

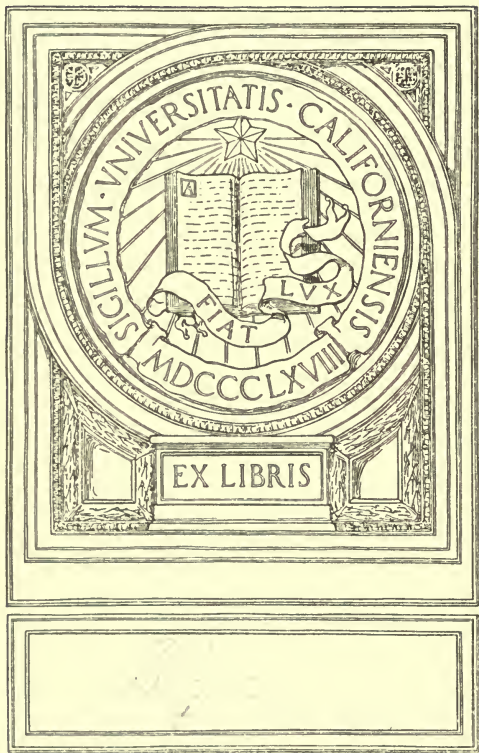
TONDA

A STORY OF THE SIOUX.



BY
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PREFACE.

We have had many books treating of life on the Plains, ranging from pure fiction to that which can lay some claim to historical accuracy. In these, with one or two exceptions, the rough-and-ready Whites are endowed with virtues and the Indians not only are denied them, but are portrayed as skulking savages. It is only in recent years that the Indian has had justice done him, for which he should thank the ethnologist, the philanthropist, and the educator.

In Tonda we regard the white people through Indian eyes, and most of the aborigines are sketched from life or are composites of what was best in "old time" Indians. There is a sharp distinction to be drawn between Indians of forty years ago and those of the present day.

While the author wishes to have Tonda classed as fiction, many of the incidents related actually occurred. Generally, the customs are true to life, although some ethnological liberties have been taken. The Indian form of speech is frequently changed, yet many sentences are given as literal translations—from governmental and other reports, from the author's records made while at Pine Ridge reservation, etc.

The men responsible for most of the trouble with the Plains tribes from 1840 to 1891 were traders, hunters, horse-thieves, adventurers, and other white rascals. As a rule, the *bona fide* pioneers and settlers were noble

men and it is far from the writer's intention to speak ill of them. As the Indians came in contact with the *worst* white men, naturally the Bills and Dicks of these pages do not present an edifying spectacle.

It is worthy of note that Canada has had no serious trouble with her Indians during the past hundred years. Why?

W. K. M.

Andover, Massachusetts, March 10, 1904.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER.	PAGE
I TONDA COMES HOME	1
II THE COUNCIL	15
III TONDA AT THE AGENCY.....	24
IV THE BUFFALO DANCE	35
V THE BUFFALO HUNT	49
VI RICHARDS MEETS THE HORSE THIEVES.....	61
VII A FIGHT WITH THE CROWS.....	67
VIII THE SIOUX PLAN AGAINST THE HORSE THIEVES....	85
IX O'DONNELL AND TONDA	98
X LE MOYNE AND SPOTTED EAGLE.....	108
XI TONDA ESCAPES FROM SPOTTED EAGLE.....	120
XII DEFEAT OF THE HORSE THIEVES.....	134
XIII TONDA AND STRONG HEART	150
XIV THE MARRIAGE OF TONDA	159
XV MINERS ARE DISCOVERED	165
XVI CUSTER COMES	177
XVII RUNNER AND THE WOLVES	189
XVIII THAT CORK LEG	201
XIX DEATH OF MINNEHAHA	209
XX TROUBLE IN THE NORTH	216
XXI TONDA RESCUES RAIN-IN-THE-FACE.....	225
XXII PRISONERS ARE KILLED	234
XXIII THE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE	244
XXIV EXELBY'S SCHEME	260
XXV CUSTER MAKES WAR	275
XXVI THE WAR DANCE	282
XXVII THE DEATH OF CUSTER	289
XXVIII CONCLUSION	300

ILLUSTRATIONS.

	PAGE
TONDA	<i>Frontispiece.</i>
OMAHA AND TWO BEARS	11
WADAH, THE MEDICINE MAN	19
STRONG HEART	40
THE HIDE-HUNTER	48
STRONG HEART ESCAPES FROM THE HERD.....	54
WHERE THE MILLIONS HAVE GONE.....	59
RAIN-IN-THE-FACE IN FULL COSTUME.....	84
THE EVIL FACE OF SPOTTED EAGLE.....	110
RAIN-IN-THE-FACE IN ORDINARY COSTUME	123
THE SIOUX AND THE HORSE THIEVES.....	135
THE DEATH OF JACK.....	144
BILLY BURNS THE AGENCY.....	171
MINNEHAHA	212
RED CLOUD AND PROFESSOR MARSH.....	256
SITTING BULL	273
THE DEATH OF CUSTER	296
STRONG HEART, JR.....	301





T O N D A .

I.

TONDA COMES HOME.

It was nearly thirty years ago. Those were the good old times of the Indians, which to-day they touchingly refer to as "the-days-when-buffalo-were-here."

A great Sioux village lay along the Niobrara river in northern Nebraska, the heart of the buffalo country. Three or four days' journey northward were the Black Hills, far to the south and the east lay the White settlements; beyond the Black Hills on the upper Missouri lived the Crow Indians — hereditary enemies of the Sioux.

It was early morning, and the camp had bestirred itself. Over the sand-hills eastward the sun was mounting and the prairie dogs with joyous and multitudinous barks hailed his warm beams. Indeed it was a happy day for all. Did not the Great Father on this date give rations to his red children? So the squaws must needs hasten, and the smouldering embers of the camp-fires were raked together, and the blaze rekindled. The remnants of food in the tipis were prepared and hastily eaten, and, as soon as the ponies could be caught and brought in from the plain, nearly every man, woman, and child mounted and rode off to the agency buildings, five miles distant, to receive supplies.

Near the center of the village stood Two Bears' lodge. Like all the tipis, it was built of heavy buffalo hides

some twenty-two feet high and fifteen feet base diameter. The poles supporting the hides were strong and straight. Inside lived, besides the warrior and his wife, two girls. The younger, although about ten years of age, had not yet been named—according to a custom prevalent among tribes of long ago. When some important event in her history occurred she would be named accordingly.

Two Bears himself was a head warrior and sat in the old men's council. He was an intelligent, kindly old fellow, highly respected, and he stood nearly on an equality with the second chief, Gopher. Omaha, the squaw, was named after the tribe of Indians from whom she had been captured, the Omahas. In Indian history it often happens that a woman is seized during a fight or raid upon a village. She is adopted by her captors, and is taken to wife by the man who captured her or by one of his relatives. She soon becomes reconciled to her new home, and no social distinction is made by the women of the village between her and any of the squaws whom they have known since childhood.

Two Bears' family took along two extra horses, not because they expected to receive more supplies than other Sioux, but that they might be properly prepared for a certain event. Their eldest daughter was coming back to them; a bright beautiful girl of eighteen, the pet of the entire village, Tonda, or Bright Star. Tonda had been some three years in the East, for her parents, listening to the good advice of a missionary, had permitted him to place her in one of the schools for Indian girls.

In the olden times food was issued to the Sioux on every alternate Wednesday, which was designated by them "the-day-we-get-food." It was always followed by feasting, dancing, and demonstrations of joy. The provisions would be amply sufficient to keep the natives in food dur-

ing the ensuing fortnight if they were at all economical, but they generally gorge themselves to the utmost capacity during the next few days and nights; hence when two weeks have passed they are often in sore need of food.

And so they set out for the agency and scattered themselves, observing no order, as they journeyed toward the goal. Some of them raced their horses, and each man took care of himself, for first come would be first served, and in the eyes of the agent the chief was no better than a common warrior.

The government buildings consisted of a small two-story frame house, in which the agent lived; smaller houses for the "boss herder" who had charge of the cattle, and for the other employees; a long, low building, wherein was the store and the distributing office, a large warehouse where the supplies were kept, and a little log fort which could be used in case of disturbances. This fort was also used as a jail, and more than one obstreperous Sioux was familiar with its interior.

The corral was a large inclosure of two or three acres, and into it were driven, on the morning of ration day, enough cattle to supply the entire tribe. There was not a little competition on the part of cattle-men living two or three hundred miles south of the agency to supply beef. The cattle were brought overland two or three times a year in large herds, and were kept on the range near the agency. Although the Indians sometimes stole cattle from settlers, it is worthy of remark in passing that they never robbed each other, and the government cattle were safe except from white cattle-thieves.

This was the initial beef issue of the season, for it was early fall, and the Indians were supposed to have had sufficient game to last them through the summer. It was the first year in which buffalo had become scarce; or

rather the first on which, because of the great number of white hunters, the bison had begun to range farther west, north, and south. There were two great bodies, each comprising millions of creatures, known respectively as the north herd and the south herd. As the Indians had killed no buffalo during July, August and September, the agent received instructions to issue beef early in October. Ordinarily he would give them cattle every two weeks from November until June. Even this was an innovation, for it was only recently that cattle had been issued to the Sioux at any time during the year.

When the horde of Indian horsemen came in sight of the agency building they belabored the little mustangs and thundered forward, kicking up a great cloud of dust as they approached. There was much flaunting of blankets and feathers and streamers, and as it was a clear day, the sight presented by these Sioux — and thirty years ago they were the finest horsemen in the world — as they drew near, decked out in all their trappings and finery of the most fantastic hues, was one not soon to be forgotten.

Upon reaching their destination the men dismounted, and, leaving the squaws and children who had been lumbering along in the rear,— for the warriors were on the best horses and had given the squaws and children the old and broken-down ones,— entered the agency building and stood before the distributing clerk. Here they reported their names, and each head of a family, or, in the case of small families, each man who represented some ten or twelve persons, received two tickets on the warehouse keeper. With their tickets they passed in a long row in front of the warehouse platform, where, upon presentation of one of them, the warehouseman and his assistants delivered coffee, beans, flour, sugar, etc. The squaws kept near their husbands and assisted in carrying the supplies to their ponies.

The second ticket is presented to the employees in charge of the corral, who turn out as many steers as there are tickets. The men know how many Indians draw rations, so that the number of animals is just sufficient to satisfy the demand. At a given signal the gates are opened and the cattle let loose. The Indians have meanwhile mounted their ponies, and as soon as the first steer makes its appearance, they set up a great yell, and the terrified animals pour out of the pen, filling the air with loud bellowings. The Indians surround the herd and drive it toward their village, the squaws, meanwhile, coming slowly behind with their children and the supplies on the backs of the patient, worn-out ponies. When near the village, each man singles out the steer that he prefers, and drives it some little distance away from the herd. When a favorable spot is reached for the slaughter of the animal he sends an arrow or a bullet into some vital spot, and thus the chase is ended. He hastily dismounts, cuts the jugular vein in order to let the animal bleed, and then returns to the village, while the squaw skins and cuts up the meat. In some cases the braves help do this work, but more frequently the squaws are compelled to do it alone.

William O'Donnell was agent for some four thousand Sioux. He had been a lesser politician in a certain large city, and his party, not ungrateful for his services, had rewarded him five years previously by this appointment. O'Donnell was known to the frontiersmen and most of the Indians as Billy, and rumor had it that he was becoming rich. A hard master he was in some ways and, contrary to most of the sons of Erin, he possessed very few good points. In him the bad predominated. Smoking his inevitable pipe with the official interpreter alongside, he marched back and forth on the warehouse platform and called out greetings to the assembled natives.

"The beans are not good, they are wormy," growled Sitting Bull.

"Sure and youse fellers is always kicking," he replied. Two Bears came up.

"When does the stage come? Tonda is in it. Have I time to get my meat?"

"It's a good two hours yit. Kill your mate. And so the pretty one is coming home? You're a good Injun, Two Bears, and have a foine daughter. Oi wish they was all loike youse." Two Bears called out to Omaha what O'Donnell had said.

"Yes, but remember the oily tongue," she replied grinningly. "You shoot the steer as near camp as you can. We will wait here. Gopher's people can take the meat home for us. We must not miss Tonda."

"Aow,* Gopher, will you take my meat to your tipi?"

"Aow," grunted Gopher. To the corral they went and when a favorable steer came forth they drove him slowly toward home. Women of Gopher's lodge followed — for Gopher had a large family.

Two Bears was somewhat above the average Sioux, and, when he had shot his steer, he dismounted, and, taking his sharp hunting knife, skinned the beast and then disemboweled it, helping Gopher and the women load the quarters on their ponies. The weight caused the animals to stagger under the load, and when relieved they seemed greatly pleased, for with one accord they whinnied, flourished unshod heels, and started on a trot to join those of their companions that were grazing on the undulating plain near-by. Gopher's people cut the meat into long strips and hung it upon the little frame-work outside the wigwam. There the sun would dry and harden it so that

* A peculiar long guttural denoting assent. Its use is not confined to the Sioux.

it could be used later in the season. Packed solidly down in leather bags or "trunks," great stores of jerked beef was laid away for winter use. While the beef dried, smudges were started to keep off flies.

Two Bears mounted his horse and jogged back to the agency, singing to himself a song learned from his father long ago:

"Some day the Whites shall go back
Across the great salt water
Whence they came.
Happy days for the Lakotas*
When the Whites go back."

Poor, old simple-hearted Indian! Could he have looked forward thirty years — game gone, lands taken, disease reducing tribal strength — no song of hope would have escaped his lips.

Tying his pony at the agency store-rack he went in. Omaha had bought cheap calico and gaudy ribbons with his last silver dollar.

"I go to see Billy," he said. Now Two Bears understood very little English, but the knowledge, limited though it may have been, was valuable to him. He had never let O'Donnell suspect that he knew one word. Such traits among Indians are common. The writer has seen Indians enter an agency store to buy some sugar and coffee from the storekeeper. Two whom he has in mind could speak English as well as their interpreter, yet they confined all their remarks to the Sioux tongue, and although conversation engaged in by those near-by pertained to them personally, and they undoubtedly understood every word, they did not betray the least sign of intelligence, nor could you have told that they knew anything about the English language.

* These Sioux called themselves Lakota; Northern Sioux. Dakota.

As Two Bears entered (Indians never knock) he caught two sentences —

“You got ter quit taking ’em, Exelby. There’ll be trouble,” remarked O’Donnell.

“What the Hell do you care? You don’t give ’em the rations Washington buys,”—they stopped, as the Sioux entered. His bronzed features were stolid, but his heart beat fast. What he and his chiefs had long suspected was true. “Doc Exelby” after all was a horse-thief; and Le Moyne, the French half-breed squaw-man, had lied when he declared that Exelby was unjustly condemned by the Indians.

“Oi got ter git the interpreter. Set still. He don’t understand a word of American,” and O’Donnell ran out of the office. Meanwhile Two Bears drew out his small pipe of Catlinitite, the sacred red-stone of which all Plains tribes made pipes, and began to smoke. Exelby, suspicious of all Indians, regarded him narrowly, but the warrior never glanced in his direction and the outlaw, relieved, drew a deep breath. Back came the agent and his interpreter.

“What is it? I am busy. You have not time to talk. The stage is due.”

“Aow. I shall come in two days. We want to go on a buffalo hunt.”

“Come in three days. We will talk then,” and Two Bears, who had heard enough, went out.

“Omaha, I have bad news. I must get to the village.”

“But Tonda is coming.”

“We can ride to the hill and if the stage is not in sight you will have to meet her alone.” Mounting, they cantered down the road half a mile and halted on a ridge crest commanding a view of some miles in every direction.

“Tonda, Tonda, Tonda!” cried the little girl joyfully,

for near at hand lumbered the old coach, Jim Smith — a true old timer and one of the few honest men in that section — on the box, his hands full of reins skilfully directing four sweating horses. Our three friends cantered down and old Smith pulled up. Open flew the door and Tonda bounded out into her mother's arms, then embraced her father and sister while tears of joy sprang to her sparkling eyes.

"I'll take your trunk to the agency," cried Smith, whipping up. "Guess you want to ride a pony back."

"Yes, I do," she replied, jumping up ahead of the little one. The first greeting over, there came such brief questions as we are wont to ask one dearly beloved whose countenance we have not beheld for years. After that we think of more serious matters: so with these Indian people. The first greetings were short, but they were sincere, and from inquiries they passed to small talk.

On the *qui vive* was the village, and when Two Bears' party came in sight, many natives ran down the trail to meet them. People poured out of the tipis and a great shout went up as Tonda entered the camp. Indians among themselves are a very affectionate and jolly people. It is only in the presence of Whites that they are reserved and stolid. It is a popular error that they never express emotion. In his wigwam with his family, a brave is a jolly, whole-souled person, from whose lips flow humor, wit, and amusing anecdotes. He has a bright word for every child in the tribe, and his face, instead of bearing a look of impenetrable stolidity, is often wreathed in smiles.

Few Indian women are handsome, but this girl was an exception. Tonda was standing in a crowd of people on the bank of the stream — friends who had come to welcome her. There were young Indian girls with whom she had played and romped, and there were young Indian youths

with whom she had enjoyed many a wild pony race across the plain. There was her aunt, her uncle, her cousin; there was her old grandfather, the medicine-man of the tribe. He stood waiting for her to run to greet him, and as she approached, lifted his hands toward the blue sky above and asked for the blessing of the Great Spirit, Waukantanka, upon his grandchild.

What a change there was in Tonda! She went away from the Indian village sun-burned, with the complexion of a dark prairie rose, with raven tresses, which had never been clipped or trimmed, and which, when she was mounted upon her pony, racing across the prairie, streamed backward in the breeze, or falling about her neck and shoulders, set off to the best advantage her pretty face. She went away with a freshness and vivacity which one absorbs from nature alone, like some wild flower that had reared its shapely form upon the green sward of the prairie; she came back like that same flower which, when taken up and transplanted to some conservatory, loses part of that beauty which it had in its natural surroundings. The flower may have become whiter and more delicate, but it has lost its wild and characteristic freshness. So with Tonda. She came back educated, and robed in garments such as those who know not the pleasures of a personal contact with nature are wont to wear.

Two Bears sprang from his horse and threw back the buffalo-skin covering to the entrance — “Enter and welcome, daughter.” The friends followed and soon the tipi was crowded; those who could not get in blocking the entrance. Omaha offered meat and sugar to the guests. Her lodge was better and more tastefully arranged than the majority of Indian homes.

“Mother,” said Tonda, “I am so glad to be with you again. Although I have been away three years, I have



OMAHA AND TWO BEARS.

THE
MIND
AND
THE
MACHINE

not forgotten my friends, nor have I given up all my Indian ways. The school contains many girls from the agencies near here, and from the southwest, and while we studied in the white man's tongue, yet we always talked among ourselves in our native languages. I have come back to do what good I can for you and try to persuade some of our young people in the tribe to go away to the white man's school, but I do not intend to leave and take the white man's road. They treated us very well there, and they did not make us work as hard as you think. I learned a great many new things, and I can be very useful to you, dear mother, in taking care of the household. In the trunk I have some presents."

"Richards, the squaw-man, can go for your trunk," said her father; "My child, we have too much confidence in our children to think they would do wrong. You are a Sioux girl; you are the daughter of a brave father who will do anything for you; we are glad that you have been to school; we are glad that you have learned much, and we want you to teach us something of what you have learned, and to aid your mother in her work."

"My grandchild," said the medicine-man. Wadaha, "you have spoken wise words to us, and I have listened to them patiently. We do not want you to become one of us unless your heart prompts you to do so. No Sioux maiden shall be compelled to do what she does not like. Decide yourself, O my child. Tonda. Remember the Indian family to which you belong, a family that has become stronger in late years instead of weaker; a family of which the Sioux nation is proud. You are one of a people whose bravery and deeds of valor have been sung by all the red men from the far North to the South, and even those Whites who live in tall houses in the land toward the rising sun tremble when they hear of us.

“You are free to come and go; you can wear your white women’s clothes or put on your frock of beaded deer-skin, and with your old friend and companion of your childhood, your faithful pony, Brown Eyes, you can dash across the rolling prairie, smelling the sweet perfume of the wild flowers, with a stretch of blue sky above and a green carpet below, as you used to do before you entered the white man’s school.”

Indians are emotional, and Tonda, when she heard these words, was much affected. She had looked forward for many days to her home-coming. She had enjoyed many privileges at the school, and had learned a great deal, but her proud and free Indian spirit longed to get into the open air again. In those days Indian children sent East to school took up their old mode of living on their return to the reservations. To-day, more than half continue “the white man’s road” when once they have entered upon it.

II.

THE COUNCIL.

Chief Gopher came and entered the lodge, greeted Tonda and said: "Has your daughter made you forget the meat?"

"Aow, Omaha, let us see if our daughter has forgotten how to work and cook. You women fetch the meat."

"Father, I shall broil the best meat you ever ate," she cried, as the women went out and turned toward Gopher's tipi.

"Gopher, I have bad news. We must call a council. No squaw-man or half-breed shall attend, only the old men and dog-soldiers,"* and he told what he had heard.

"Bad medicine, bad medicine," groaned Gopher. "We must confer at once," and he ran out to the lodge of the village crier.

"Call a council of old men and dog-soldiers at once." Then he came back to Two Bears.

In the old-time village, the lodges were placed from one hundred to three hundred feet apart. This community, acknowledging Rain-in-the-Face as head chief, covered two miles of ground. A certain responsible man of middle age officially carried the news. Usually he had a younger relative as assistant. The crier at once set out toward the east, while his son, known as Runner — and he was well-named — started west. On passing the lodges they called out — "Councilmen and dog-soldiers, assemble at the great tipi at once." Immediately there was com-

* The leaders among young warriors. They preserve order in a village and form a brotherhood more or less secret.

motion. Young and old wondered, women chattered, boys said, "I wish I could get in and hear." In a short time Rain-in-the-Face and more than forty men were present, seated in a circle within the largest structure of the village, their council house. It was fifty feet in diameter at the base, constructed of great cotton-wood poles, lashed together at the top and covered with mats and robes.

Wadaha lit the medicine pipe — a very large and beautifully ornamented object. He blew the smoke upward to Waukantanka,* downward to the evil spirit — Waukaw-sica, and then to each of the cardinal points. Indians do not forget to propitiate the devil, "for," say they, "the good God will help us without asking. But the devil will not, and we must make him gifts also."

Rain-in-the-Face told Gopher to make public his information. Runner stood without and kept the crowd back from the doorway. Silence reigned as Gopher spoke. Occasionally his periods were emphasized by "aow, aow," grunted in unison. When he ended, Sitting Bull arose. Sitting Bull was one of the most interesting characters America has produced. Thoroughly aboriginal, he hated the Whites, and subsequent history proves that he had cause for bitterness. He was of medium build, heavy of feature and not remarkable physically. But his face was undeniably *strong*. It was the face of a man of passion and resolve. The lines were deep, the expression cruel. His eyes were black and piercing. An army officer, who had fought him, says that they were "snake-like and glittered." Nothing could be farther from the truth. His eyes were indescribable — intense, penetrating, and suggestive of the restless, dominant spirit of the brain

* The Great Spirit.

behind them. He did not belong to this village, but had come from the upper agency a month ago. His influence was great among the common folk, but the better class of Indians, such as Two Bears, did not like him — he always talked war. They were afraid of him. A shaman of renown, he became better known later through his making medicine for the Custer fight. All the hostile elements flocked to his standard. He made trouble at every agency.

However, Sitting Bull was consistent in his hatred of the Whites. What he said at this time was concise and to the point:

“Brothers, a few winters ago at the Laramie treaty. Red Cloud* made peace. Our young men quit fighting and came in — a few are out with the Cheyennes and so on, but most of them came in. We have lived on our reservation, and twice a month we go to receive what the Great Father sees fit to give us. (Aow, aow.)

