by the pomp and glitter of empire?"

"What book did you get that out of?" asked her husband.

"No book," she answered, stoutly. "I remembered some of it after reading a newspaper article. But I hope you have not abandoned your old principles. Last night you were talking in your sleep, and you said several times that all you wanted was another king to make you all right. And after the trouble we had with George III, it does seem perfectly foolish."—Washington Star.

A Little Fable.

There was once an eminent statesman, who was always ready to take the initiative, or anything else that was not chained down.

One day another eminent statesman chanced upon him while he was busily writing.

"What are you doing?" asked the second statesman.

"Drafting a bill to disfranchise the illiterates," responded the first, "and, by the way, I am glad you dropped in. How do you spell illiterates?"

Moral—A night school for reformers would draw well.—Baltimore American.

Loyalty to His Employer.

That young man who consented to have a portion of his blood let out to save his employer, set a remarkable example of heroism. The incident shows what power there is in good blood. There is only one natural way to get good blood, and that is from the stomach. If the stomach needs assistance, try Hostetter's Stomach Bitters. This wonderful medicine cures dyspepsia, indigestion, constipation, and makes rich red blood.

The Way of the World.

Town: Every man must hustle for himself, or get left. You'll get very little in this world if you don't ask for it.

Browne: Yes, there's one thing you're likely to get most of if you don't ask for it.

"What's that?"

"Credit."—Philadelphia Press.

Spelts, 80 bus. per Acre

Of this remarkable hay and cereal food Adam Herwebe of Iowa writes to the John A. Salzer Seed Co., La Crosse, Wis., the introducers: "Spelts beats anything and everything I ever saw for stooling, for food and for yield. I could hardly believe my own eyes that I grew from one kernel of seed 72 big heads." While E. L. Rogers, Castlemore, Canada, says Spelts yielded him at the rate of 100 bus. per acre. It will pay every farmer on earth to try Spelts. Write to Salzer to-day about it. [K.]

Neglected His Business.

A Kansas City physician went in southwest Missouri for a day's shooting, and on his return complained to his wife that he had killed nothing. "Hum—that's what you get," she volunteered, "for neglecting a day's business."—Kansas City Star.

Piso's Cure is the best medicine we ever used for all affections of the throat and lungs.—Wm. O. Endsley, Vanburen, Ind., Feb. 10, 1900.

The best education in the world is that got by struggling to obtain a living.—Wendell Phillips.

Red Cross Ball Blue is the best in the world. Large 2 oz. package costs 5 cents.

Failure is one of the things that are spoiled by success.—Chicago Daily News.

How She Floored Him.

A fresh young man had a large chunk of conceit removed from his cranium during the past week. The one who removed it was a pretty young Dublin girl who is in Albany for a few weeks' visit while awaiting the establishment of her father's home in the west. One evening last week she was visiting at a friend's house when the fresh young man dropped in. He was charmed with her ways and wit, and worked hard all evening to create an impression. He was flattering himself on his success until the end, which occurred as he left her at the door of her temporary home. Before saying good-night she thanked him heartily for his kindness in accompanying her home.

"Oh, don't mention it," gurgled the young man in his nicest way.

"Indeed, I won't. I'm as much ashamed of it as you are," was the startling reply.

The fresh young man is worrying about what she really meant.—Albany Journal.

Hewitt—"That man has made a great deal of trouble in the world." Jewett—"I shouldn't guess it; he looks like a peaceable fellow." Hewitt—"Well, it's a fact; he's a clergyman, and he's married a good many people."—Town Topics.

"We had the first trouble at our house this morning," said the newly married man. "No gas?" suggested the old bachelor. "Worse than that. I undertook to correct the English of our German cook and my wife will hereafter have to get the meals."—Indianapolis News.

Dooley—"What's the matter wid ye anyhow, Mick—all tattered an' torrun an' bitten an' scratched all over?" Mick—"Ay, an' me own dog done it! I went home sober last noight, an' the baste didn't know me!"—Punch.

Mrs. Henpeck—"I'm often sorry I didn't marry that army officer when I had the chance." Henpeck—"I'm sorry, too, my dear. Perhaps he'd have been able to stand you, having been used to hazing in his younger days."—Town Topics.

Catarrh Cannot Be Cured

with Local Applications, as they cannot reach the seat of the disease. Catarrh is a blood or constitutional disease, and in order to cure it you must take internal remedies. Hall's Catarrh Cure is taken internally, and acts directly on the blood and mucous surfaces. Hall's Catarrh Cure is not a quack medicine. It was prescribed by one of the best physicians in this country for years, and is a regular prescription. It is composed of the best tonics known, combined with the best blood purifiers, acting directly on the mucous surfaces. The perfect combination of the two ingredients is what produces such wonderful results in curing Catarrh. Send for testimonials, free.

F. J. CHENEY & CO., Props., Toledo, O.

Sold by all druggists, price 75c.

Hall's Family Pills are the best.

Force of Habit.

Would-Be Suitor—I desire to pay my addresses to your youngest daughter, sir. Have you any objections?

Druggist—My youngest daughter is already engaged, young man, but I have another daughter just as good.—Somerville Journal.

Cheap Rates to California.

February 12th and each Tuesday thereafter, until and including April 30th, Special Low Rate Colonist Tickets will be sold via the Southern Pacific Company's "Ogden" and "Sunset" Routes to all points in California. The rate will be: From Chicago $30.00, from St. Louis, Memphis and New Orleans $27.50, from Omaha, Kansas City, etc., $25.00. Corresponding low rates from all other points east and north.

For particulars and detailed information pertaining to the Southern Pacific Company's Routes, and these special rates to California, call upon or address

W. G. Neimyer, G. W. A., S. P. Co., 238 Clark St., Chicago, Ill.

W. H. Connor, C. A., S. P. Co., Chamber of Commerce Bldg., Cincinnati, Ohio.

G. G. Herring, C. A., S. P. Co., 711 Park Bldg., Pittsburg, Pa.

L. E. Townsley, C. A., S. P. Co., 421 Olive St., St. Louis, Mo.

C. C. Cary, C. A., S. P. Co., 208 Sheidley Bldg., Kansas City, Mo.

Miss Lafin—"What has become of Mr. Clay?" Mr. Rand—"He has taken employment in a powder mill for six months." Miss Lafin—"How strange!" Mr. Rand—"Not at all. He wished to break himself of smoking."—Stray Stories.

It Is a Good Thing.

Everyone should be glad to say a good word for an article that deserves it, which accounts for the universal endorsement of the Sterling Remedy Co., makers of the famous Cascarets. Within five years the sale of Cascarets has grown from a single box until last year it reached the enormous sale of over 6,000,000 boxes. This is a matter of pride to newspaper men because Cascarets has been very largely and persistently advertised in newspapers for a number of years, and it shows that advertising of the right kind will certainly bring success. All druggists report an enormous demand for Cascarets that is steadily increasing. They are put up in convenient form and the prices are 10c., 25c., and 50c. a box. A 50c. box is enough for one month's treatment. Anyone who has the slightest liver or bowel trouble is urged to give them a trial.

Didn't Want It Pulled Out.

Mrs. Naggs—Don't you know that wearing your hat in the house will cause your hair to fall out?

Mr. Naggs—Yes; but then I prefer to lose it that way.—Chicago Daily News.

To Cure a Cold in One Day

Take Laxative Bromo Quinine Tablets. All druggists refund money if it fails to cure. 25c.

"Say, ma!" "What is it, my daughter?" "When shall I be big enough to have a chaperon?"—Town Topics.

If you wish to have beautiful, clear white clothes, ask for Red Cross Ball Blue. Refuse imitations.

Theodore—"He went so far as to call me a puppy!" Harriet—"And at your age! The idea!"—Boston Transcript.

Each package of PUTNAM FADELESS DYES colors either Silk, Wool or Cotton perfectly. Sold by all druggists.

"Yes," said Charles, "I have had some very trying experiences in my time. I was struck senseless once."—Chicago Journal.

The Mexicans allay their thirst by chewing Chicle, which is the main ingredient of White's "Yucatan" Gum.

Every man has a show in life, but few of them find it a circus.—Star of Hope.

The astronomer is a space reporter.—Chicago Daily News.