“A month ago one hundred ponies were stolen. By what men? Our enemies, the Crows? No, we know that Exelby and his gang took them. Shall we go to war? The agent gives us bad food. Does he not sell the good food before it gets here and issue us bad beans, caked flour, and spoiled rice instead? Are you men? If so, get upon your legs and talk like warriors!”

There was instant confusion as Sitting Bull ended his fiery speech. Some shouted for war, but Rain-in-the-Face sprang forward, crying, “Be still, be still!” and walking back and forth in the midst he spoke as follows:

“There is folly in haste. We do not know for sure that Exelby stole the horses. We think so. Now, if we go to war and attack the wagon trains, soldiers will come

* Head chief of all Sioux bands.

and whip us again. Two Bears is as crafty as the fox. Strong Heart knows white man's talk well. They must find out about this matter. We can't trust any interpreter or squaw-man. John Richards, our only good squaw-man, might help us. He never lied or cheated us yet, but we don't want to tell him unless all other means fail. Let us leave it to them and they can talk to Richards if they think best to do so."

Wadaha had kindled a small fire, and the thin line of smoke sought the central opening above. Producing a flat, polished object made from a buffalo rib, he said: "If the buffalo bull comes to light on my sacred medicine-rib, it is safe to trust Richards." They looked on intensely, while he slowly heated the relic. Having warmed it he ran to Rain-in-the-Face and Gopher.

"Yes, we see it," they said. But as the rib cooled the tracing disappeared.

Various comments upon the best action for Strong Heart and Two Bears to take were made. Then all smoked Wadaha's council pipe and went home.

Gopher was the story-teller and had in keeping all tribal records and history. Soon after the council he and Two Bears entered the latter's lodge. Presently the women came back with another load of meat.

"What an odor there is in the camp," said Tonda.

"Umph," grunted Gopher. "You have been living with Whites. It is curious how odors affect people. Once a young woman had been lost from a party who were crossing the Plains on the way to the Black Hills to hunt buffalo. There was nothing heard of her for nearly a year, and then another party who were traveling for the same purpose discovered her hiding place. A young man, who had been riding some little distance from the main body, ran his horse into camp, saying that



WADAH, THE MEDICINE MAN.

he had found the woman who had been lost, but that he could not get near enough to induce her to come to camp. Some of her relatives happened to be with the party, and they went in great haste to the place where the young man said the woman could be found. But they could not get near her for a long time, for she said they had a strong smell about them and that she did not want to go with them because of this odor, which was very offensive to her. She had lived, she said, with a pack of buffalo wolves, and the wolves had killed buffalo calves for her, and thus furnished her with food. She had a knife with which she cut up the calves. The meat she had carried to a cleft in some rocks where she lived. She had great quantities of dried meat in this place, which she pounded with stones quite fine and ate raw. She had no way of building a fire, and therefore could not cook the meat. She was finally induced to go to camp, and after a short time said that she did not notice the smell any more, and at last consented to stay with the people. She lived to be an old woman, and her name is 'I-guga-o-ti-win, The-woman-who-lives-in-the-cleft.'

With this Gopher arose, and, handing the pipe back to Two Bears, stalked out of the wigwam. Gopher was never known to tell more than one story at one sitting, and the other Indians went to their respective tipis, and thus the family of Two Bears was left alone.

It was now growing late, and after eating a hearty meal out of the kettle — Indians eat whenever hungry — each one lay down and dropped asleep. The owls hooted from the neighboring cottonwoods, the wolves howled on the prairie, and the Indians, accustomed to this lullaby of nature, slept on without fear of molestation.

The next morning, when they were up and about their

usual duties, two horsemen came into camp from the upper Sioux reservation, eighty miles away, and announced that this lower reservation was invited to join them in a great buffalo hunt. This was to eclipse anything the Indians had ever done of its kind, and therefore preparations ought to begin at once.

Some of the Indians went up to Rain-in-the-Face's tipi as soon as the invitation became generally known.

"Let us go and see Billy at once," said Gopher.

"Do you think he will let us hunt?" asked Strong Heart.

"He can't prevent it," growled Sitting Bull. "This is the last of the warm season. In a few days it will get cold. Buffalo coats are now thick. Does not the Great Father wish to feed us as little as possible? We must kill many buffalo. The more meat we pack away, the fewer empty stomachs there will be."

"Well spoken," said Rain-in-the-Face. "Two Bears and I will go and see Billy at once."

"It is better for me not to go, Billy does not like me," said Sitting Bull. Whereat the Indians all laughed, for they knew that Billy had threatened to put him in the guardhouse if he did not quit complaining and making trouble. So the two Indians got their ponies and ran them to the agency. O'Donnell had just received a letter from Washington in which the Commissioner of Indian Affairs advised economy, that opponents of the political party in power—particularly the members of Congress west of the Mississippi—were making capital out of the extravagances of the Indian Bureau. Billy therefore was glad to give consent and the Indians had no more than stated the object of their visit before he told them to go out for two or three weeks and to be sure and bring back meat enough to last the entire tribe all winter.

“An’ youse fellers take notice,” said he, “that Sitting Bull’s heart is bad. His people have got a grudge agin the government. You’re goin’ ter hunt wid his band but don’t youse git any o’ that foolishness in yer heads. Youse know what the soldiers done the last time they was here.”

This was a very tactless remark on the part of a man who prided himself that he “knew how to handle Indians,” because even conservative Two Bears resented it. The Indians were too much engrossed in enlarging on the pleasure and excitement of their annual buffalo hunt to think of it at the time: but when they joined Red Cloud’s band, the agent’s words came back to them.

The messengers were instructed to return to their people and say that the invitation was accepted, and that in three days the entire village would move to the upper reservation, and from there the start should be made.

III.

TONDA AT THE AGENCY.

When Richards brought Tonda's trunk over from the agency the word flew from mouth to mouth that she had presents for relatives and friends — presents made by the strange Whites of the far East. Expectantly the people gathered. They crowded about as Tonda unlocked a large second-hand Saratoga — a gift from some philanthropically inclined person, and threw back the lid.

“Washta, Washta,” (good, good!) cried the women and children as gorgeous garments and wonderful articles were taken from the ample recesses of that old trunk. When new, it had been to Europe and in it were stored Parisian creations for certain members of a rich family in Philadelphia. But the reception the indifferent and satiated Whites accorded that Saratoga was far different from the greeting given it by these simple-hearted folk of the prairie. Sincere and joyful shouts of pleasure and anticipation greeted each article spread upon the grass. Even stoic men gathered about the edge of the circle — they did not crowd, for this was a woman's affair — and enjoyed the sight.

“Mother, a fine colored blanket for you,” and she flung a big, cheap, bath-robe of many hues to Omaha, who immediately put it on and strutted about, the admiration and envy of all the other women. “A pipe for you, father,” and she handed to the nearest woman a large ornamented wooden pipe. This was passed back to the men. An inexpensive clock was given to her grandfather, Wadaha. Now Wadaha had no use for a clock, as only

Indians who have been away to school carry watches or make use of clocks. But this timepiece contained a strong and almost tireless alarm. Had not the other Indians seen it Wadaha might have used it in his medicine making. However, it was a never-failing source of delight to the youths of the village. There were many and different things for her friends. So interested was Tonda in making her presentations that she did not observe her little sister standing alongside. Even a Sioux child is more or less of a Stoic, but this one's heart began to sink within her as she saw other persons remembered and as yet nothing for her. She put on a bold face and plucking at her sister's dress said:

"Is there nothing for me, Tonda?"

"Oh, my dear sister, I had nearly forgotten you." Apparently there remained nothing in the trunk but Tonda's personal effects. She pulled many things about in hasty search and then dragged forth a remarkable doll, something far more magnificent than had occurred to the little one in her childish dreams.

"See this," cried Tonda, placing the doll in the arms of the wondering child. "It is asleep."

The girl regarded it fixedly, smoothed its beautiful dress, stroked its yellow hair, while the other youngsters elbowed through the crowd in order that they, too, might behold the "medicine baby."*

"Now, child," said Tonda, "place the doll on its feet." The little one obeyed, steadying her toy by the arms. The eyes were now opened. All the children sucked in their breath in wonderment. What kind of a doll was this that was awake when it stood or sat up and went to sleep the moment you put it down? Indeed,

* Medicine and mystery are synonymous terms in Sioux.

they now believed the awe-inspiring tales told them about the camp-fire by their parents of the wonderful power and mystery of the Whites.

When Tonda had leisure she began the instruction of her sister in various simple subjects, continuing the lessons as opportunities presented themselves.

"Now, little one, I have a nice book to show you," and Tonda opened a child's book. It was full of wonderful pictures. There were fairy tales, Bible stories, and descriptions of birds, flowers, and animals. A new life was opened to the mind of the young aborigine.

"How happy the white men's children must be," she sighed: "When they are tired of play, stories are read to them. We tell our stories, but they are not written down. Just think, before you came home I had one doll, that was all. Now I am rich, for I have more than any girl in the camp."

Omaha regarded all these things with great curiosity. Tonda showed her some photographs. In one a child held a dog and a girl was caressing a cat.

"Tonda, do they have dogs about their towns, where the Whites live.

"Oh yes. And cats, birds, and all sorts of live things. They feed them and keep them in their houses."

"What for, to eat?"

"Oh no. Just to play with. In great cities rich women carry dogs about in their arms. In cold weather they wrap them in blankets. They even have places where sick dogs and cats can be cared for and made well. I have seen a woman combing the long hair of a small dog while it lay on a pillow."

"Huh, huh! Have they no children to love? What kind of women are those who waste care on dogs and cats!"

“That’s nothing, mother. In a great city called London, which is across the eastern salt-water, the many rich women live in one end and the poor in the other. They do not share food or clothing as we do. More people than you can count starve while the few have abundance. They have laws for the care of cats, dogs, and horses. While they keep these, little boys and girls are starving in the other part of the city. The rich do not have children.” Omaha became angry.

“If I was husband of such a squaw I would throw her dog out and then beat her! What foolishness! And these white people come out here and say — ‘Why don’t you Sioux be civilized and be good?’ Of what use is a woman that loves a dog more than a child? I would like to catch one of those lazy, rich women here!”

“What would you do?” said Tonda, amused at her mother’s wrath.

“Why I’d make her work good and hard and whip her afterward. Carrying dogs and combing their hair! Huh, huh!”

One day Omaha and Tonda mounted their ponies and rode over to the agency to purchase some supplies. The post trader generally trusted the Indians. Aside from the regular rations issued, once or twice a year the Indians received cloth, a certain sum of money per head, blankets, and other necessary articles. In the old days this money was often withheld by the agent until the native had squared his account with the post trader. By the time that individual was paid there remained little or nothing for the Indian, and he was continually in debt.

Brown Eyes felt very good that morning and pranced about. During the two months previous to Tonda’s home-coming, her mother had been hard at work upon a new costume composed of the finest tan buckskin, orna-

mented with bead-work, split porcupine quills, etc. Omaha was an expert even in those days when Indian tanned buckskin was famous. The texture of the dress, the skirt, and the leggins was as fine as that of chamois skin. The costume was strikingly beautiful, and Tonda dressed in it was entirely in keeping with her surroundings. Far more picturesque was it than the modern ill-fitting, inartistic suits worn by the Indians who have been away to school, and have returned to the agency with just enough white man's learning and ways to make ridiculous spectacles of themselves.

O'Donnell and Charlie had gone to the store early that morning, and were perched on the counter ready for a social chat. Said the agent:

"Henry, how's business?"

"Slow, purty slow. I wisht that the great and good Father would double what he sends his red children, particularly the money. I want to go back to St. Louis in two or three years."

"Youse are doin' very well, Henry. Think o' the thousands as ain't done so well. If Washington don't sind no more pace commissions out here, youse an' I kin go back and live aisy an' comfortable, loike gintlemen."

"If them blamed hide-hunters would keep out of this region I could send more buffalo robes East. It ain't helped my business any. Confound 'em."

"Lots of hide hunters, is they?"

"Yes, an' they kin all go to Hell. They is goin' to ruin the country an' ain't got sense enough to see it. Why, there's Buffalo Bill, as they calls him. A great feller to hang around whar the sogers is. He hunts fer market, an' he bragged the other day that he done killed four thousand, two hundred an' eighty buffalo in eigh-

teen months.* A man's a hog ter kill 'em like that." O'Donnell laughed.

"Henry, ef the hide-hunters sold ter youse it would be all right." The men grinned, and the agent continued, "Oi told the chiefs that they could go buffalo huntin.' They jines Rid Cloud's band an' the two of thim will get more robes than they need. If youse is keerful you kin have siveral hundred of thim at your own figger."

"Now that Winchester's and shells have jist come in," remarked Henry, "and Indians all want the new arms, it seems to me that I can get twenty robes for a rifle and a robe for five cartridges." †

When they rode up to the agency store, Brown Eyes sidled about so that it was with difficulty that the girl could restrain the steed and dismount. Hearing the noise, the three men came to the door and commented upon the girl and her costume.

"Great Scott, Charlie," said O'Donnell, "what a good looker an' foine one is Two Bears' daughter."

"Yep, Billy. I reckon more than one buck would give all his ponies to marry her."

"Seems a pity ter waste such good looks on thim damned Injuns."

"Wall, it does. But you don't need no squaw. The gov'ment don't allow its agents to marry Injuns."

"No, it don't, and Oi ain't hankerin' after losin' my aisy job."

"How did youse git on, East?" he inquired, turning to Tonda.

"Oh, very well. I liked it there."

* Smithsonian Report, '87. Prof. Hornady on Destruction of Buffalo.

† Just before the Custer fight, when Indians were short of ammunition, the traders charged them one robe for three metallic cartridges.

“So you’re going ter teach the Injuns the white man’s road?” inquired the agent.

“Oh, I don’t know,” replied Tonda. “The Indian trail is good enough for most of us. What is the use of following the white man’s road here?”

“Sure an’ Oi can’t see any perticular good in it,” said Billy, winking at Charlie. “Whin we’ve lived on the reservation we become more Injun than white.”

“You can change and we cannot,” replied the girl. “We have to live here always. It is easy enough for you who make a good living off the poor Indians,” and here she glanced at each of the three men — “to talk about taking the white man’s road. When I think of all the trouble that the Whites have caused my people, I do not wish to trail the white man’s trail here. It is straight in the East, but it is crooked here.”

“That’s not fair to us,” said Charlie. “I wisht you Injuns would quit complainin’. Nawthin’ goes to suit you.”

“Would you complain if you were in our places?”

“Huh,” grunted O’Donnell. “Don’t youse get stuck-up simply because you’ve been East. What did youse mane whin youse said straight back East and crooked here?”

“I did not say that,” replied the girl with some spirit. “as any insult to you. You know perfectly well what the Indians get and what they should have.” The other men listened attentively.

“Take notice,” said O’Donnell, coming near her, anger showing in his blue eyes as he brought down his fist upon the counter to emphasize his remark; “that Oi’m master here an’ ef yer git chewin’ the rag ’bout how the Injuns is trated, Oi kin cut off Two Bears’ rations.” Tonda was a woman of spirit and she, too, became angry and looked at him without the quiver of an eye-lash. She said:

“ You cut off Two Bears’ rations if you dare.”

“ Oh, quit ! ” called Henry. “ Let the girl alone. Can’t you keep your temper? What will the chiefs say — a woman makes the agent mad — will that help you ? ” O’Donnell laughed. He waited until Tonda got through buying and then attempted to curry favor with her.

“ Glad ter git back, air youse, Tonda ? ” he inquired, coming near to the woman. “ Want ter stay here or go back ter the white man’s road ? ”

Tonda knew more of Billy than he imagined. Her mother had cautioned her to beware of the oily tongue and so had put her on her guard.

“ Oh, yes. I like to be with my own people. Don’t you ever think of your own folks over in Ireland ? ”

“ Ha, ha, ha. ” roared Charlie. “ He ain’t no Irishman, his father was ; he don’t talk like one. He is American and ‘ agin the government. ’ ” The agent’s face flushed.

“ Shut up, Charlie. ” Henry looked up and joined in the mirth. It was seldom that they got the better of Billy in wit.

“ See here, girl. Oi’m agint and Oi don’t allow no girl whither she has been ter school or not ter git flip with me. ” Tonda regarded him coolly and fearlessly. In her heart she loathed the man. Possibly he opined it; at any rate he did not address her again. When the women were outside Omaha spoke:

“ What made the men laugh? Why did Billy get mad ? ” Tonda related the circumstances.

“ My child, do not anger Billy. He has the power to do us harm. ”

When the women had gone the three Whites continued their conversation. While they conversed the stage rolled in. Jim Smith, the driver, dismounted, gave his team to the boss herder and his assistant and entered. Henry treated all to drinks and cigars.

"I got some news fur you fellers," said Jim, as he mounted the counter. They were all attention, for Jim never delivered himself of gossip and unimportant matters.

"Word come through from driver to driver from the Missouri river that they discovered placer gold in them Black Hills. The old Californy prospectors an' anybody what knows anythin' 'bout gold is goin' in; some keepin' on steamboats until up by the Cheyenne river where they'll foller up the river to the Black Hills. Others may go up the White river. By these two routes they'll run less chance of seein' the Injuns. Ef they kin get settled thar without the Injuns seein' 'em, they kin mine all they want to." The other three instantly became excited.

"Was much gold found?" inquired Charlie.

"Wall, I should say there was. I seen with my own eyes an' handled with my hands two big sacks that held five thousand apiece in 'em."

"How many men is in the camp? Is it goin' to last?"

"They say," continued Jim, "that it looks like Californy did in the early days. Men is jest pourin' in. And women went too—Old Man Card tuck his daughter Elizabeth and they're callin' one o' the camps Elizabethtown 'cause whenever a miner goes down stream from the main camp, Deadwood, they say, 'where is you goin'?' an' he says, 'I'm goin' to see Elizabeth.'* Things is bloomin'. A shoemaker is gittin' four dollars a pair fer solin' boots. More saloons than anythin' else. Lots o' fakirs an' tin horns. Everythin' is very high an' money plenty."

"Gosh, I'd like ter go," said Charlie. Henry expressed similar sentiments.

"No gold fer me," remarked O'Donnell. "Oi kin lay around very well here. Miny a mon has gone busted in

* Fact. She was the first white woman in the Black Hills.

thim minin' camps. Howsumever that may be, there'll be a bit o' trouble whin the Sioux hear o' it."

"It sartinly will help business," said Jim. "I don't believe in maltreatin' the Injuns, but they got too much land, and if there's gold in the hills, it'll bring in money an' people."

"Jim," said the agent, "Oi don't want ter leave here. A bird in the hand—you know the rist. But ef youse want ter go up thar an' locate claims before the rush begins, Oi'll stake youse."

"Wall," mused Jim, "I don't like this drivin' business an' goin' up thar can't be no worse. I'd like to make a strike an' get a nice farm down somewhar in Iowa. You give me five hundred, Billy, and I'll pull my freight fer the Black Hills. Charlie kin go with me back to the river on the trip tomorrer, as they'll need a man in my place fer a few days. That way, the Injuns here won't suspect nawthin'."

"Done," said O'Donnell, "Shake hands on the bargain."

"Now," he continued, "there's one thing youse fellers got to promise. Not a word to squaw-mon or Injun. If this gits out we're done for. Sooner or later they'll find out about thim miners. But it mustn't leak from us."

"Spouse the Injuns did find out miners was there," began Jim.

"There's no tellin' what the rid rascals would do. They might all start for thim hills at once."

"You could order 'em back," suggested Henry.

"Order Hell! It's all fine enough ter bluff these here Injuns. Ivery toime Oi tells thim ter do so an' so Oi expect thim ter rafuse. But if they ever sets their heads on goin' ter a place, their worthy an' honest agint will play hob tryin' ter hould thim. Don't youse forgit," he cautioned as they parted for the night. "Not wan word."

It was even so. When the Sioux learned of gold hunters in the Black Hills, it was not through a white man. A Sioux girl from Standing Rock agency had lost her parents and was sent East to school. She secured a position at Omaha and was employed there by a white family favorable to Indians. Wishing to keep posted concerning her people, she corresponded with Tonda. It was from her that Tonda learned of the new gold fields. She read the letter to Omaha and Two Bears. Both agreed not to speak of the matter elsewhere, for they did not believe it, and it would excite the natives, whether true or not.

IV.

THE BUFFALO DANCE.

Whenever there is to be a big buffalo hunt, the Indians as a prelude usually spend two or three nights in dancing, not only to prepare themselves for it, but to "bring the buffalo." The ceremony is more or less religious in character. It was known, therefore, among those present that two dances would be held that night, one for men and the other for women. In the center of the village there was a large area of hard-baked earth, two or three hundred feet in extent, and quite smooth and level. This was used for a general assembly and dance-ground by all the people.

It was now beginning to grow dusk. Every Indian who expected to take part entered his tipi and put in good order his very best suit. He then took down from one of the posts a mask made from the hide of the buffalo. To this the horns were attached, while a strip of buffalo skin fell down the back, ending in a tail and two hoofs, one on each side. This mask he strapped on his head; the skin was fastened around his body by a heavy leather thong, and the hoofs hung down and struck upon the ground. When dancing they clashed together and made a clattering sound, imitating — though in much less volume — that made by the bison when galloping over the hard earth.

Let us consider the two leading men, while preparations begin for the dance.

Gopher is the richest Indian, for he owns over five hundred ponies. His children are married and live apart, but they all help him on ration day. He and his prematurely aged wife live alone. Rain-in-the-Face, the

leading chief of his time, is about forty-five years old, tall, commanding, and of pleasing address, although at times very stern and relentless, and possessing a temper which, when fully aroused, sweeps and rages and turns him into a demon, as the fearful cyclone sweeping across the prairie turns a scene of beauty into a wilderness of desolation. Rain-in-the-Face has a squaw, Wa-wa, and a son, Strong Heart.

There are several squaw-men, whites who have married Indian women, and who live off the tribe and the government, and a number of worthless persons. We find these in our civilized communities, as well as in the barbarian's home; it is a thing to be deplored, but one for which no remedy has yet proved effective.

Evening has settled down, and the sunlight has faded. Dark forms can be seen here and there hurrying toward the dance-house, some in groups of three and four, talking and laughing, others singly and silently wending their way to the scene of the festivities.

The ground outside the house is being used by the small boys and girls of the tribe as a play-ground, and they run here and there with merry shouts and laughter, chasing a dog or tripping up a companion, just as our boys and girls do in our country towns on the evening of some political meeting. Presently the drummer takes his position near the door of the dance chamber. He strikes upon the tom-tom, and the boys and girls instantly cease their boisterous merriment, and in subdued tones and with stealthy tread approach the building. Some of the boldest enter, while the others lurk about the entrance or apply their ears to crevices in the walls, and give themselves up to longings to be a grown man and dance.

As the drummer pounds upon the tom-tom, the boys run

out; the dancers file into the structure until some sixty or seventy are present. All do not dance at once, but from time to time those who are tired retire, and their places are taken by others. The head-dress of buffalo horns is heavy, and a warrior cannot dance over two hours without great fatigue. Outside, the women and young folks are free to dance, and they frequently do, for the music is plainly heard by them. Indeed the chants of the women are often louder than those of the men. After some hours the children and older women withdrew and numbers of young men and women appeared in the open space. A new and pleasing feature presented itself. An old woman — who always led the squaw dances — called out — “The lover’s dance,” whereupon fifteen or twenty unmarried women, led by Tonda, formed a line on one side of the dance-ground, and began a low chant. They were decked out most gorgeously, and looked really charming. There was no horrible buffalo mask about their shapely shoulders; they had come for a social and pleasure dance. In this young braves and maidens are at their best, and often become betrothed. It is an event keenly anticipated by all the young people. When the maidens began numbers of young men left the medicine lodge, threw off the masks and appeared in feathers and paint, dressed with great care and taste. The column of young women moved with a graceful motion, although similar to a shuffle. The young men advanced, hopping on one foot, then on the other; then, when the lines were about ten feet apart, all turned suddenly and danced backward to opposite sides. The lines delayed a moment, the squaws came to the assistance of the orchestra, and a new tune, much more lively, was struck up, and the young men began the love chant. A rude translation of some of the lines may be of interest:

Young man: "Pretty one, will you take my hand and dance? I am strong and brave; none can treat you so well."

Young woman: "Who are you thus to speak? I will not take your hand."

"A trial will assure you that I am not so bad. I think you will prefer me to other braves here."

"Since you are so bold, I will dance with you once."

"I shall come near your tipi and play the flute" (courting).

"Have you no heart for the girl to whom you played flute last spring?"

"She is not so nice as you," etc., etc.

So the conversation ran, very dull to us, but full of meaning to the Indian.

Tonda had danced forward and back again several times. She saw no one she fancied; in fact, it was the first dance she had attended for three years, and she was somewhat bewildered. She remembered that Rain-in-the-Face's son, Strong Heart, was a friend of hers before she went East, but supposed that he had forgotten all about her. She had not seen him since she returned, and could scarcely imagine how he looked.

When the second call came, and the time for each girl to be led across the floor to the other side, she noticed a large, broad-shouldered, finely-dressed young brave approaching her, his face full of expression and his eyes intently set upon her face. There was something familiar about the features; could it be Strong Heart? He was near; he asked to dance with her; she consented, and before she could realize where she was, they were across the room and responding to each other in chant.

Now Strong Heart had been trained by his father with a view to his ascending to the chieftainship. The famous



FRANCIS WEST 04.

STRONG HEART.

Sioux missionary, Riggs, had taught him English and to read and write a little. Naturally Strong Heart was more congenial to Tonda than the more aboriginal warriors.

“Have you forgotten me?”

“No; how could I? I am the daughter of a Sioux, and as such I would feel ashamed to forget any one whom I had known and with whom I had played.”

And so they talked and chanted back and forth. The half hour allowed for this dance seemed but a few moments, and both were very sorry when it was over. The people looking on were struck with the beauty of Strong Heart and Tonda, and many said: “How well they look; how they keep time; what a fine son our chief has!” or, “Two Bears ought to be proud of his daughter.”

As the dance was concluding, Strong Heart said:

“Tonda, let us take a ride on our ponies in the morning. I want to talk with you. Would you not like to see the rocky glen where I shot an antelope for you when last we romped across the plain? Will you go?” And as she left him and rejoined her companions outside, she whispered “Yes.”

The bright faces vanished and in their place came a crowd of masked warriors, pouring out of the great lodge in order that they might have more room, shaking bows, spears, and guns and calling on the Great Spirit for plenty of buffalo. The young men who had been in the lover's dance strapped on their masks and furiously beat moccasined feet upon the earth. Thus the dance went on all night — frequently Wadaha cried out, “O come, buffalo! Buffalo, come as of old.” Around and around they circled, now bending low to the earth, now straightening up and delivering a piercing yell. The fire-light, the shadows of the dancers, the doleful singing of the squaws and the drone of the orchestra make a combination of sight and sound which, when once heard, can never be forgotten.

When one becomes fatigued with the exercise, he signifies it by bending forward, resting upon his hands and sinking his body toward the ground; when another draws a bow upon him and hits him with a blunt arrow, and he falls like a buffalo — is seized by the bye-standers, who drag him out of the ring by the heels, brandishing their knives about him; and having gone through the motions of skinning and cutting him up, they drag him off, and his place is at once supplied by another, who dances into the ring with his mask on; and by this taking of places, the scene is easily kept up night and day, until the desired effect has been produced, that of “making buffalo come.” *

As soon as the sun was fairly above the eastern hills, those who had taken part repaired to their tipis, where they were glad to pass nearly the whole day in sleeping and smoking.

Tonda had stayed up no later than midnight in anticipation of what was coming, so when Strong Heart rode toward the tipi on his fleet pony, she was ready to accompany him. Her father had brought in Brown Eyes, and when her-escort was drawing near, she leaped nimbly upon the animal's bare back and galloped out to meet the chief's son. Strong Heart advanced to meet her with a smile upon his face, and as soon as he was beside her, with a common impulse both lashed their ponies into a mad run and raced away across the rolling prairie toward the north.

While the preparations continued, Richards, the squawman, decided to go fishing, and accordingly got out a ball of heavy twine known as a “trot-line,” to which he attached fifteen or twenty short lines or staging, and at the end of each he tied a monstrous hook. Wrapping his formidable tackle on a board, he proceeded down the river

* Catlin.

about a mile to a certain broad, deep pool. The Niobrara had been higher than ordinary because of rains, and Richards thought it not unlikely that large channel and shovel-head catfish might have ascended from the Missouri. He tied one end to a bush, affixed a stone to the other end, and having baited his hooks with raw meat, swung the stone about his head and cast it far out into the stream. Richards was undeniably lazy, and to "live on the government" was to his liking. After the manner of all squaw-men, he occasionally visited some mining camp or frontier town and got drunk, but be it said to his credit that he never intrigued with the worthless element in preponderance in Julesburg, Hays, and other board and canvas "cities," to swindle the Indians.

Moreover he was secretive, and although he knew who had cheated or were likely to defraud his adopted people, he had as yet volunteered little information to the Sioux. While he watched his line Le Moyne joined him. Born in Canada of French Canadian parents, this man had been partly educated by a priest. He was the linguist of the village, speaking French, English, Sioux, and Crow. They were out of sight of the village and not an Indian could be seen from the bluffs or elsewhere.

"Got anythin' yit?"

"No, I've just set the line." Le Moyne seated himself and produced a plug of tobacco from which each cut a chew.

"What was that council about the other night?"

"I don't know. I didn't ask the Indians," replied Richards.

"Have you any idea?" Richards cast his eye upon the line, saw it move slightly, placed his hand upon it and gave a sharp jerk; then he released his hold and faced Le Moyne.

"How should I know? Don't the dog-soldiers give a medicine dance about this time every year?"

"Shucks, Richards, ain't you got no idea?" The fisherman laughed.

"Wall, Le Moyne, since you brought up this matter, suppose you give me your idea why they was in council."

"I had some whisky the other day. It was not enough for a drunk, but I gave Spotted Eagle three or four drinks of it this mornin' and tuck the rest myself. I axed him but couldn' get no information, but I heard old Sittin' Bull say, as I went by a tipi, that they'd get them horse-thieves." Richards grunted.

"See here, Le Moyne, you take my advice. These Indians won't stand no foolin'. You know what it was three years ago when they was raidin'. Now you know the men at Julesburg well and if they say anything to you you be keerful what you tell 'em." There was a strong tug on the line. Richards gave an answering jerk and the fish was fast.

"Better pull him in."

"No, wait until I git another one."

"What do you keer, Richards? The Indians got plenty of horses. They can't fight because the soldiers will come in. Say, I'm goin' ter Julesburg day after the buffalo hunt, you'd better go over with me. You may learn somethin'." Richards again grunted and spat into the water. "Is it a go?" asked Le Moyne.

"Yep," replied the fisherman. Le Moyne got up and went up the river to camp. "So," mused Richards, "Le Moyne is puttin' out a feeler fer to git me to go in some deal of the horse stealin' order. I kin see clear through it. They had the council to debate what should' be done. Some buck heard somethin' up at the agency, and it must have been Two Bears, because he was there all the

mornin'"; and he continued to think and occasionally to jerk his line. Presently he drew in two large catfish: rebaited, and cast out the stone. He would go to Julesburg and find out all that he could and he might or might not tell the Indians; that would depend upon circumstances. Undoubtedly Le Moyne was worse than when he had joined the tribe ten years before. When Gopher, two years before, sold a drove of horses, Le Moyne was the interpreter. The sale was effected one hundred miles south of the agency, and when Gopher bought a large amount of supplies at the store and handed over a roll of bills to pay for it, the storekeeper laughed in his face. The horse buyers had given him Confederate money.* Gopher and Richards and some others went in search of the horse buyers but they could not find them. Richards did not blame the Indians for demanding silver afterward. They could appreciate the difference between a metal dollar, a half and a quarter, but they could not distinguish between a ten dollar bill and a one.

Undoubtedly Le Moyne was responsible for this swindle. Le Moyne lived better than the other squaw-men and frequently had money with which to gamble in the frontier towns. "Where did he git that money?" pondered Richards.

It clouded up and the fish bit well. Richards caught more than he could carry: some of the big fellows weighing upwards of ten pounds. At dusk he cleaned his fish, hung them upon a tree beyond the upward leap of a wolf and carried thirty or forty pounds to camp. His young son and a squaw brought in the remainder.

Strolling about the village after supper, he met Strong Heart, and told him of his luck and that the Indians

* This has actually occurred more than once.

should make a brush net and drag the pool on the morrow, for now was a good time to lay in a supply of fish, as cold weather would soon begin.

"Anybody with you?" asked the Indian.

"Le Moyne was there a while."

"He just went to the agency," said Strong Heart, as he strode forward in the direction of Tonda's tipi.

"Wall," thought Richards, "Here is a good chance for me to sound Rain-in-the-Face without Le Moyne knowing that I done it," and forthwith he made a circuit of the village, keeping away from groups of people in order that they might not see him. On coming to the chief's lodge, without ceremony he threw back the flap, stooped and entered. Rain-in-the-Face happened to be alone. Without formality Richards told him what Le Moyne had said. Rain-in-the-Face did not inform Richards of the council, but he said:

"I am glad that you have spoken. I always thought you had a good heart and now I know it is so. Le Moyne's heart is bad. A feather shows which way the wind blows. We are worried over the theft of our horses. I shall talk with Gopher to-morrow. Instead of your coming to see me again, I shall come to your lodge after the hunt. In the meantime let no word escape your mouth."

"Aow," grunted Richards and took his departure, feeling that he had done the Sioux a good turn.



THE HIDE-HUNTER.

V.

THE BUFFALO HUNT.

They set out soon after daylight. Everybody went save a few old men and women and a score of sick persons. The ponies, the dogs, and the children caught the contagion of the chase and a multitude of noises ascended as the village moved.

Indians transport baggage by both dog and pony. A lodge pole is fastened on each side of the pony, the ends dragging upon the ground. Smaller poles are lashed on either side of the dogs. Across the trailing poles short sticks are tied and on these they fasten the blankets, skin coverings of the lodges, etc. Extra horses are taken along so that thousands of pounds of meat and hundreds of new robes can readily be transported back to the winter camp. These travois, as they are called, enable the natives to move a great amount of baggage. A good-sized dog draws seventy pounds, and a pony from three hundred to five hundred. As the faithful animals jogged along, numerous small children not large enough to walk might be seen nestled among the blankets. Only when rough ground was encountered did the mothers carry them in the papoose boards upon their backs. Everybody went light, but on the return the squaws must carry every child of tender years.

In a few days they united with Red Cloud's band. He made a speech; dog-soldiers were appointed as hunt captains over bodies of twenty warriors, and then they sought the herd, which had previously been located by scouts.

The Indians left their temporary camp. The wind was

from the herd and there was no danger of a stampede. They approached within half a mile and halted beneath a ridge of sheltering sand-dunes. Runner leaped agilely up to the summit of the elevation and coming hastily back reported that there were about twelve hundred buffalo perfectly at rest, some grazing and others lying down. Then there was great, though suppressed excitement. Each man stripped himself of the loin-cloth. None of them carried guns, for the old style of hunting was greater sport. Some took their long lances, the keen polished blades glittering in the sunlight, and others seized their bows and arrows. The horses are all trained for this business and seem to enter into it with as much enthusiasm and spirit as the riders themselves. While the men stripped and mounted they exhibited the most restless impatience, and when the approach began (which is in a somewhat compact body, upon a slow walk and in a straight line toward the herd) they all caught entirely the concept of the chase, for the laziest nag amongst them pranced with elasticity in his step, champed his leather bit, his ears erect, his eyes strained out of his head and fixed upon the game before him.* Both rider and pony were trembling with suppressed excitement and in this way they carefully and silently proceed until within fifty rods; then one of the creatures, an old and grizzled veteran, emitted a hoarse bellow. Up sprang the sleeping animals, the whole herd faced about, the bulls roaring and bellowing and pawing the dust. At this instant the leader of the hunt, Red Cloud, emitted a shrill "hi, hi, hi, yah!" and the Indians clapped moccasined heels sharply against the ponies' ribs. The horses laid back their ears and leaped forward. As the column thundered on it

* From Catlin's description.

separated, one-half taking the right flank and the other charging to the left. Soon they were abreast; then the excitement and fun began. Away flew the thundering mass over the prairie, a cloud of dust marking its trail. The women and the children with the pack animals and scores of dogs had also begun to advance and were less than a mile distant. On the moment of the charge, they quickened their pace, singing the buffalo song as they came on. "Thrust! thrust!" cried Strong Heart, as a splendid buffalo charged in his direction. The Indian immediately behind plunged his long lance between the ribs, and the first victim of the hunt fell upon the earth.

Indians are careful. How they can watch the ground and the herd and avoid the charge of wounded or infuriated animals is a mystery. Yet they do all these things and are seldom hurt. Buffalo can run over very rough country and as their legs are stronger than those of the horse, prairie dog holes seldom cause them to fall, although they may stumble. Watching his chance, warrior after warrior sent an arrow or a lance home as the buffalo was on the jump. There is more likelihood of a mortal wound if the weapon can be directed when the ribs are stretched farthest apart at the beginning of the jump. The difference is not much, but it counts, and all Indian hunters avail themselves of favorable chances.

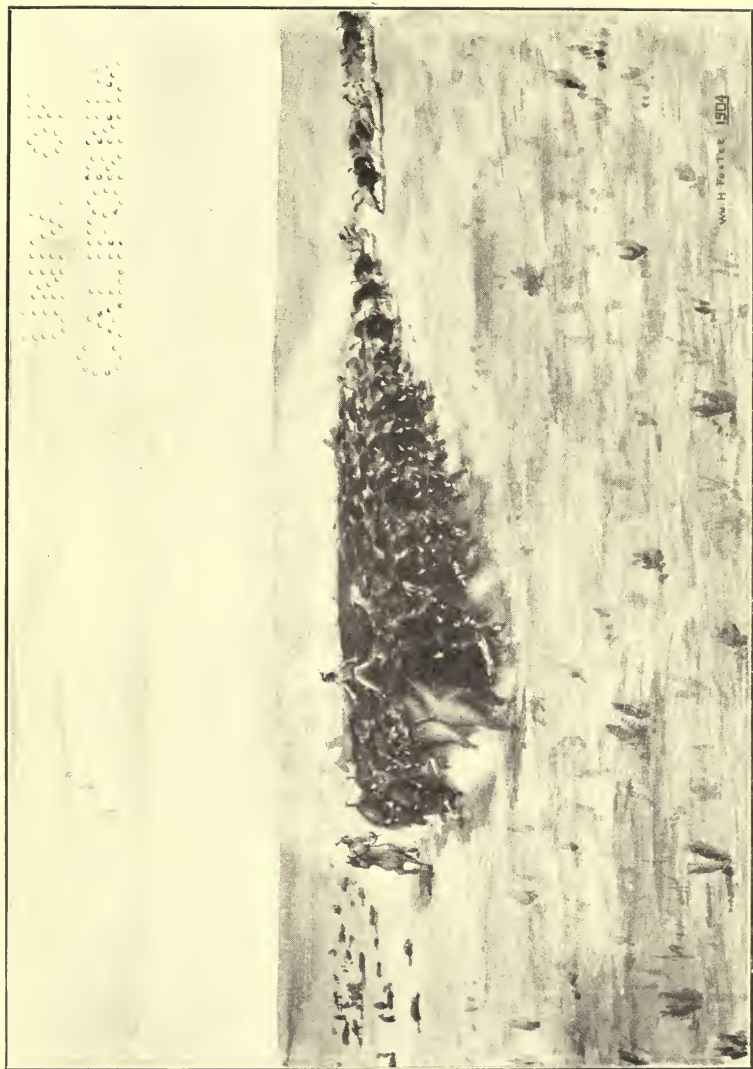
Strong Heart was superbly mounted upon a big American horse for which he had traded a ranchman six good ponies. He gained on the herd and was soon near its head, leaving the other Indians several hundred yards behind. His bow was strong and shapely — made of thin strips of Rocky Mountain sheep horn, glued together and wrapped with sinew — a relic of a fight with the Crows. He shot arrow after arrow — long steel-pointed affairs with grooves cut in the sides in order that the blood

might run freely. His horse partook of the exhilaration of the chase and needed no urging.

There was a gap in the herd, and he forced his way into it for one or two hundred feet. Just beyond him towered the head and shoulders of a magnificent bull, the largest the Indian had ever seen. "Now," he thought "if I could only get that fellow and make a mask out of his head, I would have the finest dance dress in the whole tribe." He hitched the quiver a little more to the left, felt in it and found that he had but seven arrows remaining. He strung and shot one, but the point coming squarely in contact with a rib did not pierce more than six or eight inches, and the wounded creature instantly wheeled to the charge.

This caused some commotion, for the bull was a leader. As the animal turned, other buffalo began to close up the gap until they were massed together about Strong Heart. His horse had been running evenly and fast, and had dodged danger several times. Now great brown bodies hemmed in mare and rider on every side.

In a twinkling Strong Heart realized that he must leap or be killed. Remember that he was not only very active but he was accustomed to bareback riding on half-broken horses. Gathering himself as the horse stumbled preparatory to going down under the thundering hoofs, he jumped upon a young cow's back. She trembled and bellowed, but he retained his upright position. Then upon a bull's broad, brown back he leaped. It was exciting and he enjoyed it. The other Sioux saw him and ki-yied in astonishment. The bull shook his head, but he was too closely hemmed in to swerve, or kick, or plunge. A dust arose about the Indian and the odor from great sweating bodies nearly stifled him. Like a great brown sea heaving up and down, appeared the bodies about him. What if



STRONG HEART ESCAPES FROM THE HERD.

one should fall? So without hesitation he skipped nimbly from one back to another until he reached the outer animals. Two or three buffalo on the edge separated, and Strong Heart was compelled to leap out as far as he could. This he did, barely avoiding the hoofs of Gopher's horse. Gopher had seen the accident, and being nearest urged his horse forward, and as Strong Heart fell, used his long lance to effect upon the animal nearest him. All this happened in an instant, and several Indians reined in their horses as soon as possible and stopped where the Indian was lying somewhat stunned. As they dismounted he raised himself on his hands, and with his eyes and mouth full of dirt, felt about for his bow and quiver in a dazed fashion. Then he got up, and the other Indians seeing he was not much injured continued after the herd. The horse, however, did not fare so well. Borne along by the heavy bodies of the buffalo for a few yards, he was soon down never to rise again, for by the time the herd had passed, his mangled remains indicated the scene of the accident. Strong Heart looked back across the plain. For a mile and a half the surface was dotted with the bodies of slain animals, but it did not seem to him that they had already run the herd so far. He walked in the direction of the women to procure a fresh horse. Only one buffalo was up and he watched him, knowing that the creature was too badly wounded to do him any injury. No one can imagine the look and expression of such a subject. Frightful and hideous he appeared, turning round and round for battle, swelling with rage; his eyes bloodshot and his long shaggy mane hanging to the ground; his mouth open; his bellowing guttural and weak; the blood pouring from his mouth and through his nostrils as he vainly endeavored to gather sufficient strength to charge the Indian. He lurched forward, but

planted his legs apart to steady his body, then with a last groan fell upon his knees and another king of the herd had paid the penalty.*

The train of women had now reached the first slain, and one or two stopped at each body. Soon the carcasses were surrounded by exulting groups. The dogs capered and barked, eagerly seizing upon such unimportant morsels as the squaws cast in their direction. Shrill cries rent the air, as busy knives severed the meat from the bones.

"Meat and clothing," they shouted as he strode past them.

"Where is Tonda?" but the first groups knew not, for they were northern or Brulé Sioux, and Tonda was an Ogalala. So he went on, the women joking him meanwhile, bantering him to help butcher, to take care of the children and so on.

"I never saw so many women before. All the squaws in the world must be here," he thought. Presently he found her helping Omaha cut meat.

"O, Tonda, let me take Brown Eyes. My horse was killed and I barely escaped by running over the top of the herd." Tonda laughed.

"You must be so nimble on foot as not to need a horse. Why didn't you shoot from there? Think of the chance you had — carried along by the herd." The women looked up and grinned.

"O let me have her. I am in a hurry."

"Well, be careful, don't run her hard. She is not as young as she was."

"I shall treat her as well as you did the other day when we had our fine ride over the plain."

"Pretty speeches, O hunter. But go; you said you must make haste."

* Abridged from Catlin.

"Got any arrows? I lost mine."

"I see you saved the bow."

"I threw it out of the herd as I jumped."

Tonda ran to a pack animal and got Two Bears' extra quiver.

"He can get more from some other hunter," she said, and handed it, smiling, to Strong Heart. The Indian leaped up, and glancing toward the herd, now three miles away, cried, "They are turning the buffalo this way."

"Good, good," cried the women, "We shall get all the meat we need."

He did not hurry, but rode slowly to the right and approached the coming mass. Less than five hundred animals remained. The Indians were all on the outside, and those in front succeeded in their purpose, that of swinging the leaders so that the herd ran in a circle. This meant that all would be killed. Strong Heart nerved himself for action. Brown Eyes used to be a good buffalo pony, but was somewhat old now, and knowing that, he would save her all he could.

They came near. The horses were foam flecked; the rider's bronzed bodies warm with exercise and excitement, glistened in the sunlight. Yells of triumph issued from every throat. The buffalo were running heavily; sides heaved and froth dropped from shaggy beards. The light hunting steeds charged in and out, now dodging the rush of a wounded bull, now circling to the attack. The earth trembled as the body swept by him. Picking out a fat cow, Strong Heart began the killing again, Brown Eyes bearing him swiftly here and there. The graceful, picturesque riders were everywhere. Stupid animals they must be, for had the herd galloped straight away on the moment of attack and sought broken country, four-fifths

had escaped. Now they were bewildered and fell an easy prey to the horsemen.

Did the buffalo think? Did they know that others must live through their deaths? Nature-students claim that all animals think. Even if this is true — which we may doubt — at best few thoughts passed through their thick heads. A man lost travels in a circle; but he has thoughts. Certain it was that the circles became smaller, the center of the remaining bison was soon stationary. A general Indian charge brought low the survivors; the sod ran red with blood, and the annual buffalo hunt, begun and ended in one day, was over.

That night there was feasting and dancing in the hunter's camp. Squaws smoked meat while men danced. Wadaha and Sitting Bull, as medicine-men for both tribes, offered sacrifices to the spirits of the slain buffalo. They set up the head of an immense bull, and to propitiate his spirit or ghost, placed before it a platter of mush and bowl of stewed meat, saying meanwhile, "Eat that, eat that."

Gopher stood before a camp-fire, and surrounded by an appreciative audience, told one of his stories.

For ten days the natives tanned hides, cut, dried or jerked the best meat, gorging themselves meanwhile on what remained. Added to what beef the agents would issue, they now had sufficient to carry them through the winter. Camp was broken and the ponies and dogs sweated as they dragged heavy loads homeward. Babies journeyed on mothers' backs, for every pound of beast energy must be devoted to meat transportation.

As the long column wended its way eastward, gangs of wolves rushed upon the field and searched the skeletons for such few morsels as remained. At Red Cloud's camp his band — about a third — stopped; the Ogalalas pushed on southward and home.



WHERE THE MILLIONS HAVE GONE.

VI.

RICHARDS MEETS THE HORSE THIEVES.

In a day or two Le Moyne and Richards saddled their ponies, packed a small camp outfit upon an old horse, and rode to Julesburg. At dusk the fourth day they entered the town, left their horses at a corral and visited the saloons — “for it has been a long time since we irrigated our innards” — said Le Moyne. They went into the Belle Union, a famous frontier resort.

“Now, Richards, you stay here. Take a hand in the game if you want to. I got to see some men” — here he winked impressively — “afore I kin let you in on what may be doin’.”

“Got any money?” asked Richards. “I ain’t got but five dollars and that ain’t nothin’.”

“Here’s ten. That’s all I kin spare. It’s enuf fur a small game,” and he went out. Richards sat down where some miners were playing a twenty-five-cent-ante-and-dollar-limit poker game. The proprietor introduced him, saying: “Like you fellers he is busted.” They dealt, drew, and called.

“Wall,” grunted one of the party, “this is the smallest game I ever set in. But you Injun traders ought to have money. We’ve lost ours.”

“I ain’t no trader,” said Richards, as he laid down three jacks, a pair of nines and drew in chips amounting to six dollars. “I’m a squaw-man.”

“Wall, there is *some* squaw-men who has money,” remarked another player.

“Yes, and mebber they gets it standin’ in with Exelby. Did you hear what he done day afore yesterday?”

Richards shook his head.

“Wall, him and six of the gang held up the mail stage and got five thousand.”

“Who is his gang?”

“Wall, I suppose you is all right, but I don’t know ’em all. Billy the Kid is his right-hand-man.”

“Humph,” grunted Richards as he lost part of his winnings. The game ran on for nearly two hours. Le Moyne came in.

“How much to the good?”

“About twenty.”

“Come out with me.”

“All right,” and as Richards left he treated the players.

“Come agin when you is flush, and then we’ll git your money,” cried a cowboy.

“Sure, I will,” and the squaw-man went forth.

They walked two blocks down the street, entered a side entrance of a two-story frame building and went up stairs. Players were in the large room they passed through, but neither man paid them attention. Into a small rear room, thick with tobacco smoke, strode Le Moyne. As they entered, some one threw open the single, small window. Two men were present, but they sat at the farthest side from the window. A single candle guttered upon a soap box. Richards was brusquely introduced to Exelby and Billy the Kid.

In an eastern community such men would be continually in hiding—if they could exist at all. But here, although three-fourths of Julesburg knew them and that they were in town, no attempt at concealment was made. They sat back from the window not through fear of

recognition, but because some jealous and equally bad "bad-man" might be tempted to make a pot shot.

In its infancy Julesburg could be taken as typical of the frontier towns. But it was quite different from a mining camp. Cattlemen, scouts, hunters, traders, and desperadoes invested Julesburg, Hays City, and similar Plains settlements. In the summer of 1867 Whites from Julesburg carried on a regular business in murder and robbery — the same was true of Dodge City in 1873.*

Exelby was tall, thin, and wiry; Billy the Kid, short, light, and frail-looking, with the worse face of the two — a lean, malignant countenance. He had the pointed chin, the flat ears, the low brow, and the furtive eyes of the habitual criminal. He killed for pleasure and, although barely twenty-three, more than twenty men were already victims to his six-shooter. Once he shot some sheepherders; "just to see them kick." Exelby stole for gain and killed in self-defense.

Both men rather anticipated winning over Richards — who Le Moyne said had great influence with the Sioux. Having struck hands, all sat down.

"Have a drink?" and Exelby indicated a bottle and glasses. Billy the Kid poured out for each man.

"Now, Richards," announced the leader, "I have heered as how the Crow Injuns intends to raid the Sioux fer ponies."

"They ain't got no grouch agin my people," remarked Richards.

"Mebbe they ain't and mebbe they has. I got a friend there who knows the Crows like you know the Sioux and he says that the Crows must have more scalps and more ponies."

* Our Wild Indians; Col. Dodge, p. 650.

“They ain’t strong enuf. We can outfight ’em. Howsomever if they was to come, Washington would be wired and troops sent.”

“Did you ever hear of the gov’ment interferin’ when Injun was fightin’ Injun?” asked Le Moyne.

“Wall, let them Crows come. There will be the biggest time you ever seen — not barrin’ the times when the Sioux used to raid the Platte trails,” growled Richards.

“See here, Richards. You don’t want to git into no trouble, but you wouldn’t throw a few hundred over your shoulder. The Crows is shorely goin’ to raid. What’s the matter with my gang puttin’ on moccasins, ridin’ unshod horses, and gittin’ away with a big bunch too?”

Exelby leaned forward and regarded Richards fixedly. Then Billy the Kid put in. “It is dead easy. There won’t be no shootin’, ef that’s what you is afeered of” —

“Hold on thar, Kid, I ain’t afeered of no shootin’.” Billy chuckled and continued:

“You got a good chance to make your stake out of this by doin’ what we tell you and helpin’. Ef you think them Injuns is going’ to find out about it, why they won’t.”

“No. They won’t know unless you tell ’em,” commented Exelby.

“And ef he done that there would be one squaw-man less,” interjected the Kid.

“Why don’t you fellers git Le Moyne to do this instead of me?”

“Say, you is innocent. You can’t jolly us. You know well enuf why we come to you. They will do as you say, but they won’t pay no attention to Le Moyne — not since them Confederate bills was passed” — and all but Richards laughed.

“When do them Crows raid?”

“That ain’t decided,” continued the leader. “You will be told in plenty of time. All we want you to do is to help us. We will do the hard work.”

“Then you wants me to be the confidence man.”

“Sure,” cried the Kid. “You is the tin horn this time.”*

Richards thought quickly. These men would snuff his life out on the instant if he said them nay. The very fact that they were quietly conversing with him, not urging, convinced him — and he had a broad and deep knowledge of frontier characters — of their determination. They would arrange the details as coolly as he might plan for a trip to the agency. One suspicion that he was playing them false and the squaw-man was no more. So he did as would most men under the circumstances — he lied.

“All right, boys. I am with you. But Le Moyne here has got to be mighty keerful. Them Injuns is foxy, and he don’t want to make no breaks.”

“That’s it,” cried Exelby, striking hands with Richards again; “we will leave it in yer hands. Le Moyne won’t open his head unless you tells him to.”

“Need any money? Got plenty of dough, if you wants to git in another stud-poker game?”

“No, I’d jest lose it. The best move fur me is to ride back to the agency so there won’t be no suspicionin’. I don’t mind gittin’ drunk with you fellers, or takin’ enuf liquor to last me until I git nearly back. But I better be movin’. Le Moyne kin stay as long as he wants to.”

* Tin horn was applied to crooked gamblers. There was a sharp distinction drawn in the early days between gamblers who cheated and those who did not.

"Jest so," grunted the Kid. "If he gits back ahead of Le Moyne them Injuns will think more of him."

"That's rough on me," said Le Moyne, and they all roared.

"Then there ain't nothin' until I hears from you?" asked Richards.

"That's all," replied Exelby. "Keep the Injuns in a good humor an' do what we tell you when we sends word." Then they made a night of it and shouted, told stories, boasted of what they had done and of projected events. But Richards did not permit himself to betray his real heart. About sunrise, sitting his horse unsteadily, with a package consisting chiefly of bottles securely fastened behind the saddle, he bade the trio good-bye and started for the agency.

When he rode up to his tipi Wadaha, who saw him dismount, said to Gopher:

"Richards been taking too much Minne-wakan" (whiskey).

VII.

A FIGHT WITH THE CROWS.

Richards lay in his lodge until the next morning. His head cleared, he at once sought Rain-in-the-Face, and told him that he wanted an absolutely confidential talk with the five leading men. Instead of sending the crier the chief himself summoned Gopher, Wadaha, Two Bears, and Sitting Bull. They met in Two Bears' wigwam; Omaha and the child being sent off to visit. The men talked low and earnestly. Sitting Bull placed himself near the entrance and made sure that no eavesdropper approached.

At an early hour Strong Heart and Tonda had set out for a day in the cliffs—a region some fifteen miles to the north.

The horses had proceeded but a short distance before they settled down into a steady gait, and when about five miles from the village, far ahead toward the north could be seen looming up and clearly outlined against the azure sky, the first rocks and ledges of the Bad Lands. In the clear dry air of the northwest distances are very deceptive, and a mountain or hill may look not more than three miles away, when in reality it is ten or fifteen. Tonda and Strong Heart were not deceived by this, for they were accustomed to the atmosphere and rode on, chatting pleasantly together.

“How much more enjoyable,” said Tonda, “is this life than that which I led at the school in the East! Here I have no dismal walls to surround me, no one to dictate what I shall do, none of the rules which bind my free spirit and make me feel as did that poor red bird which

I once saw in a cage, vainly beating its wings against the bars in a mad but hopeless effort to escape. Never again will I leave my people; I am a Sioux girl and I will live as such."

Strong Heart was not much given to sentiment, but he voiced a tremendous grunt of approval, which, although it might lack in elegance, still made up for the deficiency by coming from his heart and being exceedingly emphatic. Indian-like, he passed over her remarks without any comment, and, changing the subject hastily, he said:

"What did you think of the dance last moon?"

"Oh, I liked it very well," she replied; "I had not been at a dance for three years, as, of course, they have nothing at the white man's school except one totally different from ours. I saw one or two of these, and did not think much of them. I had a very good time, but as you were the only young man that I remembered or cared to dance with, it would have been rather tedious had you not been there."

"Many of our people thought we looked very well upon the floor," said Strong Heart; "they said that you did just as well as if you had been at our dances once a week for years, instead of having been away all the time."

They rode on in silence for awhile, and then conversation began again, Strong Heart asking Tonda what the white man's idea of the Indian was. He had seen many white men on the reservation and on his travels, but he had never been to a large city, and he did not know how many there were of them and what was their mode of life.

"You would be surprised to know the ignorance of most Whites about our customs and habits. Many whom I saw in their country would pass me upon the street

and turn around and look at me as if I were some wild animal. You know, Strong Heart, that were a white man to go through our village we would talk among ourselves and wonder who he was and what he wanted, but unless he asked questions or showed interest, no one would crowd about him and be so rude as to stare at him, ask him impertinent questions and laugh aloud at his replies; yet he calls himself a civilized being, and looks upon us as savages. Another thing I could not understand was how their men could cheat and defraud each other, saying with open face 'this dress or horse which I have for sale is the finest to be bought in the city, and I am selling it at less than I paid for it,' when they know that which they offer has not cost them half what they sell it for, that it is a very poor dress or horse, as the case may be, and worth very little. Were one of our tribe to defraud his neighbor in such a bold-faced manner, he would be driven out of the village."

"Aow, aow," grunted the young man.

"But they have some very beautiful writings and sayings about our nation, and about other Indian nations in the West, some of which I read or our teacher read to us, and we committed to memory. There was a great man named Longfellow, who wrote some beautiful poetry about the Indians, which, while in some particulars untrue, is still so beautiful that I wish you could hear it."

"Say some of it to me, I should like to hear what the great story-teller of the white man has to say about us."

"He wrote a big book full of these stories, which, of course, when I translate to our people, I shall try to make interesting. To-night, if the people will come to the lodge, I will read them what the great story-teller has to say."

The young man gave another grunt, and she con-

tinued: "He writes a beautiful story about our red pipe-stone, and as I remember some of it, I will say it for you." Then Tonda began to recite, translating into the Sioux tongue, Longfellow's celebrated "Peace Pipe," which begins:

"On the mountains of the prairie,
On the great red pipestone quarry,
Gitchie Manitou, the mighty,
He, the Master of Life, descending,
Stood, and called the nations,
Called the tribes of men together," etc.

Strong Heart thought it was very well done, and he expressed his approval, saying that his people would greatly rejoice to hear the poem recited, and he should tell all whom he saw to assemble at the large dance-house, where she would read it to them.

Tonda hoped to get the Indians interested in some of these poems, because she thought it would do them good. She had a very peculiar character herself, and while she wanted to be free, independent, and live with the tribe, she still wished to retain some of the white man's ways and to give the other Indians an idea of what the white men said of their people.

They were now close to the Bad Lands, and vegetation had almost entirely disappeared. They traversed a distance of nearly a mile before reaching the base of the cliff along the bank of a small and muddy stream. To the right and left of this stream there was a stretch of reddish earth, with nothing green upon its surface. Where the waters flowed and irrigated the soil within a short distance on each side, the vegetation flourished; but even the banks of the stream soon began to present a desolate appearance, and when the young Indians passed into

the opening of the glen from which the stream issued, almost everything that had life had died out, save here and there large ferns and colored flowers growing in crevices and openings.

"Let us get off here and walk," said Strong Heart. So they dismounted, and the young man made fast the halters of the horses to a good-sized stone.

An Indian never goes out alone without being armed, so Strong Heart had taken his Winchester with him and about thirty-five or forty cartridges.

They had seen one or two deer grazing in the plain as they approached the Bad Lands, but as the young people were not on a hunting expedition, he had made no attempt to shoot them.

"Gather some of the flowers for me," commanded the girl. "These are the last of the season."

"What do you want them for? They are no good."

"They are nice to smell."

"Did they give you flowers at school?"

"Yes, and they taught us to plant them." The man thought this request foolish and made no movement to obey her.

"If Spotted Eagle were here he would get flowers for me."

"He is no good;" but Strong Heart at once became all attention and gathered ferns and flowers until her hands were full. He scaled precipitous places, gathering the more beautiful ones and at her bidding came and went. As he would, perchance, slip and fall, or stumble when making a supreme effort to gain her approval, she would laugh and her musical voice echoed from side to side of the gorge, until it died away in the distance. Thus the time passed pleasantly. About one o'clock they sat down on a ledge of rock, and, with their feet

dangling, began to eat some little corn cakes and dried beef which he had brought in a beaded bread-sack, such as braves generally carry when hunting. But suddenly something happened which drove all thought of pleasure out of their minds, and caused the ferns and flowers which Tonda held in her hand to fall into the narrow defile below.

Just after Strong Heart had opened the bread-sack and had given the corn cake to Tonda they heard voices far up the gulch echoed clearly toward them by the rocky walls. They knew instantly that the sound was made by the Crows, old enemies of the Sioux nation. Both were aware that, while there had been no hostilities for some time, the last depredations committed had been by the Sioux of their own village, so that, should they be seen, they could expect little mercy at their hands. Like his father, Strong Heart was kind and considerate to his friends, but revengeful and cruel to his enemies. No sooner had the sound reached him than he caught Tonda by the arm and pulled her back, while he glanced up and down the defile. He saw an opening in the rock about two hundred feet beyond them, nearly on a level with the ledge on which they had been seated. Running hastily thither he looked in, and returned to Tonda saying, "Come quick; get in here. The Crows are coming. Keep perfectly still."

Hurrying to the opening, they found a narrow space some five feet high leading into a small, irregular room or fissure. This had once an opening above and below, but, fortunately for our friends, a contraction in the rock, or some upheaval in past ages, had slipped a large slab across its top. This had broken, and a part of it, falling into the crevice below, had wedged itself tightly. It formed an uneven floor, which had a dip or slope toward

the west, which was hard to stand upon, but which afforded a safe retreat. There was no way for a missile to reach the interior, except through the opening in front.

“Tonda, keep near the opening. Don’t run back. Shots will glance from the roof backward and downward. Help me build a wall.” There were not stones enough to make a barrier more than waist-high, but Strong Heart was in hopes it would suffice as a protection.

It was nearly ten minutes before the enemy, who were advancing through the gulch, had come near enough to be seen by those above. The feelings of fear in Tonda’s breast had passed away, and she now had considerable curiosity as to the movements of the Crows. Of course, the presence of the two in the cave was unknown, and they would, perhaps, have been passed unnoticed, but for the flowers and ferns which had accidentally dropped into their path. The mounted Crows were carefully picking their way in and out among the boulders. They had passed the cave, which was about eighty feet above them, and would, in all probability, have gone on, not supposing that any Sioux were near at hand, when one of their number discovered the freshly-broken ferns and flowers lying in a little heap near the wall of the defile. As soon as he saw them he uttered a cry of surprise, dismounted, picked them up and showed them to his companions, who immediately gathered about and looked up and down, this way and that way. They saw the cave entrance, but as it was partially filled with stones and its interior quite dark, they could not, of course, tell whether it was inhabited.

Five or six dismounted from their horses and started on a quick run ahead of their party. They soon came in sight of the tied ponies. An Indian pony knows an

enemy or a stranger, and gives an alarm on their approach, just as a farmer's watch dog lets it be known when a person of a different community passes the farm house or a stranger enters its gate. So the two horses, hearing the patter of the Indians' feet, were on the alert, and recognizing, perhaps, that something unusual was taking place, pricked up their ears, snorted, and sprang back as far as the halters would allow them. When Strong Heart had made them fast he did not expect to be gone long, and so had tied them to a stone of about three hundred pounds weight. The animals struggled vainly to escape, while the Indians quickened their pace, in order to capture them before they could break away. Brown Eyes gave a great plunge, and overturned the stone to which she was tied; the rope around the end of it slipped off, and thus freed her. The stone in falling tightened the knot in the halter of the other animal, so that, although it struggled frantically to escape, it was unable to join its fleeing companion, and fell an easy prey to the exultant Crows. Brown Eyes dashed down the rocky bed of the stream, and would have soon been out of danger; but, quick as thought, one of the Indians caught up his gun and sent a well-directed shot after the fleeing mare. Although this grazed her flank and wounded her slightly, drawing considerable blood, it proved a blessing rather than a curse, because it frightened the animal so that she redoubled her speed, dashed across the plain in furious haste, and traversed the fifteen miles between the scene of the capture and the Sioux village in an hour and a quarter.

The sight of Brown Eyes dashing into the village, covered with foam and blood, created great excitement, the conference in Two Bears' tipi broke up abruptly,

and it was not thirty minutes before half a hundred mounted Sioux were hot upon her trail, anxious to learn whether or not the son and daughter of two of their most prominent people were in trouble and needed assistance.

The Crows, meanwhile, led the captured horse back to their companions with exultant shouts. Those who had halted where the flowers were found had been looking all about, but could find no trace of trail or see any living being. Some moments were spent in consultation, and it was advised to go down the cañon to where the rocky ledge, up which our two friends had clambered, began its ascent. The ledge was about five feet wide, and ran slantingly up the side of the cañon until eighty feet from the ground, then it was quite level in extent for nearly a hundred feet, the farther end being in front of the cave. In other words, it was a sort of a road formed by nature, a freak which cannot be explained, but which is of frequent occurrence in the Bad Lands.

Two of the warriors began the ascent at the lower end of the ledge. Intense excitement reigned inside of the cave as these two braves clambered upward. Strong Heart's eyes were flashing, his sinews stretched to their utmost tension, and grasped his trusty Winchester, and made ready to fire upon the approach of the foremost Indian. Tonda stood in the corner and whispered to him some suggestions, but as a warrior cares little for the advice of a woman when there is a fight on hand, he silenced her with, "Be still."

He decided upon a bold course, and bidding her stand with cartridges ready, so that he might lose no time in filling the magazine, he stuck his head and shoulders out of the aperture, and shouted "Stand back. I will shoot

the first man that comes upon the ledge. We desire peace. You are on our land, where you have no right. Our nations have not had war for many moons. Stand back, I say."

The Crows debated a few moments among themselves, then one of their head warriors called out "Come down and surrender. We will not harm you; we wish to exchange you for two Crow prisoners in your camp. Come down, or I will order my young men to shoot."

Strong Heart turned to his companion and said, "What do you want me to do?" "Why, there are only thirty of them. Make them keep off."

Cautiously screening his head and shoulders behind one of the irregular-shaped rocks in the opening, Strong Heart called out, "We will not surrender. We will stay here. Call those two men off the ledge, or I will fire." Then, turning to Tonda, he said, "I have only thirty-six cartridges. I must not waste the ammunition. Here, take my hunting knife."

He drew a keen, bright blade, fitted into a handle made out of a deer's foot, from his sheath, and placing it in her hand, said, "Tonda, hide this in your dress. If they capture or kill me, advance to the head warrior as if to shake hands, and say, 'how,' and run the knife through him as quick as thought. Then they will instantly kill you. You don't want to be captured." She hesitated, the white man's learning prompting her to weaken or say "no." But he urged. Then she concealed the blade under her deer-skin dress.

"It will be the leading man."

"Aow, the sub-chief," he assented.

The Crows on the ledge hesitated, then turning, ran back to their companions.

The band withdrew up the cañon, secreted their ponies in a sheltered spot, and advanced on foot to the attack. They were armed with muzzle-loaders, and bows and arrows, being evidently just coming in from a hunting excursion. There were thirty of them, and there was not one Winchester in the entire band, so Strong Heart stood a fair chance if he could make his shots count, and, at the same time, keep himself well secreted. It had taken the Crows some time to go down the gulch to the horses and return, so that, with the time taken for the parley, an hour had passed by. Strong Heart and Tonda had heard shot and saw the pony led up the cañon. They divined that Brown Eyes had escaped. This greatly gratified them, for they knew that it would reach camp, be seen by their friends, and that a party would be sent for their rescue. The Crows, too, were well aware how near the Sioux village they were, and they would not dare to remain very long for fear of the approach of their enemies.

They returned after hiding their horses, and ran up and down the cañon, secreting themselves behind rocks, or standing where they thought the bullets of the enemy would not reach them. Strong Heart, knowing well their superior numbers, reserved his fire as long as possible, and it was not until several volleys of arrows had whizzed through the entrance, or splintered themselves against the rocky walls on each side, that he fired his first shot. Then he became consumed with a lust for blood. He foolishly sang his song of defiance and thereby aggravated the Crows:

“Come and fight. I am not afraid. My medicine is strong and I shall take your scalps.”

“Coward of a Sioux,” they shouted. “Afraid to come out of your den. Hiding like a ground-hog. O Sioux

we shall dance the scalp dance to-night with your scalp on a pole."

"The war eagles scream on high,
They whet their forked beaks;
I shout, I raise my battle cry;
'Tis fame that Strong Heart seeks."*

And he gave the Sioux war-whoop, full-toned and piercing. The cañon echoed the cry far and wide and the Crows answered it with their own as they advanced to the attack. He lay down on the bottom of the cave and fired through a little opening, scarcely three by four inches, as it was too dangerous to shoot standing. Tonda crouched in the corner at his side, holding the spare shells ready. The arrows and bullets that entered above the breast-work flattened themselves against the wall behind, doing no damage. Strong Heart wished to keep the Crows from ascending, because they would then have a better command of his stronghold. If they shot from the creek-bed upward their missiles struck against the ceiling and glanced to the rear wall, where they fell harmlessly. Hence the importance of keeping the enemy from reaching a height equal to his own.

Crack, crack, came two loud shots, from the cave; at two reckless Crows who had run from cover to get nearer. One warrior was killed outright, and the other had his arm broken at the elbow. Strong Heart hastily slipped two new cartridges into the places of those discharged, it being very important in a fight like this, against great odds, to keep the magazine of the gun filled. Two more shots disabled another warrior. Then ten Crows, armed with bows and arrows, came on a dead run, with loud

*Adapted from Schoolcrafts' North American Indians.

“hi-hi-hi’s,” up the rocks, in order to secure a position that would command the cave.

Strong Heart sprang to his feet and shot as rapidly as he could aim and work the lever. One brave fell mortally wounded: another was slightly hurt and the rest took to cover.

As Strong Heart dropped to the floor several arrows and bullets passed close to his head, one of them making a scalp wound about three inches in length, but not stunning him. The Crows became convinced that he had plenty of ammunition, and a superior gun. So they ran with the speed of the wind back to their ponies, and held a consultation. The sudden death or disabling of four of their number considerably disheartened them, and from their loud words and “ki-ky-ing,” the companions in the cliff thought that many were counseling a retreat. Nearly half an hour passed in the debate, and just as our friends were hoping that they were to be left alone, the remaining warriors, with loud yells, charged down the creek, grasped the bodies of their dead and wounded, and rushed back to shelter. Strong Heart meanwhile sent two shots, which, at this short distance, with a steady hand, could not fail to do damage. One man was shot through the lungs, and another one had his right hip broken. The Crows did not remain in hiding long, but soon came with a wild rush down the cañon, stripped nearly naked, with all the knives, tomahawks and rifles they could command, evidently designing to storm the place. As they swept by they scattered out, then came together again at the beginning of the terrace or ledge, and charged up in a body. As soon as they were in full view, Strong Heart, supposing that this was their last charge, resolved to take the risk of being shot. He screened himself as well as he could, and resting his rifle

across the stones, poured twelve of the sixteen shots in the magazine of the gun into the advancing crowd. Those in front staggered back, and those behind tried to push forward. There was a pause for an instant.

The besieged leaned forward, forgetting their danger in the tense, strained excitement of the moment. The man slipped more shells into his gun, but even as he did so the Crows leaped into cover. Some jumped down fully twenty feet from the ledge and below the angle of rifle-shot. There were two dead Indians and two badly wounded ones on the ledge.

Again the enemy consulted and their low voices could be heard at the base of the wall. Some were for leaving, others said that it was a shame to lose so many men on account of two Sioux. However, Strong Heart did not understand Crow, and the one Crow who spoke Sioux naturally conversed in his own tongue, so the imprisoned ones did not understand what was being said.

Even as they talked a faint, distant war-cry was borne up the cañon. The Sioux were coming! Tonda's heart took on new courage. Strong Heart became a demon and sent forth his pealing war-whoop again and again. The Crows ran hastily up the cañon toward their ponies, not even stopping to take their dead and wounded. Strong Heart's Indian spirit exulted now that he had vanquished his foes, and, rifle in hand, he pushed down the barrier and leaped out on the ledge, threw back his head and uttered the long, shrill war-cry. As it echoed and re-echoed through the rocky walls of the gorge, there came an answer from the distance of loud re-echoing war-whoops, mingled with the welcome clatter of horses' feet. The Sioux were coming, led by Rain-in-the-Face. As Tonda heard this glad sound she laughed hysterically, alternating her mirth with

sobs, and stood in the doorway ready to behold the glad sight. At this moment, just as the horsemen came in sight, one of the wounded Crows, maddened by the sound, drew himself up to a sitting posture, presented his piece and fired, the ball taking effect through Strong Heart's left shoulder and piercing the shoulder-blade. The instant that the savage fired he fell back among his dying companions, weak from the loss of blood. With his remaining breath he chanted his death song.

Strong Heart dropped fainting from the shot, and Tonda, with mingling emotions of pity for him and hatred for his slayer, grasped his rifle, cocked it, and would have fired upon the two remaining Crows had they made a motion, but as their guns were empty, she left them to meet their fate at the hands of the coming Sioux, and bent over her fallen friend. She quickly tore off part of her dress, staunched the flowing blood, and called out loudly to Rain-in-the-Face, who was a few hundred yards distant, to hasten. She lifted the head of Strong Heart into her lap, and, holding him as gently as she could, called his name again and again. The tears streamed down her cheeks as she remembered his brave defense of her and the noble spirit which he had shown. The horsemen were near at hand, and raising her head, still holding Strong Heart, while the blood flowed from under the bandage across her deer-skin dress, coloring it crimson, she called, "Come quickly; bring water. Strong Heart is dying."

Two Bears and Rain-in-the-Face dashed into the creek, filled the little bread-sacks that they carried with water, wet their blankets, and hastened up the ledge. The other Indians took charge of the bodies of the wounded and dying, went through their usual horrid yells, and were instituting a hasty scalp-dance, when Rain-in-the-Face called to them to desist and come near.

The chiefs bound up Strong Heart's shoulder, brought him to his senses by dashing water in his face, and, while praising his bravery and telling him to be strong and of big heart, they carried him tenderly down into the creek-bed. Forty of the warriors followed the trail of the Crows, while the others scalped the bodies of the slain and rode on ahead to take the news to the village. The Indians took turns in carrying the wounded man on a sort of rude litter made from their blankets.

After a few miles they placed him upon the gentlest pony, and supporting him on either side thus slowly they moved across the prairie; and when the procession entered camp, about eight o'clock that night, there were demonstrations of joy over the victory.



RAIN-IN-THE-FACE IN FULL COSTUME.

VIII.

THE SIOUX PLAN AGAINST THE HORSE THIEVES.

While the lovers were journeying, Richards was telling the assembled councillors his tale. They listened in silence.

"Bad medicine, bad medicine," growled Rain-in-the-Face.

"Now," concluded the squaw-man, "you fellers got to stand by me. If this becomes known, I am a dead man."

Wadaha stood up and impressively said: "May the buffalo never come again and may our women and children die if we tell any man that you opened our eyes to this danger and our ears to this information." And every man got up and swore accordingly. Then all fell to plotting as to how they might save Richards and capture the thieves. While they thus consulted, the wounded pony came in, and, as we have seen, the warriors went to the rescue.

Late that same night they got together again and conferred in secret. Rain-in-the-Face would call a council of the old men and dog-soldiers in the morning. He would say nothing about Richards, but Sitting Bull would skilfully turn what Richards had conveyed to account. Presently the warriors returned unsuccessful from their pursuit, for the Sioux ponies were too tired after their dash of fifteen miles to overtake the Crows.

Crier and Runner went through the village next morning and announced the council. Richards was the only white man present. Runner took up his position as guard at the door. After the smoking ceremony, the

head chief briefly narrated the incidents of the fight and asked what should be done.

Full of indignation, Sitting Bull arose. Himself a constant hater of the Whites, he had been awake all night and by council time he had worked himself into a frenzy. Back and forth he strode like an Iroquois orator of old. His long, lean hands he waved about, his feet he beat upon the ground, his body he bent this way and that as bitter words of denunciation fell from his lips. The circle stirred now and then, swayed by his emotional address, and at its conclusion the men would have stormed the agency had he so commanded.

“I have lived long upon the prairie. I have seen but six good white men. Since the Fetterman fight I have been at peace. I am a great medicine-man and made the medicine for that day. Then we killed ninety Whites. Our arms were strong and we struck hard. They ran like antelopes. The men in the fort could not come out. And Washington tore down the fort and abandoned the Powder River country. Why? Because Washington knew it was dealing with men whose business was war.

“We have whipped the Crows (Aow, aow). We used to take scalps from the Omahas and the Pawnees (Aow, aow). And we can whip the Whites again.

“What were those Crows doing here? Did they come to fight? No. I think they came to spy our herd and steal the ponies. Would thirty warriors come to attack us at home? No. They came to see how many horses we had and where we grazed them. They knew that we were in from the hunt and busy in curing meat. Did Billy know anything about the Crows coming? I think not. Who did know and who told them to come? Would they have come of their own accord?

“Some man in this village we cannot trust. He must

have told the Crows to come and see how the land lay. Then on a dark, rainy night the Crows would quietly steal down here in force. When we arose on that morning we would find our herd gone. We go after them and Billy sends talk to the fort over the lightning wire that the Sioux are raiding. Soldiers come and drive us back.

"I am going home in a few days. If you young men will not raid I shall tell my young men to raid. I will not have my horses stolen.

"I am tired of talking. God Almighty made me. God Almighty never made me an agency Indian, and I'll fight and die fighting before I become an agency Indian."*

"Listen to me," cried Gopher. "Sitting Bull goes too far. We must not raid unless we have to"—

"Warpath against the Whites," cried several enthusiastic young men.

"No, no. Let us be careful and find out more about it. I don't like the signs. I fear trouble. Can Wadaha's medicine tell us what to do?"

The shaman got up slowly. "I also closed not my eyes all night. I am afraid of horse-thieves. We had better guard the herd at night. The Crows will smart and come back in force. We must be ready."

"Brothers," and Richards addressed them. "There is no telling what is coming upon us. Gopher speaks well when he says, 'I do not like the signs,' on the warpath we watch the ground carefully, our eyes are fastened upon the trail. We tell from many things what to expect. We scent danger in the air. Now I scent danger or trouble (sensation), and think that we must be on guard.

"There is one man we have to obey and do not like— Billy. If we go not to him he will wonder. If we go to him and he wires Washington, then they cannot blame

* Literal translation.

us if anything happens. We are at peace with all, yet Crows come into our reservation and Whites steal our ponies. Let us go and tell Billy at once."

The meeting adjourned and all the council members rode to O'Donnell's office. Sitting Bull agreed to hold his tongue and let others talk.

"Wall, boys, what's up?" and Billy regarded them in some curiosity. Richards stood by the official interpreter — on important occasions each side has its translator.

"We come," began Rain-in-the-Face, "to tell you that Strong Heart and Tonda were attacked at the cliffs yesterday by thirty Crows. They got into a cave and he killed and wounded eight or ten of the enemy. He was shot through the shoulder. What does this mean? Are the Crows at war again? Will they attack us? Will you send for soldiers if we move against them?"

"Wall, wall, this is serious business. What the devil do youse suppose they come down here fur? It is a good two hundred moiles ter their nearest huntin' village, and nigh onto three hundred ter their agincy. I shall write words to their agint."

"We want to go up there and fight them."

"Youse will do no sich thing. Oi can't have youse fellers marchin' armed so far. Youse might kill settlers' cattle on the way. Washington wouldn't allow it. If they come down here, fight 'em. Youse got no kick comin.' Your man killed an' drove 'em back. That's a record ter be proud of."

"We are afraid. Wadaha's medicine says that something is going to happen."

"Wadaha's medicine is no good. Nawthin' will happen. How can there? Youse got eight hundred fightin' men, ain't youse? An' guns too? Who is ter trouble youse?"

Two Bears then spoke. "We had horses stolen some moons ago. We told you, but you did nothing. If any more are taken we go out looking for them."

O'Donnell knew that Two Bears and Rain-in-the-Face often held the younger men in check; that if they said, "Go out," more wagon trains would be attacked and sufficient horses taken to make up for past losses.

"Oi can't tell who took yer horses. Oi've written words an' used the lightnin' wire, but oi will say this, if any more ponies are stolen youse can follow the trail." (Aow, aow.)

"Charlie," he called, "give these Injuns three hundred weight o' sugar an' a hundred sacks o' smoking tobacco." They shouted in approval, received the presents and rode homeward.

Charlie Carter was a trusted employee. He and O'Donnell retired into the inner office, closed the door, treated themselves to drinks and discussed the situation.

"How long have youse knowed Injuns, Charlie?"

"I was born on the Santa Fé trail forty years ago. I know Injuns from Taos to Sleepy Eye. They are past understandin'. One day all right, next all wrong. They are like children. Yet they has their good points. Now, you can thank God for sech men as the chiefs here. Them Brulé Sioux would have followed the trail of Exelby's gang the mornin' of the raid."

"Yis. What do youse think is brewin'?"

"Wall, that's hard to say. Them Crows never would come down here of their own accord. It's too resky. Seems to me there is somethin' comin', but rest easy. Our feller's got their dander up. Say, if Exelby come over here raidin' some night there'd be Hell to pay."

"Yis. An' they moight wipe out the hull of whatever town he rode back ter."

“Injuns don’t like to tackle a big place. They won’t hurt Hays City.”

“No, but they moight go south an’ take Julesburg.”

“Wouldn’t be no loss if they did. Nobody but tin horns an’ road agents there.”

“Charlie, we got ter be foxy. Exelby can’t hurt us, but he may squeal if we lets thim Injuns go after him.”

“Can’t do it. We can say he is a horse thief and that Billy the Kid is the worst road agent and killer in this country. How can he tell Washington about our ration deals? We got him.”

“That was a foine deal last month. Oi got the draft this mornin’—eight hundred dollars. Youse gets a hundred, Charlie. When oi looked out this mornin’ oi says to meself, ‘this is a foine day and there ought ter be a prisint fer the givirmint’s faithful agint.’ And when the stage come there was.”

“Wish we could work what they done once at the Apache agency.”

“What was that, Charlie?”

“Why, hay was scarce. The contractor says to the agent, ‘Seems like it is a pity to waste hay at forty dollars a ton on them damned Injuns.’ ‘Why,’ says he, ‘its for the cavalry horses.’”

“‘Same thing,’ says he. ‘They come to keep the Injuns down. Looks as if this same load of hay might be used agin,’ and he waves his hand to the driver. Dick winks, and after the agent calls out ‘One load of hay’ to the clerk, and that feller says, ‘Check,’ Dick drives around the corral and comes through the gate again.

“‘Another load of hay,’ calls the agent, and the feller inside says ‘Check.’ So they kept that blamed load of hay goin’ until they had checked her up twenty times!’” Both men laughed gleefully, and Billy said, “Surely, them

was foine days, but we couldn't do it here — not quite that strong. But so long as Congress don't kick we can git on easy and comfortable like." Billy thought a moment.

"Suppose them Sioux did git Exelby and his gang?"

"Wall, what of it? This ain't no country fur tender-feet, and they shorely ain't that. If they can't take keer of themselves, why let the Sioux nail 'em."

"Yis, an' if they do it may save youse an' me trouble. At any rate youse an' oi got ter sugar the Injuns and agree wid 'em as fur as we kin."

Strong Heart was now the most famous man in the tribe. In their annals there was no record of a similar exploit. Single men had killed many, or escaped great dangers, but no lone man had himself defeated thirty Crows. He lay ill and weak in his father's lodge, and friends came to ask how he did. Tonda also received her share of praise. Young women were proud of her, and young men jealous of Strong Heart.

That night a great scalp-dance was given in celebration of the victory. Tonda stood near the dancers and watched their evolutions for some time. At last, wearying of it all, she sought her father's tipi, and, throwing herself upon the pile of skins, gave up her mind to meditation. The excitement of the scenes through which she had passed would have unnerved any but an Indian girl. Tonda's strong spirit scarcely knew fear, and while thinking over what had taken place she was highly gratified with the results, more especially because she was fond of adventure, and because the adventure had given her great notoriety in the tribe. Indians will do almost anything to gain the approval and applause of their own people. Tonda thought of her friend Strong Heart lying wounded, and deciding upon the impulse of the moment,

ran out into the open air, passing many fires, and winding in and out among the tipis until she reached his lodge.

It was ten o'clock, and none of the Indians had as yet quit dancing. Wawa, Strong Heart's mother, was preparing a little broth for her son at the camp-fire back of the wigwam, so, before entering, Tonda spoke a few words with her. "How is he getting on?" she asked.

"Oh, he is feeling much better, although the wound those Crows gave him pains him severely. Would you like to go in and see him?"

Wawa entered the lodge, followed by Tonda, and going over to one corner where Strong Heart was lying, said, "My son, here is Tonda, come to see you."

Strong Heart turned his head toward the new-comer and made a slight motion with his right hand for her to sit down. She found a seat on the pile of soft furs on which he lay, and from the little light shed by the small fire in the center of the tipi, could see that he was suffering. His face she could not distinguish plainly, but she opined from his heavy breathing that he was feverish.

"The medicine-man has little that will do you good. Strong Heart. I have some medicine which I brought from the school, which my teacher gave me, that may be better. Shall I bring it to you?"

"Yes," murmured Strong Heart, "bring it here."

At this Tonda ran quickly home, opened a little wooden box, and took out one or two morphine powders. Then running hastily back, she seated herself close beside Strong Heart, telling Wawa to bring a little water. Raising the sick man's head carefully, she gave him one of the morphine powders and then a drink of water. She sat patiently beside him for nearly an hour, holding his hand and watching the deep sleep into which he had fallen from the effects of the drug. She explained to Wawa the

use of the powders and left them, so that should Strong Heart suffer during the night, he might be given another.

Richards, who knew a little of medicine as practiced by white physicians, had been there and had rudely dressed the wound. The medicine-man had been there also with his rattles and drums, making the usual hideous noise to drive away evil spirits. Wawa had great faith in the medicine-man, but neither her son nor his father placed any confidence in him, Strong Heart himself being especially wearied by the noise he made, so that he was very glad when he had gone. Whatever Tonda might think of the Sioux people, she had learned enough at school to lead her to believe her grandfather a fraud as a physician, although in other ways he might be an estimable Indian. She resolved to see him and find out if he would not give up the care of Strong Heart to her and the squaw-man. It would not be worth while to make known this idea to her parents, as they would not approve of it, neither would it be best to tell any one save Rain-in-the-Face himself. Therefore she decided that as soon as her grandfather should be up in the morning — for he would sleep late on account of his efforts at the scalp-dance — she would see him and extort, if possible, a promise from him. Having decided on this, she gave herself up to thoughts about Strong Heart himself for a few moments, and then, with a slight parting pressure upon his hand, returned to her father's tipi.

She slept beside her little sister until late the next morning. Her father and Omaha had been attending the scalp-dance, and did not return to the lodge until broad daylight, so that when they arose, about noon, Tonda had been up for some time, and was on her way to see her grandfather.

As is the custom in Indian tribes, the medicine-man

always lives on the outskirts of the village. His lodge is looked on with some superstition by the other Indians, as there are in it objects which seem to them to be more or less akin to the supernatural. Although she had been taught to pay no attention to such things, and to regard them without fear, it was with some hesitation that she entered the lodge. Her grandfather, not imagining her mission, received her very cordially, bade her be seated, and asked her what news she brought.

“I have come,” said the girl, “to ask a favor.”

“Wadaha would grant a favor to his granddaughter, he well knows that she would ask nothing foolish, and her brave spirit, as shown by what she did at the cliffs, entitles her to many favors.” Pleased with the words, she became quite bold, and broached the object of her coming without further delay.

“I want to give Strong Heart the white man’s medicine, of which I have a supply, which was given me in the East. It will do him good — make him strong; it will do more for him than all the noise which you make about his bedside.”

“My child,” said Wadaha, “it is a good plan to give him your medicine, but it is not best for the great medicine-man not to see him, as there are many evil spirits hovering about which I must drive away.”

Tonda’s heart sank when she heard these words, but she did not give up, and said, “Give him to me, grandfather. I will take as good care of him as you could, and I am sure he will get along better under my care. Please do this, O, great medicine-man, and I will do anything for you that you may wish.”

Wadaha thought a moment before replying. “My child, if I do not cure the chief’s son they will say my medicine is not as good as yours; they will laugh, and

say the great medicine-man has failed. No, my child; I cannot give him up to you."

"Oh, this you must do," she cried; "I will give him good medicine, and, if you will only say that I can take care of him, I will tell the people that it is your medicine that is doing him so much good. You shall have all the credit and the honor of making well the son of great Rain-in-the-Face."

This put a new phase on the matter. The old man knew well the potency of the white man's medicine, and in his secret heart was compelled to acknowledge it. He therefore reasoned thus with himself: "If I accept, I get all the credit of this great healing, and many in the tribe will make presents to me to conjure their enemies and cure their sick. Therefore, I shall accept, and it shall be known that great Wadaha's medicine is so powerful that even dangerous gun-shot wounds can be cured with it."

Wadaha loved power and prestige. Turning to her, he said, "My child, you bother me much, and you are very forward, for one so young. but it shall be: I give up Strong Heart to your care, with this condition: You must tell every one whom you meet, and who shall question you as to the condition of the patient, that great Wadaha's medicine is doing a wonderful work, and that the patient is rapidly recovering." And, with that, the old rascal began muttering to himself, and strode back into a dark recess of his wigwam, where he rattled some bones and other trinkets probably to frighten the girl. She knew what he was about, and, with a merry laugh, sprang out of the lodge and ran rapidly home, full of delight at her success. As she tripped gaily past the lodges and exchanged salutations with those whom she met, she thought of her dear friend who was now under her tender care, and of whose recovery she felt certain.

She entered the tipi of her parents, humming a little tune which she had learned in the Eastern school, and as bright and happy as the birds in the air, that with cheerful chirpings, were migrating southward in large flocks.

Two Bears came out shortly after she came, partook of food prepared by Omaha, and then stretched himself in the sun, lighted his pipe, and indulged in a quiet smoke. Scarcely had he settled himself, when a number of young people came running up to the wigwam, and called loudly for Tonda to come out.

“You promised us,” they said, “to read from the great story-teller’s book the words he wrote about the Indians. We should like to hear what he has to say,” and they forthwith seated themselves. Tonda was rather sorry that she had told any but Strong Heart of the book, because she could not expect to escape in less than two hours if she attempted to read, for as soon as they heard one story or poem they would wish another. However, she got the book and opened it at Hiawatha’s fishing. This pleased the young men very much; then, for the girls, she began with Hiawatha’s wooing. As the reading of this poem went on, they expressed their admiration in various ways, some by grunts, and now and then by laughter, and when the author attributed to the Indians customs far removed from every-day life of the Sioux, they shouted in derision, but Tonda explained that he wrote of Algonkians. On the whole, the poem was considered a success, and when the book was closed, it was with reluctance that the crowd dispersed to their homes. As night fell, she went to see Strong Heart.

Entering the tipi, she found both Rain-in-the-Face and Wawa present, also Richards, the squaw-man. Richards had been feeling Strong Heart’s pulse, and said that the morphine, in putting him to sleep, had greatly reduced

the fever, and that he was in hopes that no serious inflammation would set in. If he could be kept perfectly still for some weeks, the shoulder blade would heal sufficiently to allow him free movement of the muscles of the upper arm, breast, and shoulder, but, if he should move about much, he might be maimed for life.

Wawa and Richards went across the flat to the river to pick up drift wood. The chief, his son, and Tonda heard Wadaha approaching chanting a weird song, and rattling his necklace and chain. Before he entered, in a few words she told them what had taken place that morning in the lodge of her grandfather.

Among our people it would be considered very improper for a young girl to take care of a wounded man when his parents were at hand to do this, but Indian custom is quite different. The way the Indians live, separated from each other by a simple door of thin hide, permits many things which with us would be considered impossible. Therefore, when a warrior is injured or in distress, there is not a woman in the entire tribe who will not do all in her power to assist him to recovery. Whether such a woman be attached to him or have not the slightest affection for him, makes no difference.

"You did well," said Strong Heart; "your medicine is good, and I have much faith in it. I shall tell old Wadaha that his noise disturbs me greatly, and I do not want him here."

"No; do not do that," said the father. "He is a great man in the tribe, and exerts a powerful influence: were you to tell him this he would be furious, call a council, and I should be denounced as favoring the Whites instead of a man supposed to be endowed with power from the Great Spirit." So they suffered him to come and practice his incantations.

IX.

O'DONNELL AND TONDA.

O'Donnell admired Tonda every time she came to the agency. He had purposely not spoken to her since their spirited conversation of some time previous. But he told Henry to give her anything she ordered, to reduce the price a third, and to treat her well.

Being Indian Tonda felt flattered and proud. Had not she stood by the brave youth when he defeated the Crows? Were not all the young men in the tribe casting eyes at her? She enjoyed being admired. Her mother noticed it and cautioned her. But Tonda was a woman. One day she put on her best dress, got Brown Eyes, and in company with other girls rode over to the agency. It was a clear, crisp fall day — the last of Indian summer. In the high and dry northwest the air was tonic — one's blood leaped through his veins, and man or woman, red or white, felt stimulated. Naturally the girls raced, shouted, and made merry. O'Donnell stood in the agency doorway, humming "Garryowen."

"Charlie, got sore eyes? Here's a sight for thim." Charlie came out. Said the agent, "Oi'm goin' ter call her in here fer a talk."

"Be keerful," commented Charlie. Seeing he was not wanted he went over to the store. Billy called after him, "Tell Henry ter give the girls candy an' calico on me."

Tonda interpreted to the Sioux maidens what Billy said, and they shouted in approval. An Indian may not like you, but he will seldom refuse a gift, and sad experience with the Whites has taught him that when any man

offered something for nothing, they had better accept at once.

"Good mornin'," he cried to Tonda. "Oi have words ter spake ter youse. Come inter the office." Wondering what he wanted, Tonda entered.

"Sit down," pushing a chair toward her. She did so.

"Oi got a letter here; read it." He handed her a communication from some person in Boston. The writer wished to buy Sioux bead-work and trinkets and offered to take a considerable quantity. At that time there was little demand for Indian goods in the East. To-day, the tribes derive no small revenue from their sale.

"Now, Two Bears' daughter, here is a chance for youse. Them people East will pay a good price for such things as youse can aisy make, or already got. Youse think it over an' talk wid Omaha."

Tonda was pleased. Truly an opportunity presented itself whereby she might make money and buy for her parents many needed articles. This was very good of Billy — possibly she had been hasty the other day. Visions of prosperity floated through her little brain.

"I thank you with my whole heart. You have done us a good turn. I shall ride home at once and tell mother."

"Youse are welcome," said Billy with a lordly wave of his hand. "It's nawthin'. If there's money in it, sure an' Oi'm glad."

Tonda threw herself upon the horse, galloped past the store, calling to her girl friends that she must go home. Once there she rushed into the lodge and read Omaha the good news.

"Just think, mother. We can sell enough goods to get a hundred dollars, and, perhaps, more."

"Aow. But what do the white people there want with Indian things?"

“ Oh, just to look at them and wonder what we use them for.”

“ Huh! Why don't they use their own things? ”

“ They do. They hang our bead-work up about the great houses and look at it and make strange guesses as to how we live and what we do.”

“ Tell me more about them, daughter.”

“ Well, they think that our men beat us women and that they smoke all the time while we support them. They have a favorite saying, ‘ No good Indian but a dead Indian.’ They all go to church on Sunday and sing about being good and hear long speeches about the white man's God. Then the other six days they rob and cheat each other, and shut children up in big buildings where they have to work like grown men. The women sit up all night at parties, take care of houses larger than the agency warehouse, and tire themselves out with visiting about over the country. When they meet an Indian girl they ask (as they did me) — ‘ Why do you work so hard when your husbands loaf? ’ ”

“ So they live in tall houses far above the ground, you say? ”

“ Yes. Taller than the biggest cotton-wood tree you ever saw and built of stone and iron.”

“ Why do they build of such hard materials? ”

“ Oh, so that they will last a long time. They spend much money in building one of these houses.”

“ Huh! White men think that by doing so they will live long and keep away from the evil spirit. But white men cannot live forever. They have got to die the same as us poor Indians. So they make the children work hard? ”

“ Yes. The poor little ones look so pale and sick.”
Omaha pondered a moment.

"There was a man preached to us for a long time. I think he was a good man. He told about the God of the Whites. Some followed his road. When my baby died he said I was a wild woman because I cut my arms when I buried my little boy." Omaha got up and came over to Tonda and shook a long, bony hand in her face.

"I wish I could have words with that man again. I would tell him — I am a wild woman, am I? But I do not whip my children; I do not make them work hard all day; I do not hear them cry, and so long as I have a mouthful of buffalo meat my children have meat too! A wild woman! Huh, huh! Why does he not preach to his own people? They need it. I always thought in my heart white people bad. Now I know it."

"They work from daylight to dark in the big cities in little, dimly-lighted rooms. They shut each other up in prisons. Lots of them go hungry half the time; yet they say to me — 'How can you Indians be so cruel?'"

"That's talk enough. Stop, daughter. Why does the Great Spirit allow such people to crowd us out?"

Tonda sat by the entrance and gazed off toward the sand-hills.

"Why does He, mother?" She mused.

"When I was a girl," began the mother, "we had no trouble. Buffalo, elk, and deer everywhere. Traders brought us goods and we gave them robes. Some spirit water was given us — more than was good for us — but there were no bad men, no agents like Billy to hold us down, and no Great Father at the rising sun to send soldiers after us every time we stood up for our own rights. Now bad white men are about us on all sides. We cannot move where we would. We are penned up like hogs! Huh! I wish the warriors would fight again!"

“Why, mother, Washington would whip us if we did take the path. No good could come of it.”

“Child, you know little. Was I not in the village in the Big Horn country when Red Cloud killed Fetterman’s troops? Did not Washington tear down the forts and get out of the good hunting region and leave it for us? Did not Washington make peace at Laramie? Aow! A fight is a good thing sometimes.”

“But we would be killed.”

“No, no! Some of us would, not all. White soldiers attack, but when we give in they quit. They are different from the old-time Indian tribes who fought among themselves and killed all but young women and children.”

“Think of the pain and suffering.”

“Pain? What do you call pain? A bit of lead through you is not as bad as starving to death. Would you rather die in a few moments or be months in dying? Huh! My man better take his gun and die like a brave than to sit around and starve to death.”

“But we are not starving now.”

“My daughter, no. But the days may come when we must have one of two kinds of hearts. Brave hearts, and die fighting like warriors of old, or weak hearts, and die by inches.”

The old-time Indians had these moments of passion, these longings for revenge and action — when they brooded over their wrongs. Tonda endeavored to calm her mother and presently turned her thoughts into other channels.

That afternoon she rode over to the agency and mailed a letter to the Boston person. A correspondence ensued, and Tonda was able to gather among her friends numerous Indian articles. Richards and Charlie packed them in two barrels, and these, in due time, were sent East, and

thus was established a trade that in time brought to the Indians considerable revenue.

Tonda tied Brown Eyes and made a few purchases at the store. O'Donnell, ever on the watch, saw her, and called to her to come in.

"What did the ould woman think of my scheme?"

"Oh, she was glad. All of us were. We can now make some money."

"Yis, yis. There is more than wan way ter make money. Now. Oi ain't no hand at sewin' an' bein' an onmarried man: Oi has much mendin' ter be done. Youse been away at school an' has learned all thim things. Why can't youse take my clothes home an' sew on the buttons?"

Tonda laughed. Think of the powerful agent asking her to mend his clothes! The subject amused her — she did not feel insulted; Billy had done her favors: moreover Omaha and Two Bears had said, "Do not cross Billy." She would not mend his old garments, but some poorer girl might do so, and whatever Billy paid her she would give to the one that did the work.

Billy continued, "Oi think that foive dollars would be about right, for they need considerable fixin' an' so foine an' competent a sewin' woman as youse must now be, should be paid a good price."

"Yes, I will fix them. Get them ready."

"Did youse come on a saddle or bareback? They makes a big roll, an' if you got no saddle they will be onhandy ter tie on."

"Oh, yes. I always ride with a saddle. You can show me the things, and I shall help you roll them up."

O'Donnell's bedroom opened from the office. He threw open the door, and as he sought his garments Tonda looked in with some curiosity. "The agent of the Great Father," she thought, "does not keep his room in as

good condition as we keep our lodges. The rooms of the eastern Whites were far cleaner."

"Youse see, Oi has ter do my own work. Charlie helps me wid the males, as he is a good cook; Oi'm not. We has ter bach it here."

"Why don't you get married; you have money enough?"

"That's aisy said. But white women don't want ter live on the agency. They is afraid of the Injuns."

"We would not hurt them."

"Of course not. But thim women is a quare lot. Oi offered wan a dollar a day ter come here an' be cook an' housekaper for me, an' she would not."

Tonda's white training told her that it was not to be wondered why the woman refused; but a Sioux unacquainted with the ways of the world would see nothing improper in the arrangement.

He came out with the clothes, put them in a heap upon the floor.

"Youse larned ter cook well?"

"Oh, yes. I can cook both Indian and white styles."

"Now, see here, Tonda, Oi would not want one of thim Injun girls ter cook for me or to keep my house, but youse is different. Youse is nate an' attractive, an' youse got sense. Oi will give youse tin dollars a wake ter come here an' cook for me an' take care o' my house."

Her eyes had been fastened upon the coats and trousers during his proposition.

"Now," coming over to her and standing by her chair, "youse kin tell Omaha that Oi need youse for ter look after my place; that youse is ter be my housekaper. Youse kin go home iviry Sunday mornin' an' come back Monday mornin'; that will give youse a chance ter see the other Injuns. An' youse kin ride over afternoons after

the work is done. Its big pay fer such light work as Oi have."

O'Donnell's voice seemed rather to tremble; why should he be either moved or excited in making an ordinary business proposal? A fear stole into her heart. She remembered what Omaha had said of this and that girl who had worked for the Whites. Surely he meant no harm, and the offer was tempting, but she must first talk with her mother. Something told her not to answer finally now.

She looked up, about to speak. A peculiar light was in his gray eyes, and she guessed the truth. She started for the door. He seized her arm.

"Hould on, Tonda! Stay and talk it over. Youse has not got the clothes," but she tore away and stepped outside.

"Whin youse talk wid Omaha, come back an' tell me," he urged. Hot anger now leaped through her veins, her dark cheek turned a darker red. She could think of nothing fitting to say, so she ran away, mounted Brown Eyes and galloped home.

Billy cursed to himself, heaped maledictions upon the girl, and went over to the store.

Once home, she threw herself upon the bed and gave way to tears. Omaha came in.

"Why, child, what's the matter? A Sioux girl should not cry unless some one has died. No one is dead. Tell me. You act like the bird-hearted white people."

Tonda told her. Omaha came over and stroked Tonda's head.

"Bad hearts in all of them. Do not go to the store or his office again. I shall buy what you want there. If Two Bears was not an agency Indian he could go over there and take Billy's scalp. But if he did that soldiers would come again. The first time we fight he will shoot

Billy. He has no right to speak bad words to my daughter."

"Do not tell any one, mother."

"I may speak to husband if I think best. You come of a family known for its good record. We do not want war, but it is just such men as Billy that bring on wars. If Washington knew all the evil we have to suffer, Washington would not send soldiers after us every time we strike back. Billy does not dare tell this to a man, white or red, and neither you nor I can speak. If I tell Two Bears he will keep it to himself. But you are a Sioux girl. Your heart is strong. My husband's heart is strong. I, too, have a brave heart, and have fought twice with my butcher knife when Whites attacked the village.*

"So be of good courage. You are a good girl. You shall be revenged some day." Omaha's eyes snapped. She beat her clenched hands upon the ground. "Billy cheats us; Billy makes money off us; Billy tries to ruin our daughters; but some day Billy will get a bullet through his lying, white carcass," and she gave the high, shrill scream of the old women. Indians came running up to the lodge, asking what was the matter. Tonda remained on her bed, but Omaha, who had wonderful control of herself, smilingly told the inquiring ones that she was showing Tonda how the women used to scream when they taunted the wounded on a battle-field.

Tonda, being Sioux, and having no nerves, got over her experience in a few days.

When she went to visit her girl friends, Omaha told Two Bears. He listened gravely, then put down his dish of buffalo meat and swore an oath according to the La-

* Sioux women have helped the men fight in more than a score of engagements.

kotas. He would bide his time, but he would not forgive O'Donnell.

Afterward, when Two Bears and Omaha went to the agency he wore Rain-in-the-Face's six-shooter. He purposely stood about where Billy could see him and almost tenderly and wistfully he handled the gun. Billy saw and understood, but he joked with Charlie and Henry about it. Henry did not understand, but Charlie guessed the truth. When they went in to supper, and before Henry came, Charlie said:

"Well, I don't know just what's up, but I kin see this, that you'll never be no nearer death than if you meet Two Bears alone."

"Oh, the divil! It's a bluff."

"Two Bears ain't no bluffer," and down in his heart Billy knew that Charlie spoke the truth. After that Billy also wore his pistol.

X.

LE MOYNE AND SPOTTED EAGLE.

One or two days passed. The air grew colder. A skim of ice at night formed along the margin of still waters. Soon the natives must confine themselves to camp, for in winter they seldom travel.

Le Moyne came back. He rested a day and then sought Richards. That worthy had thought out the conversation, told him about the Crow fight and the talk with Billy.

“They are watchin’ the herd an’ afeered of the Crows,” he mused. “Ef Exelby kin come quick and there is a light snow falls the same night to kiver tracks, mebbe he kin git away with a good bunch.”

Le Moyne rode to the agency and had Charlie — without the knowledge of O’Donnell or any one else — write a letter to Exelby at Deadwood, setting forth the facts.

The son of a rich father, Spotted Eagle, wanted for nothing, and was a dandy among the Indians. So far as it is possible to draw a parallel, one might say that he represented the idle, rich young man — what we call a dude. This type is the same whether found in a Sioux camp, at Newport, or in London. It adds nothing to knowledge, is of no benefit to civilization, and even lacks manly virtues. If such an one among ourselves is lavish of money, he has his followers, although sensible persons hold him in scorn. So the Sioux — especially some younger persons — were glad to accept presents from Spotted Eagle, for he spent money freely at the store, but behind his back they made sport. More handsome and better dressed than any other warrior, yet his per-



THE EVIL FACE OF SPOTTED EAGLE.

sonal bravery was in dispute; some held that he would fight, others called him a coward.

Spotted Eagle had cast glances at Tonda and strutted past her tipi daily, arrayed in his best costume.

“Strong Heart is sick. Here is an opportunity to become acquainted with the girl,” he thought. “I shall play the flute near her lodge.”

As it was the custom to give notice by some little present or token before commencing the flute song, in order that the maiden might expect her lover, Spotted Eagle sent by messenger to Tonda's lodge a very handsome silver bracelet that he happened to possess, and a little piece of well-tanned deer-skin, upon which was engraved, in Indian pictographs, a sentiment, the whole having about the same purport as a valentine with us. Tonda was within the lodge sewing for her mother when this arrived, carried by a small boy, to whom Spotted Eagle had given a handsome tobacco-pouch for his services. No sooner had she glanced at the articles than she interpreted their meaning.

The Indians, when courting, observe several methods. One is playing the flute. They have a little reed flute, not unmusical, and of a very weird sound, which is used for this purpose alone. The brave who desires to wed approaches within a hundred yards of the wigwam of his intended, just after dusk some evening, and, seating himself, begins a plaintive melody. If the maiden favors the suit, she comes forth from the wigwam, shyly at first, but growing gradually bolder, she advances toward the spot where her lover is seated. Tonda decided to accept the whole matter as a joke, and dismiss the young man that evening, telling him that she could not love him and that he must not hope. So she waited rather impatiently for dusk to come, at first with some trembling, and later

with expectation of the fun in store for her, and with not a little vanity—for he was a goodly youth to look upon and rich. In any civilized community attentions from a young man like Spotted Eagle would be thought insulting to a respectable girl, but, as we have already said, the Indians, good and bad, mingle very freely in their social life.

Scarcely had the sun disappeared over the vast stretch of prairie, when the notes of a flute were heard issuing from a clump of bushes about a hundred yards from the tipi. The player was evidently in a desperate strait, for he piped and blew with all his might, and made such a noise that it called forth the remarks of all persons near at hand.

Tonda chuckled to herself, and unmindful of her mother's frowning caution, "Do not go," she ran out.

Spotted Eagle saw her coming and came forward, his heart beating rapidly.

"Pretty one, you are here. Let us walk on the plain where no one will disturb us."

"No, I cannot walk with you."

"But you came out. See, the boys are running this way. Come with me." Tonda knew that she would be recognized, for a dozen youngsters had heard the music and were assembling for a good time. "She needs urging," he thought, and seizing her by the arm he attempted to lead her. "Nice one, let us run away from these bad boys. I want to talk with you." She was now aware of the indiscretion—she should have remained at home.

"No, I cannot go with you," and then seeing her father approaching, she fled home mortified.

Thinking that he might lure her out he blew upon the reed again, but the boys crowded about and the lover had great ado to keep them back and continue his tune.

The lads crowded around the disconsolate lover, some to hoot, and others to laugh. Although somewhat of a coward, Spotted Eagle could not stand being tormented, and, losing all patience, he seized an Indian boy standing near and planted a vigorous kick in his ribs. The boy went down with a howl; there was an instant of surprise upon the part of his companions, and then a number of them, from twelve to sixteen years old, assailed the Indian on all sides. The flute was broken in the scuffle, and Spotted Eagle was roughly used. He knocked some boys down, but others leaped upon him and he was pushed and pummelled until he rolled over the bank and down among the briars. Some men now ran forward and the lads fled, leaving him to make his way back to his wigwam. He returned thither without further molestation, probably the maddest Indian upon the whole Sioux reservation. His neatly-trimmed buckskin leggins were soiled and rent; the beaded work on his beautifully embroidered shirt was much torn, and the shirt disfigured, while his handsome face was cut and scratched.

Le Moyne happened to be one of those who ran up. Catching a boy he demanded:

“Who was he?”

“Spotted Eagle, and he played the flute to Tonda.”

“Aow!” Le Moyne thought a moment. This youth was not liked by the best Indians. “Might not he be of service to me?” A desperate scheme flashed through the half-breed’s mind, and he went home to smoke a pipe and perfect it.

Meanwhile, Spotted Eagle, whom, by the way, Two Bears called “a coiled snake,” was rushing hither and thither, gnashing his teeth, and fairly foaming at the mouth because of his defeat. Indians detest to be laughed at. How could he face the boys to-morrow? Hot anger

surged through his veins. How could he obtain Tonda? How might he be revenged? He could neither answer these questions, nor invent a balm for his feelings. So he gave up to violent outbursts of rage. Possibly there was some way whereby he could humble both Strong Heart and Tonda.

“They say I dress too much. Huh! I am not stuck up like that girl. Who is she to throw my heart away? I am rich and beautiful to look upon. Why will she not have me?”

He got out the medicine-pouch and holding it against his heart, cursed both the girl and her lover.

Wide awake lay Le Moyne on his bed of buffalo robes that night. Why should the Indians guard the pony herd? Surely they must know that the Crows were not sufficiently strong to raid more than two hundred miles from home. Moreover, if the Crows did raid O'Donnell would correspond with the Crow agent, and the fact that the Crows had returned with a large number of horses could not be concealed. As a result the soldiers would return to the Sioux such ponies as had been stolen. Exelby had not told Le Moyne that there was no truth in his statement to Richards regarding a prospective Crow raid, but he believed that Exelby had deliberately concocted the story in order that he might blind Richards. Now, Le Moyne was convinced in his own mind that the only raid contemplated was that proposed by Exelby himself. The few Crows defeated by Strong Heart constituted a band of young men, he thought, who, to distinguish themselves, hoped to slip into the Sioux agency unseen and run off a drove of ponies. He was convinced of the accuracy of his theories. Le Moyne sober was more far-seeing than Le Moyne drunk. Therefore, it was perfectly plain that Richards had broken his

word, and informed the Sioux of Exelby's expected raid. Under no other theory could he explain the presence of guards. He noticed coolness, not to say contempt, on the part of the dog-soldiers and the leading Indians toward himself. Richards would have all to gain and nothing to lose by standing by the Sioux. As for himself his course was nearly run. He must seek new pastures. He knew something of the Crows and spoke their language, although imperfectly. If he could steal twenty or thirty horses and join the Crows, he might escape the vigilance of the Crow agent — for that worthy had something like two thousand persons under his control — by claiming to be a half-breed recently arrived from Canada. Thirty or forty ponies would not be sufficient to cause the Sioux to go to war. Yet that many would supply Le Moyne's needs for some years to come. He would join a village of Crows far removed from the agency, and live quietly so long as the ponies lasted. His Sioux squaw, he mused, was possessed of a temper, and he had supported her long enough. She was no longer young and comely. He would marry a young attractive Crow squaw, and through her coaching would be able to speak the language very well before he visited the agency.

He reasoned that every man should take care of himself. If he could gain anything by assisting Exelby in the raid, well and good. If not, he would, on the night of Exelby's raid, drive his own herd (the herd he appropriated) through to the Crows country and act independently of Exelby, Richards, the Sioux, or any one else. The government was bound to support his squaw, and she would not starve, even if he ran off.

Such was Le Moyne's character, and accordingly he laid his plans.

The next morning, making sure that Spotted Eagle's

relatives were out, he visited that person. Spotted Eagle was busy with his thoughts, when the flap was thrown aside and Le Moyne entered.

"What want you?" demanded the Indian in an angry tone.

"Just came for a talk," replied the squaw-man.

"My heart is not right for talk."

"What's the matter? Trouble? Le Moyne can help Spotted Eagle if he will trust him."

"You can't do anything. It's about a girl."

"You played flute to Tonda. The boys told me. She was bad to run away."

"May Waukawsica* take her and the little devils."

"You want her for your squaw?"

"Yes, but how can I get her with that Strong Heart and the rest of the people against me?"

"Elope with her."

"What!" cried Spotted Eagle, starting up in great amazement. "You put into my head what cannot be done."

"It can be done. If you will say words in no man's ear, I shall tell you." The Indian swore secrecy.

"Once you are away with her you can claim her as a squaw, and they cannot get her back without fighting — and they seldom fight for a girl, for there are too many marriageable girls in the tribe."

"But not as pretty as Tonda," remarked Spotted Eagle.

"That makes no difference. See here, Spotted Eagle, I got a plan, but I do not know whether to let you in on it or not. If you breathe a word I am lost."

"I do not care what you have in your head; I have sworn that I will not tell."

"The Sioux do not like me now;" the Indian grunted

* The bad spirit.

that he knew that long ago. He was not a member of the council, and, therefore, did not know why the dislike of Le Moyne was now intense. "I propose to join the Crows." The Indian looked up in blank astonishment, for, with all his faults, and notwithstanding a consuming anger against the girl and her relatives, he had been trained from infancy to hate the Crows.

"Remember, you are not to speak of it. I have been treated like a dog here, and do not propose to stand it longer. I know the Crow tongue, and I shall skip out some night soon. It is Indian summer for a few days yet. They will never find me once I get there."

"Yes, but me? Where am I benefited?"

"I am going to take thirty ponies — for the tribe owns many, and they owe me some. You need not fear; I shall not steal yours; but you can give me some for helping you win the finest woman of all the Lakotas. With these ponies I flee northward. If they do not find me before morning I am a good fifty miles on the trail, and they can't catch up. East of Billy's place is a small camp down in a draw. The Indian living there left last night to go on the upper reservation, where he will live."

"How do you know that?"

"Oh," grunted the white man, "I know everything. These Indians do not know no one is there. Now, the night I run off with the ponies you are to steal Tonda and take her to that camp. They won't find you for a day or two, and then she will be your squaw according to the old tribal law."

In former years a warrior could steal his squaw. But as the Indians became acquainted with white men they gradually abandoned the practice. At the time of our story, marriage by consent was in vogue, and the suitors gave ponies or robes, etc., to the bride's father.

“But,” objected Spotted Eagle, “her friends are more powerful than mine, and as Strong Heart wants her, when he is well he will kill me.”

“No, he won’t. Some people think the girl feels herself above them because of school training. Many do not like her. If an outcry is raised, these people will say, ‘If Spotted Eagle was sharp enough to get her, let him keep her. You have no right to part them.’” The Indian laughed gleefully and rubbed his hands. The picture drawn by Le Moyne was pleasing. Yes, he would do as the white man suggested.

“How am I to take her?”

“Her medicine is making Strong Heart well. Everybody knows that. I shall say that the old fellow who lived in the draw camp is sick and wants Tonda. Wadaha will offer to go also, but I shall say that he is not wanted. Tonda will ride out there alone. Meanwhile, you have gone to the agency. You are at the old camp and have put up lodge poles and covered them, made a fire inside, and got all ready. When she enters the tipi you seize her. That same night about dark I select thirty good horses from the bunch farthest from the village. There will be twenty of your ponies also there which you are to give me for helping you get the squaw.”

“But twenty ponies are too many.”

“Your father is rich. What are twenty to you? You could not think out this plan yourself. Besides, it will help save me. You can sell me twenty ponies in the presence of other Indians. Then when the loss is discovered they will debate before they follow, for had not Le Moyne a right to drive his own horses off? They may talk several hours before they take up my trail. The longer they talk, the farther I am toward the Crows.”

“I see,” said the Indian. “It is a good plan and worthy

of a great schemer. Are you sure all will move along as planned?"

"It can't help but work that way. Now, you ride over to the agency store at once and buy a lot of tobacco and candy. Be liberal with your presents. Put the Indians in a good humor. I also ride over there, but we do not go together." With that Le Moyne strode out of the lodge. He was soon on his way to the agency. Spotted Eagle bought so much at the post trader's that that individual was astonished. Spotted Eagle's lavish presents, when he returned, did much to put him in favor again with the natives.

Le Moyne went to see Charlie. They entered Charlie's sleeping quarters unseen and when the door was shut he read him this letter:

"Pard Le Moyne. we is comin thursday night about ten you and Richards be shore and tell them injuns that the crows tuck the ponies meet us two miles west of agancy git thar early and lay still there is fifteen of us

Doc exelby"

Le Moyne turned pale. What should he do? Charlie watched him a moment and said:

"Damned if this ain't bad business. But I swore not to tell and I won't. But I won't carry no more notes nor have nothin' to do with it. There'll be Hell to pay."

"Charlie, give me some liquor. I must have it."

"I will if you don't give none to the Injuns." He promised and Charlie gave him a filled jug.

Le Moyne rode homewards heeding nothing, for he was buried in thought.

XI.

TONDA ESCAPES FROM SPOTTED EAGLE.

The Sioux were not always fighting. Omaha voiced the opinion of the majority when she said: "We must have time to rear our children." Regarding the "buffalo days" thirty years afterward we can take a dispassionate view of those tempestuous times. The Sioux must fight for existence. Besieged by enemies on all sides they must battle for their rights — and they did. No one extended a helping hand, no Indian Rights Association, such as we have to-day, stood out for honesty and humanity. All were hostile — every man's hand against them. Hence their merciless retaliation.

Le Moyne was desperate. If he told Richards, the Sioux would balk Exelby's scheme. If he started for the Crow country as planned, certainly the Sioux, thinking the large herd stolen by Exelby was taken by the Crows, would follow him clear there and Billy had not the power to prevent pursuit. Once at the Crow agency the Indians would surrender him and his stock to the Sioux. If Exelby turned off the Crow trail and drove his herd back to the southern settlements, the Sioux, coming upon the divided trails, would send half their force northward and the remainder southward. Without doubt they would follow both trails to the end, for they would be fighting mad. One course only was open, to abandon his flight to the Crows and stick to Exelby. There was a ghost of a chance — and as he sought the jug he yearned for that chance — in case it should snow the next evening he might get through, for the Sioux would follow the

heavier trail. If much snow fell, both Exelby and himself might get away. He prepared himself to act in any emergency. He must get away whether alone or with Exelby. Spotted Eagle could work out his own plans and Le Moyne was in too tight a situation to think further concerning the love-sick aborigine.

Morning broke and it was colder. Le Moyne's spirits rose. He met Spotted Eagle. Said that worthy:

"I rode to the draw last night, after the village was asleep. Took lodge coverings and blankets. I found some old tipi poles there and put up a good lodge. You better ride up to Tonda's lodge before sundown to-day and tell the story of the sick Indian."

"All right. Let us make the pony deal where other Indians hear us." So they walked about among the lodges and talked loudly arguing whether Spotted Eagle would sell twenty ponies or not. The bargain was struck. Gopher remarked to Rain-in-the-Face:

"What does Le Moyne want with so many horses?"

"Oh, I suppose Charlie is buying them through him."

The afternoon seemed long and tedious. About three o'clock Spotted Eagle rode over to the agency with Le Moyne. Few Indians were there and the men rode eastward. When near the draw they separated, Le Moyne returning home. These movements created no comment, as Indians frequently gallop about with no apparent object in view.

Down the ravine a quarter of a mile from the tipi the depression was deep and narrow and one upon the plain, unless within a few hundred yards, could not discern that a horse was there hidden. Spotted Eagle picketed his pony and returned to some brush near the tipi. Full of expectation he sat down to await the coming of Tonda.

Le Moyne rode direct to Two Bears' lodge, reaching

there about two hours before sundown. He called aloud. Two Bears came forth.

"Aow Kola," (how are you?) grunted the Indian, and Le Moyne in return saluted him.

"That Brulé who lives alone with his squaw is sick. He has heard of Tonda's great medicine and wants her to ride out and see him and make him well." Tonda and her mother came out at this moment.

"Why doesn't he send for Wadaha?" she asked.

"Because he says Wadaha's medicine is no good. He wants Tonda. I think he has fever."

"I shall ride there at once. Father, you get the pony for me."

"I will go with you," said Two Bears.

"Chief Rain-in-the-Face said he wanted you to talk with him," remarked Omaha. Le Moyne at once said:

"She can ride there, see him and get back by the time it is dark. He is in a hurry to see her."

"Aow," ejaculated Two Bears. "I will get both ponies and she can start. I shall tell Rain-in-the-Face that we can talk later."

Le Moyne, well knowing that suspicions would be aroused if he urged further, turned his horse about and slowly rode to his own lodge. Tonda mounted Brown Eyes in a few moments and started for the draw. Two Bears reached Rain-in-the-Face's lodge and told that worthy of the Brulé's sickness and that he thought it well for him to accompany his daughter.

"There is no danger," remarked Rain-in-the-Face, "sit down and talk half an hour."

Bearing a little skin bag in which were the remedies, Tonda rode rapidly northeast. Intent only on rendering the sick a service, and not suspecting treachery she reached the tipi and dismounted. Seeing no one about she thought



RAIN-IN-THE-FACE IN ORDINARY COSTUME.

that the Brulé must be ill indeed if all his family were within, and did not look out when they heard her horse's hoof beats. Pushing aside the usual covering she stooped and entered.

Spotted Eagle had rolled a blanket about chunks of wood and placed the roll upon a heap of robes. In the dim light it appeared like one lying down. He was not in the lodge, for did Tonda see him she would withdraw at once. He lay ten feet away in a clump of bushes, his evil face thrust through wild grass and shrubs, regarding her intently. As she passed inside a sinister smile overspread his countenance, triumph possessed his heart and he jumped up, rushed within the lodge, seized her in his arms, crying "You are to be my squaw, you are to be mine!"

There was an instant of terrified surprise. Her heart leaped into her throat, then heredity asserted itself and the daughter of a long line of fighting men began a tremendous struggle for freedom. Spotted Eagle at once realized that he had no common, weak woman with whom to deal. She was short, thick set, and very strong; he, slender and wiry, but not capable of long endurance, because of his indolent life and untrained muscles. At first she endeavored to tear herself loose, but failing in that whirled him around. He tripped her, but she never relaxed her hold and they fell heavily and rolled over this way and that; neither speaking, each straining every effort to seize the other's throat.

She could not master him with naked hands, and he had not the strength to hold her down until he could tie her hands and feet. This was his plan and he had prepared cords — to tie her and compel her to listen to his arguments — how useless it was to resist and how happy she would be as his squaw.

She was desperate and thoroughly angry. He, acting on the defensive, wished to capture rather than injure her. But now he too became angered. There were stones without the lodge and if she could but reach through the door and seize one Spotted Eagle would meet his fate. Once over, they turned toward the entrance. Another superhuman effort and she threw him again. Then, divining that she sought to escape, he furiously struck and bruised her face, vainly endeavored to hold her — their breath came in gasps, like men locked in mortal combat. He got upon his knees, but she clung to him. He called to his totem to help and appealed loudly to the evil spirit, for he was entirely aboriginal. But she spoke not a word.

“My gun, oh, my gun!” he gasped, heaving himself strenuously to escape her arms. She seized both his cheeks in her strong hands, hatred gleamed in her eyes, and the spirit of her ancestors — fighting men of renown — came mightily upon her and she threw him down near the doorway. Then, casting her body through the entrance, she seized a stone. Quickly, even like the panther, he had leaped for his gun to knock her senseless. But her heart was surging with hot anger and she too sprang forward like a tigress and struck him hard and fair upon the forehead. The light went out of Spotted Eagle’s eyes and he fell senseless upon the ground.

* * * * *

Before this happened Two Bears had mounted his pony, and, as was customary in those days, had put his Winchester in the case alongside his saddle and ridden forth to meet Tonda.

* * * * *

Exelby* had with him fifteen as desperate outlaws as ever roamed the northwest. This is saying a great deal. He had been told marvelous stories of the cattle country down in Texas and the mining developments in Arizona and New Mexico. Exelby was a very shrewd man. He concluded that it would be necessary for him to seek new fields. He proposed to steal more than a thousand ponies from the Sioux, and as he retreated, to sell these at various frontier towns through Nebraska and Kansas. He would leisurely proceed to Texas and begin a new career there; later moving to the mining regions. By that time he might be able to return to the vicinity of Julesburg or Deadwood. The theft of a thousand ponies would cause the Washington authorities to send out a troop of cavalry, and Exelby, being conversant with frontier history, knew that sooner or later United States cavalry rounded up any body of outlaws in search of whom they went. Sometimes it required six months, but they never failed. Moreover, Exelby was not afraid of the Indians themselves. He had stood off on the plains ten times as many warriors as he had men. But Exelby made a fatal mistake. An intrenched force, or a guard accompanying a wagon train, or a body of desperadoes or cowboys, or any other body of determined men could outfight several times their number of Sioux. The action he was about to precipitate was quite different — a running fight; and the Whites were inconvenienced and retarded by a large body of stock. They must keep this stock together. If they lost it the very object for which they raided was defeated. If they planted themselves upon a hill to repel an Indian charge the natives might hurl three-fourths

*He was a real person, and was killed in 1884 by Deputy Marshal George E. Bartlett.

of their number against the hill, while the remaining fourth drove the ponies back to the village.

His men were armed with both Winchesters and Colts. They had been five days and nights on the trail, coming very slowly. Their horses were in splendid condition. They moved almost due north.

They had selected broken country over which to travel. Before crossing table lands or prairies Exelby carefully inspected the country through his field glasses. Thus, unobserved, they reached a point about a mile from the beginning of the draw in which Spotted Eagle had built the tipi. The mile of level ground lying between them and the draw was dangerous, and Exelby decided to wait until dusk before crossing it. In a thicket of wild plum bushes they picketed the horses and, sitting down, they played cards during the afternoon.

They would follow the draw some two miles, still keeping well north of the agency, then move carefully four miles west and be at the rendezvous about nine o'clock. There they would rest their horses one or two hours, slowly push on to the herd, cut out a thousand or fifteen hundred ponies, rush northward ten miles, then swing to the west and to the south. If discovered before they had gone far enough to give the Sioux the impression that Crows had raided, they would turn the herd directly south. The ten best shots (and there were none better in the whole country) would cover the rear and hold the Indians in check. About five it began to get dusk. A few flakes of snow fell. Billy the Kid crawled up one of the sand-hills and surveyed the surrounding country. No Indians were in sight. Exelby gave the word to move their horses across the plain at a lope in order to get into the draw as soon as possible.

* * * * *

Trembling in every limb, horrified at what she had done, overwhelmed by conflicting emotions, Tonda came out of the lodge. Her father was nowhere in sight. Brown Eyes possessed that keen perception common to ponies and dogs and all wild creatures, as well as the Indians themselves. She snorted and pawed when she heard the struggle, but did not attempt to run away. Excited though she was, fearful lest his relatives would take vengeance upon her, yet conscious that she had saved herself, Tonda ran to the animal and mounted. Brown Eyes needed no urging and swung into the long gallop that would rapidly cover the six miles lying between this detested place and home. The snow was falling lightly but fast. In two hours there would be enough on the ground to cover tracks. As Brown Eyes rushed along she pricked up her ears and looked off to the left. Tonda knew that Brown Eyes never did this unless there was something in sight. She too looked, and saw a body of horsemen moving compactly and with some speed. A moment later Billy the Kid saw the Indian girl.

“There’s an Injun, Doc.”

“Yes,” replied Exelby, “it’s six miles to the village. If you nail him they can’t hear.”

“Hurry up, Kid,” cried another outlaw. “Injuns kin see funder than we kin. If you don’t git him he’ll shorely carry the news.”

“You got to git him. The rest stay with me and ride slowly,” commanded Exelby. “No use to blow the horses.”

The Kid clapped great Mexican spurs to the sides of his horse and the animal leaped forward in pursuit of Tonda. She had fully a half mile start and, not realizing the danger, naturally expecting that the horsemen were Indians, she did not urge Brown Eyes. As a result the

Kid gained, and in a short time was within pistol shot. Tonda thought it strange that the horseman pursued her, and was in mind to check Brown Eyes, so that she might see whom it was. Brown Eyes whinnied and increased her speed, whereat Tonda looked back and saw the man distinctly: that he was a white and heavily armed. Suddenly fear seized her, and drawing the quirt she struck Brown Eyes two or three sharp blows.

Again glancing backward she discerned the hard, set face of Billy the Kid. There was no pity in that countenance. Compassion was unknown to him and if he had thoughts they could be summed up tersely in one sentence: that here was an Indian no better than a dog and that both Indian and pony must be killed. Even as he thought the revolver spat out its ball and had not Brown Eyes run somewhat unevenly it had found its mark. The woman again lashed the horse. Brown Eyes gathered herself for a race the like of which she had never run before. For the moment Billy the Kid was left behind. The trail was now slightly snow-covered, but it was hard and straight. Brown Eyes knew it and the horse thief did not. Once or twice his horse stumbled and swerved. Again the red flame shot out, and this time the ball passed through the folds of her deer-skin dress. She screamed aloud; the wind favored her and the piercing cry reached Two Bears, now almost in sight. Hearing the shooting, recognizing the voice of his daughter, he too lashed his steed and drawing his Winchester shot into the air. She instantly divined that help was at hand, and her heart took courage. Billy the Kid also heard the shot and wondered. If other Indians were coming, he should ride back and notify Exelby. If it was a single Indian and he stopped to fight him, the first Indian being unarmed would not stop, but continue on his way to camp and

carry the news. He must act quickly. Again the cruel spurs were applied and the horse he rode bounded forward like the wind; then he shot. Brown Eyes was struck, but dashed on with accelerated speed for a hundred yards, stumbled and fell, Tonda springing clear as the animal went down. At this moment Two Bears loomed up in the gray of the fast settling night and, taking in the situation at a glance, fired upon Billy the Kid. Tonda ran as fast as she could toward her father, calling to him meanwhile. He told her to run on to the village, that he would stand off the assassin, whoever he was.

Accustomed to arms, Billy the Kid at once knew from the report that Two Bears had a Winchester instead of a Colt. He stopped his horse, drew his own Winchester and fired at the advancing Indian. Two Bears was about a hundred yards distant and upon the shot his horse fell, instantly killed. The Indian leaped up, got behind the fallen animal, and returned the fire.

Billy the Kid knew that the Indian was under good cover, that he could not charge him without being killed himself or at least losing his horse. He was more than a mile and a half from Exelby. Nothing remained but to return, and cursing his luck he wheeled about and rode back rapidly. Two Bears fired three more shots, each without effect.

Tonda ran as fast as she could toward home. In spite of her best efforts she was about fifty minutes in reaching the village. Two Bears being past middle age and accustomed to the saddle was not able to overtake his daughter, although he arrived some moments later.

Billy the Kid reported to Exelby. The robbers conferred hastily and concluded that they must either act quickly or abandon the plan. Exelby abruptly announced his decision.

“Le Moyne and Richards kin take keer of themselves an’ go to the devil. We kin whip them Injuns if we hurry. The main pony herd is a mile an’ a half west of the village an’ there is sand-hills between them horses an’ the village. We will ride straight west to the herd, cut out a thousand ponies an’ move straight south to Julesburg.”* The others all agreed, tightened their saddle girths, hitched their Colts more to the front, passed Winchesters across their thighs, and thus made ready for instant action. Then the whole cavalcade moved westward at a sharp trot.

Meanwhile Tonda, unnerved by her experiences, exhausted by the running, staggered into the first tipi crying that her father was fighting with some unknown white man who had shot at her and killed Brown Eyes. There happened to be a number of persons about this lodge.

“Run and tell the people,” cried Tonda, and she sank upon a pile of robes. Immediately there was wild excitement. Two old women cared for Tonda, while a dozen men, boys, and young squaws rushed about the nearest lodges crying the news. Self-appointed criers multiplied rapidly and in ten minutes three hundred persons knew that something unusual had happened. Some ran after horses, all the men seized guns — not the arms used in buffalo hunting, but their best rifles — and in a very short time a string of mounted men poured out of the village. The foremost met Two Bears, got information from him in a few broken, breathless sentences, and urged their horses on toward the draw.

Two Bears, once safely in the village, threw himself upon the ground to recover his breath. Presently some

* In this story Julesburg and Hays City are made to appear farther north than they really were.

one brought a horse and he mounted and ran the animal to the center of the village. Here he told the story briefly.

"Every man arm and mount," shouted Rain-in-the-Face. "Some go to the pony herd and watch it on all sides: others scout and trail."

"Yes," roared Richards in a voice that penetrated far and near. "I think the horse-thieves are coming. Keep in parties of thirty or forty and ride wherever there is shooting."

Women began to cry and moan, as they always do when the men are going into action. An old man, who was unable to fight, but who had been a famous warrior twenty years previous, volunteered to ride out to the agency and tell Billy. There was hubbub and confusion, and steeds galloped here and there and men shouted orders to each other.

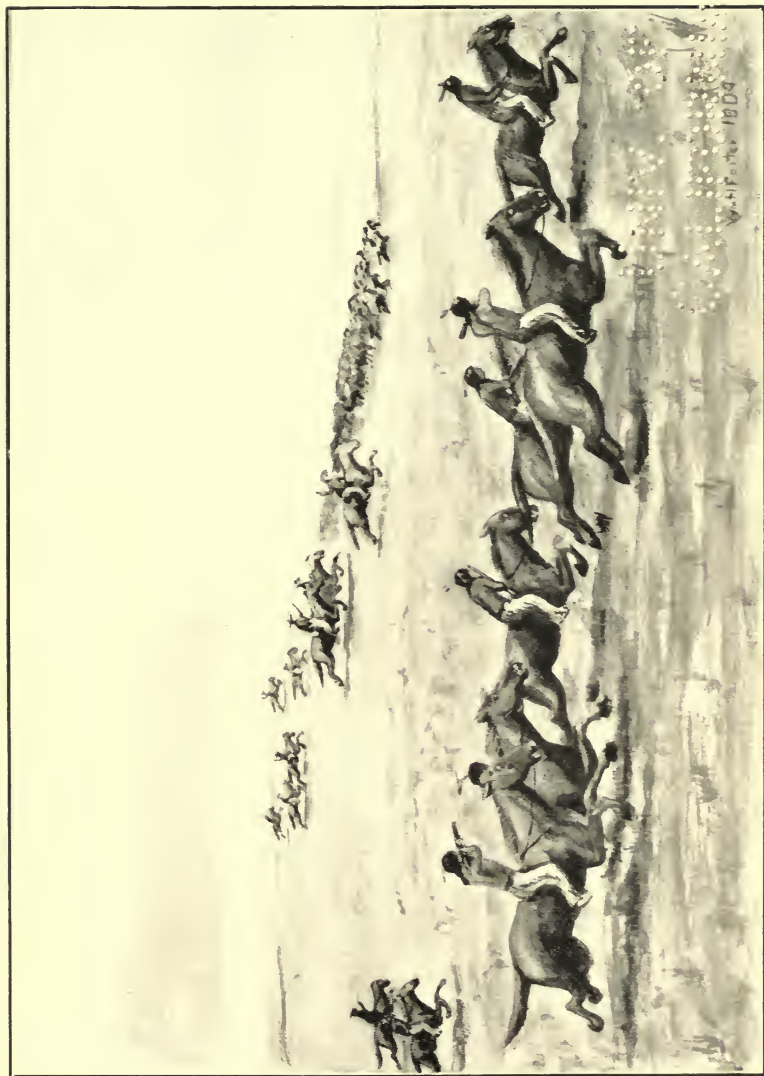
XII.

DEFEAT OF THE HORSE-THIEVES.

The outlaws reached the head of the draw. Spotted Eagle, in a dazed condition, yet recognizing the sound of hoofs, crawled out of the lodge and, standing unsteadily, leaned upon his rifle for support. In a moment the Whites were upon him, and when the foremost passed there was a sudden flash. Spotted Eagle fell, shot through the head. The horses ran fast and the outlaws pushed on to the pony herd. The old Indian who had offered to notify O'Donnell heard them coming, dismounted, and covered the head of his animal. The robbers passed just out of sight to the north and the aged warrior was saved. He immediately mounted, ran his horse to the agency, and acquainted O'Donnell with the facts.

By the time Exelby reached the main body of the herd perhaps forty Indians had mounted. There were difficulties and delays, for the night was stormy and the herd had split into small groups and sought more sheltered spots among the sand-hills. Not a few mustangs were under the banks of the river, where further protection was afforded. Not only did the Indians have trouble in catching their horses in the darkness, but it was impossible for them to find their favorite mounts — the war ponies. Therefore each man leaped upon the first animal he caught.

Exelby rode in advance, the others strung out on either side, the whole covering two or three hundred yards. Driving before them a small bunch of eight or ten ponies they crossed some sand-hills and picked up fifty or sixty more. A dozen mounted Indians appeared dimly sil-



THE SIOUX AND THE HORSE THIEVES.

V. H. W. 1809

houetted in the darkness. The outlaws checked their steeds, fired upon the Sioux, killing one and wounding another. The Indians at once fell back to await reinforcements.

"We kin keep 'em back," shouted Exelby. "Save yer horses." There was a note of triumph in his voice.

They came upon the flat bordering the Niobrara river. Here were thickets of wild plum trees. A few Indian guards, apprehending from the sound that the road agents were in force, fired ineffectual shots and retreated down stream toward the village.

"They ain't worth followin'," cried Billy the Kid. In the plum thickets two or three hundred more ponies were collected.

"Where's the ford?" asked one, as the horses paused on the bank. There was a small, light man named Campbell among the thieves. His horse was large and strong.

"Find the ford, Campbell," ordered Exelby. Campbell rode down the sloping bank, entered the water, his horse swimming easily.

"It's deep," he shouted. "I don't want no fish," and the rest laughed.

"Try up and down." Campbell rode up the bank and Billy the Kid proceeded down stream for several hundred yards. Both entered the water frequently, but there was no ford. Meanwhile the ponies were held in check by outriders on either flank and the rear guards. Unless urged they would not take to the water.

"We kin swim ef we has to," said Exelby, "but it won't hurt to wait a leetle while." The only cautious outlaw of the lot remarked: "Them Injuns is gatherin'."

"They can't do nothin'," grunted Exelby. Meanwhile Billy and Campbell searched still farther. Twenty or thirty Indians had gathered on the opposite side of the

river and opened a fire that was more galling to their own ponies than to the horse-thieves.

“Don’t shoot, boys,” cried Exelby, “fur these here ponies will stampede.”

During the halt, Richards arrived in the rear and, having heard Exelby’s comments, rode rapidly down the river, resolved to attempt a stratagem.

There was a ford a quarter of a mile up, but it was rather narrow and somewhat hidden by high banks. A good ford existed a half-mile below the first tipis. If the outlaws crossed there, the Indians might be in sufficient force to hold them in check. Richards galloped his horse thither as hard as he could, in the meantime telling an Indian whom he met to run his horse ahead and tell the women and children to abandon that end of the village, and for unmounted men — of whom there were great numbers in the camp — to guard the ford.

Billy the Kid was some hundred yards below working his way along carefully and trying the water every rod or two. Placing himself in a favorable position, but not as far down as the ford, Richards shouted with all his might:

“Hyar’s the ford.” Billy the Kid supposed that it was one of their own men, so he made no reply, and Exelby and the rest immediately moved the ponies down the bank.

“Ther’ ain’t no ford here,” shouted Billy the Kid as they came up.

“Who was it hollered from below you there was a ford?” demanded Exelby.

“I don’t know. Who did you send down thar?”

“I didn’t send no one. Are we all here?” demanded Exelby. Each man called out his name except Campbell, who they knew was up the stream.

"Swim the horses," urged Billy the Kid.

Exelby shouted, "Come back, Campbell," and he replied "All right." It required some urging to make the animals take the water, but the thieves succeeded in getting them across in ten or fifteen minutes.

By this time the Indian fire had some effect, for at least a hundred had congregated near the spot. The thieves returned it and killed and wounded a number of ponies and two Sioux. Two thieves had their horses shot and Campbell was slightly wounded. Upon the opposite bank climbed the dripping animals.

Some delay was caused in obtaining horses for the dismounted men, and the Sioux rejoiced. Well knew they that each delay rendered more probable two important things — the return of their ponies and *revenge*.

"Every man push 'em through hard," shouted Exelby. Spurs were applied, the thieves' mounts dashed forward, but the ponies ran slowly. Whether they recognized that they were leaving their rightful owners it is impossible to say. Certain it is that they hesitated and when the outriders applied whips they flourished heels and squealed, for many of them were unbroken. The banks on the south side were more uneven and several gullies entered the stream. Here Exelby added more ponies and soon had a total of about six hundred. Every little while a tongue of flame shot out from behind a clump or bank, and bullets whistled about the outlaws. Billy the Kid, Exelby, and Campbell, being magnificent shots, fired at every flash and did some execution.

While this was happening, back through the village galloped the Indians who had gone to the draw. They heard the shooting as they advanced.

"Spotted Eagle shot through the head," they cried as they passed lodges. Women and children yelled.

Angry warriors poured out of the tipis and followed the horsemen as fast as they could on foot. The whole village was stirred even as a hornet's nest is aroused when it has been struck. Young men who had never been at war sang their medicine songs and ran forward to join in the fray.

Richards met the advancing stream, his horse sweating; for he had galloped here and there incessantly since this trouble began.

"They are heading for Julesburg," he cried. "Ride in front of the herd if you can."

Ponies were lashed and warriors whooped as they endeavored to out-travel and swing the herd, but they failed. Fifty Indians were now behind or on either side of the outlaws.

"Drive 'em back," ordered Exelby, cursing frightfully. Turning about, dropping the bridles over the saddle horns, ten desperate men, a six-shooter in each hand, charged back. The Indians retreated before that fierce advance. One, two, three went down. Two more outlaws lost horses and one robber was killed. Billy the Kid took up one dismounted man and Campbell the other. "We got to git ponies fur these fellers," shouted the Kid. Exelby passed the word, for it would never do to wind two of their best steeds carrying double. A delay of twenty minutes was occasioned before saddles could be transferred and the men mounted. Indians gathered and war cries arose from all sides.

"Charge again," shouted the leader, and it was done. The natives scattered and only one was hurt.

"We ain't goin' to make head-way ef this keeps up," commented the Kid, riding alongside of Exelby. "Wish I had got that first damned Injun."

Word was passed along to move straight on and not

fire unless charged. In the rear followed the Sioux. Rain-in-the-Face deputized several of his most faithful warriors to notify all to keep behind at some distance and to follow until daylight. "We have lost several brave men. Let us await sunrise." So they settled down to a long and determined chase. From time to time Indians came up and joined the pursuers. As daylight broke the forces were fourteen of the gang and sixty Indians — for some had been unable to catch up and several had dropped behind or abandoned the chase.

They were forty miles from the village. Rain-in-the-Face said to his friends as they gathered about him:

"Our hearts got to be strong. They cannot make Julesburg short of two days. Our people are moving and by evening we shall have a good force. Keep right after them until help comes."

There were four inches of snow and the sun came out. Richards had gone to a lodge, painted and put on Indian costume. About midnight he got a fresh horse and with three Indians took up the trail. He carried his long-range buffalo gun and one Sioux had a heavy Sharpe's rifle. These would outshoot the Winchesters, but were muzzle loaders.

During the night and early morning fully five hundred men mounted and followed. At eight o'clock a dozen of these arrived and every hour afterward through the day recruits entered upon the scene. The Indians had little food with them, but were too angry to think of hunger. With their flint and steel a fire could be built in some thicket and horse meat cooked; but all of them were able to continue through the day without food.

Exelby looked about him and swore. The Indians he could defeat, but they would not stand and take punishment.

They continued, riding doggedly at a walk. Presently a splendid natural position came in sight, a small basin encircled by sand-hills and the whole about three hundred yards in diameter. Exelby halted the herd to let the ponies rest, and viewed the situation. The outlaws took up positions within supporting distance on the crests of hills. The Indians rode around at the base just out of rifle shot and completely surrounded Exelby's men.

"This ain't nothin'," he remarked. "Their line is thin an' we kin easy cut through." They all dismounted to relieve their horses, and ate some jerked beef; smoked their pipes, joked upon the situation, and bantered the Sioux. The latter also dismounted. For two hours the animals rested.

"We ain't got enuf, but if we gits the six hundred through all right we ought to git ten döllars a head fur 'em.

It was past eight o'clock and growing colder when they started.

"When they start try to cut out part of the ponies," said Gopher. The Indians divided into two flanking parties and rushed on the wings of the wind, waving blankets and yelling shrilly as the herd came over the hills. Of course the outlaws opened fire, but they saw only ponies' sides and human heads and feet, for the warriors hung down on the opposite sides of their steeds. It was a spirited action, a picturesque sight. A hundred ponies were stampeded and started homeward at a good gait; four outlaws lost horses, an Indian was killed, one wounded, and several dismounted. The Kid and Exelby, with three others, charged the dismounted braves. Then a heroic thing occurred. A dismounted and wounded Sioux, seeing that his hour had come, began his death-chant of defiance. In plain sight of all he lay, and even



THE DEATH OF JACK.

the toughened desperadoes marveled. Shooting stopped and everybody listened.

“ I fall, but my body shall lie
 A name for the gallant to tell,
 The gods shall repeat it on high
 And young men grow brave at the sound.”*

“ Enuf of this. Go shoot him, Jack.” To a man lying down there is something terrible in the charge of mounted men. They seem unnaturally large, now sinking down, now rising to great heights on the crest of the jump.

Jack and Campbell rode toward him. The Sioux was dying but he feared not. Gathering himself upon his knees in a last effort, even as his voice quavered he steadied himself, fired and killed Jack. Immediately Campbell was upon him, shot him, and returned to his fellows.

The natives continued yelling, shooting, and riding about. Exelby and the gang worked hard for half an hour before they secured suitable mounts.

At last they started again, the Indians following as usual. At nine o'clock came Richards and his friends with the long-range guns. They had ridden without stop, their horses were tired, but the disguised squaw-man was anxious to fight. They pushed ahead, got within range and shot carefully. An outlaw fell, instantly killed, and one more thief had his horse shot.

“ To Hell with these Injuns!” cried the infuriated leader. “ Two of you fellers go on with the herd. Keep right on and don't stop. We'll hold 'em back.” They wheeled, scattered out into a long line.

“ Cheer, boys!” Ten high-pitched voices rent the air, a look of joy came into Exelby's face, for the Sioux fled.

* Schoolcraft.

Children of nature learn quickly, and the Sioux were now schooled and knew how to fight these men. Remember that Ogalalas in point of horsemanship and in the art of dodging had no equals.

Those on the freshest horses fled directly homeward in evident panic. After them thundered the Whites, breathing slaughter, determined on extermination. On and on raced the Sioux. So well did they dodge, so quickly threw they themselves on this side or on that side of their steeds that but one man was killed. Meanwhile Rain-in-the-Face, Gopher, Richards, and a cloud of warriors dashed after the herd. Exelby had run a full mile before he pulled up. The other outlaws also stopped and, looking back, saw that they were outwitted. Their horses were breathing hard, but they ran them back toward the herd.

When Exelby pursued, Rain-in-the-Face cried, "Here is our chance. Whip, whip! We can rest after we get the ponies." About the herd they circled. The ponies knew their owners and ran away from the two guards. These men, with white, set faces, hurling imprecations upon the Sioux, charged in vain. In the twinkling of an eye they were overpowered, shot through and through. The herd was split up and the Indians quickly seized their favorite ponies and mounted them as Exelby and his followers returned to save the day. Like a flock of blackbirds the Sioux charged them; then scattering, as the Whites shot, even as those birds fly away upon alarm. The ponies were dashing homeward and nothing could stop them.

"It's too late," cried Billy the Kid, his voice choked by anger. "We got to save ourselves."

"Yep," said Exelby, as he glanced back and saw ten more horsemen coming in the distance. "I never thought them Injuns could do it. I lost five good men."

The ten remaining outlaws rode slowly southward, abandoning the herd. Well knew they that before they could recover it they must sustain more losses. Disappointed and filled with impotent wrath they wheeled and fired whenever the Sioux came within range. In an hour, the Indians, growing bolder, advanced within rifle shot. Richards and his friends succeeded in wounding two more outlaws, and shot a horse.

"Boys, I can't keep up," said Campbell, the more seriously wounded man.

"You got to pass in yer checks, pard," volunteered the leader. "Git behind the dead horse and nail some of 'em before yer goes under."

Exelby handed him a dead man's Winchester and belt. The outlaws paused long enough to shake hands.

"Here, lead my horse, Kid; you may need him. Good-bye, fellers." Among his sins cowardice had no part and the outlaw walked back to the fallen horse and, taking his position behind the animal, placed one Winchester on the ground, saw that both magazines were full, and waited the attack. The Indians paused.

"Take him alive if you can," said Rain-in-the-Face. "He shan't follow the others."

"Aow," grunted Gopher. "We got our ponies and six of the outlaws. No use to follow the others and lose more warriors."

More Indians came up and in an hour a hundred of them had gathered just beyond rifle shot of the wounded man. Meanwhile he had chopped through the thin frost crust with his bowie knife, hoping to make a pit in which he might withstand attacks from the rear, but he was weak and soon desisted. Richards rode to the top of a commanding sand-hill and called upon him to surrender. He replied with a shot. Again Richards told him to

surrender or be killed. Campbell would not surrender and did not answer Richards. Lying there on the ground absolutely fearless, aching for revenge, caring not for the future, he had few thoughts of the past. A derelict from the East, he had committed crimes in many States. His end was near. He realized that Hell yawned to receive him and cursed accordingly.

"Give me the Sharpes," said Rain-in-the-Face. He dismounted, rested the barrel across his pony's back and shot carefully. Campbell leaped backwards and lay still. Then the Sioux went down and examined him, took his arms, his coat, and what odds and ends were in his pockets. With ceremony they scalped him and then rode slowly homeward, leaving the body lying out there on the plain. The winds eddied the snow about and drifted a white shroud over Campbell's remains.

First they congratulated themselves and then rested, for men and beasts were tired. Now that the excitement was over hunger began to be felt. They would ride on leisurely and could not hope to reach the village short of forty hours. They gathered brush in ravines, built fires, and roasted horse flesh. About thickets and in hollows the ponies ranged, pawed aside the snow, and cropped grass and bush tops. Having appeased their appetites they continued the homeward march. They had proceeded about ten miles leisurely, recruited from time to time as they met riders from the village, when appeared O'Donnell, Charlie, and two agency employees, all heavily armed.

"We come as hard as we could," he said, as he reached Rain-in-the-Face. "What luck? Did youse git 'em all back?"

"Aow. We lost about fifteen warriors killed and

wounded. We shot six horse thieves — killed them and got their scalps."

"The devil!" said Billy to Charlie. "Oi think it'll be some toime afore Julesburg sinds Doc out agin."

"They's tired," said Richards. "But we hold a pow-wow before we sleep. They're all stirred up and mad. You better hear the talk." And so they did; talking of Le Moyne and the thieves and of Tonda's escape until every one became excited and it was proposed to raid Julesburg. Then O'Donnell got up and gave good advice:

"Be aisy, boys. Youse can take Julesburg, but youse will have many min sint ter the happy huntin' grounds. Oi have sint word ter Washington over the lightnin' wire about Exelby, and the Great Father will sind soldiers after him."

They took turns keeping up the fires, got what rest they could that night, and reached the village at dark the next evening.

O'Donnell wrote a detailed report of the events and forwarded it to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. Nothing was done, and the Sioux were left to work out their own salvation.

XIII.

TONDA AND STRONG HEART.

The two old women did what they could for Tonda. They bathed her face and made strong coffee for her to drink. A boy was sent running to find Omaha, and when she came upon the scene the meeting between mother and daughter was quite affecting. An old horse was brought presently, and Tonda taken home.

Two Bears did not join the pursuit. He, Omaha, and Tonda remained in their lodge until the next morning, when the girl had somewhat recovered. Her face was scratched and swollen, but otherwise she was practically uninjured. A white woman would doubtless have suffered nervous prostration, but such ailments are confined to those who lead artificial lives, and is unknown among dwellers in the open air. The family held a long consultation and Tonda told them everything.

“Now,” said Two Bears, “Spotted Eagle has been killed by the thieves. The Great Spirit has seen fit to remove him out of our way. Le Moyne is gone no one knows where. I have a suspicion that we shall not see his evil face again.

“Now, my daughter, you surely should have learned a lesson. If any more young men play the flute or come about here, have nothing to do with them. Strong Heart is the only one worthy of you. Suppose you had not been strong, Spotted Eagle might have carried you off. Then, according to old custom, you would be his squaw and have to live in the tipi of one you did not like.”

That was all he said — he did not deliver a loud scolding as would a white father. But it sunk into her heart.

While she was in this state of suspense, the thought of her friend, Strong Heart, came to her. Should she go to his wigwam to see how he fared during all the excitement and turmoil? Did he need her? It was nearly eleven o'clock, and high time that she helped Omaha prepare dinner, but she could not resist the temptation of paying another visit to him.

Strong Heart would have gone with the others had not his mother and Wadaha restrained him by main force.

"You cannot do anything, and you are not able to ride that far."

They plainly heard the shooting and the shrill Indian cries. As the noise moved southward it became fainter and fainter until it passed away. Toward midnight a dismounted Indian came into camp and reported the events. No more news was brought until the warriors returned. Wadaha remained with Strong Heart. Rumors had reached them as to Tonda and Two Bears, but they were in ignorance concerning Spotted Eagle.

Reaching the tipi, Tonda entered noiselessly, for her moccasined feet made no sound upon the hard, packed dirt floor of the lodge. Her breath came quick as she stepped to the side of the room where he lay. It was dimly lighted, and no one was there but the wounded man. Strong Heart was conscious of a presence near him, and called out:

"Who is there?"

"It is I — Tonda," she replied.

"What brings you here?" he asked. She knelt by his side, and told him briefly the story of last evening's doings. When she had finished, he seemed more impressed by the part that Spotted Eagle had played than by the horse-thieves' raid — of which he had already heard.

"Tonda, surely you must be watched by Waukantanka. No other girl could have escaped him. He was bad and Waukasica has him now. Why did you go to meet such a man? If he lived and had made you a squaw I would kill him." Some of Strong Heart's old fire returned. He raised himself a little.

"You are a fine girl and I like you. But my heart is sore because you went out to see this man. Had I been well I had played the flute at your door." She was pleased at this.

"So Le Moyne brought the word? They say he is missing now. We shall hear more when the warriors return." Tonda told him what she knew of Le Moyne.

"You have been away at school too long. You think the Whites' thoughts and act like them. Do not do it. Be a worthy daughter of a noble father. Do any people know of this?"

"No one but you; Le Moyne and my parents know that he tried to make me his squaw."

"That is good. I shall tell no man." Nevertheless the secret leaked out through Rain-in-the-Face's speech in Council the next day. They talked for an hour, and Tonda went to her own tipi.

Nothing of consequence occurred in the village during the next two weeks. Cold weather came and the Niobrara froze. Several times Tonda went to see Strong Heart, and on one occasion met Richards there. He said that it would not be necessary for him to make another visit to Strong Heart, as he was now nearly well. Then he added, with a smile and a chuckle, "I reckon, young girl, that your friend kin now go to your own lodge to see you. He is able to get about almost as well as you kin. I suppose you are very glad that your duties are about ended."

At this he burst out laughing, and started for another part of the village to see how some of those wounded in the fight with the horse-thieves were getting on.

"It is good weather, let us walk forth," said Strong Heart, and they passed slowly through the village.

They continued to her lodge. People greeted him with glad shouts, for he was very popular. Omaha and Two Bears shook his hand, told him that he was fully welcome and set meat before him.

The Indian is, as a rule, very unceremonious in love matters, although there are some exceptions. He joins in ceremonial dances before he goes to war, and the medicine-man carries on incantations and other orgies, but when an Indian deals with matters which pertain to his heart, and selects a bride, he wastes but few words and little time. She knew of the white man's love; he did not. Affection had he in a marked degree—more than some highly cultured Whites who say that they love but soon divorce. There was no love scene such as we have, yet there was great and deep affection.

"I have come," said Strong Heart, "to ask Two Bears and Omaha for Tonda to be my squaw. She shall share all that I have and I promise to keep her well and to be a good husband to her."

"Aow," grunted the parents in unison. Two Bears spoke:

"What does my daughter say?" Tonda went over to where Strong Heart was and sat down beside him. He put his arm around her and raised his right arm. "Waukan-tanka sees that I promise to be a good husband to her. There is none better or prettier than she in the tribe."

"She is a good girl," said the father. "We know that you will treat her well."

Two Bears and Omaha were well pleased. It was quite

a "catch," and now that Tonda's future was assured the old Indians were given to song and mirth. The host could not contain himself. Bidding Strong Heart to remain, he went out, found Rain-in-the-Face and told him. He also was pleased and brought his wife and Wadaha down to offer congratulations. All afternoon the good friends chatted, ate, and smoked.

"Mother," said Tonda the next morning, "we must name my little sister. She is too big to go longer without a name."

"I think so, child; go tell our friends, oh husband."

Two Bears, therefore, called in the members of the tribe to assist, and that afternoon they named her with due ceremony. Wadaha was present, smoking his great medicine pipe and singing softly to himself a chant composed in honor of the lives of little children. Then he passed the pipe about and each one of the men present blew a cloud of smoke over the head of the little one and then above to the Great Spirit. This done, Two Bears spoke.

"All great men and good women were once children. Who knows but that our daughter may some day be the wife of a great chief. She must have a proper name." Then they all offered suggestions, but no one thought of an appropriate name.

"Friends," said Tonda, "when I was in school and found that book out of which I have read you so many stories, I found a description of a beautiful girl who lived far east of us on the Father of Waters. She was the pride of her people. Her father made arrows; great medicine arrows they were and any man who carried one was not harmed when he went to war. There was a strong and brave man named Hiawatha who courted this girl and was accepted. Her name was Minnehaha, because she lived near the falls, and in these falls the spirit of the Father of

Waters laughed and sported and made noise both winter and summer."

"Aow," grunted Wadaha. "That is good medicine."

"Aow," echoed the parents. "Minnehaha is a good name."

"People, listen," remarked Two Bears. "It is a good name. It came from a white man's book and I have little faith in white men, but I think that this white man had a good heart. I wish some of his kind lived out here." Then Wawa, as leader of the old women, rose in her place and spoke:

"The women own the land and we have authority in the village and all the girls obey us. My child, Minnehaha, take this name which your sister Tonda has given you and be good. When you are grown up, and if you are true to the Sioux nation, you will have a voice in the council. I have finished." Tonda got up and kissed her sister.

"Now, my little one, you are named after a woman whom many people know about, and I am sure that we shall all be proud to call you Minnehaha.

Gopher, quietly sitting in the corner, was evidently prepared to entertain them. Knowing well how to loosen the old man's tongue, Two Bears handed him his pipe, and after he had smoked, he related one of his long folk stories, but as a recital of it required more than an hour, we shall not repeat it here. When he had finished Two Bears changed the subject and spoke at some length:

"Now that we are here, I want to tell you something that I have kept to myself for two moons, but you ought to know now. A Sioux girl who was in school with Tonda wrote her that the Whites have found yellow metal three or four days' journey north of our reservation. I know from what people told me when I was a young man and

from tales of other tribes, that when this metal was discovered in the mountains by the great salt-water of the West, many white men went across the Plains, and our people suffered as you all know. But the Indians in the mountains were more persecuted and at this day some of them only exist by digging roots and trapping small game. Now, if the Whites are not stopped by Washington, they will pour through our country, kill the buffalo, and seize our lands. What do they want that yellow metal for? It is not as good as red pipe stone. Why should they hunger and thirst and become weary in search of it? White men are fools."

"Two Bears, you speak wisely," said Rain-in-the-Face. Much evil will come upon us if the Whites pour through our country into the Black Hills. We must notify Washington to send soldiers and drive them out."

While they yet conversed their thoughts were turned into an entirely different channel. A horseman approached the tipi. Omaha looked out and cried: "Here comes Billy." The men went outside, shook hands with the agent and heard from him some interesting information.

"Oi has some news for youse. Oi jist got a letter from that ould gintleman who sint Christmas presents ter youse Injuns last year. He's comin' in a few days with a whole wagon-load of stuff shipped from friends in the East who love the poor Injun. He wants ter make a spach ter youse fellers before he distributes the presents. Oi'll give him the warehouse an' he can stand on a barrel an' give you the usual spach about bein' good Injuns an' so on. Youse tell your friends ter come on Christmas mornin, an' hear the wards an' recave the gifts dirict from Santa Claus."

"Who is Santa Claus?" asked the Indians of Tonda after he had gone. When she told them, Omaha remarked: "The Whites have strange ways."

The village was interested, and more Indians visited the agency Christmas morning than the warehouse could accommodate. The kind old gentleman (sent out by a certain society) was present, and he opened his various boxes and barrels. They had been hauled from the railway at no little expense. Judging from his experience of the former year — and that was the first year that donations of old clothes and odds and ends had been made the Sioux — he was astonished to note with what avidity the chiefs seized upon a few discarded silk hats included in the former consignment. He did not know that Red Cloud, five years previously, had been East, and observed that men in authority wore silk hats. This time he came fortified. It had been announced from pulpit and press that he would visit the famous fighting Sioux and distribute the Christmas gifts. The incident of the silk hats was not forgotten, and he brought with him a beautiful collection of various sizes and kinds from the vintage of the fifties down to 1871. There were three-score of them. Richards, O'Donnell, Charlie, Henry, and Tonda, and one or two others present who knew something regarding the Whites were suddenly seized by paroxysms of violent and uncontrollable mirth when they beheld dignified Two Bears, grave Rain-in-the-Face, sedate Wadaha and other prominent men, each with a silk hat upon his head, riding in due solemnity toward the village. Silk hats were not all, for in the early days all sorts of useless and senseless articles — although the gifts were prompted by the best motives and kindest feelings — were sent out and given to the “heathen” in America.

When all was in readiness, O'Donnell introduced the benevolent gentleman, and Richards kindly volunteered to act as interpreter. After he had spoken an hour, the Indians got impatient. They had not come to be lectured.

One and a half hours passed, and general restlessness prevailed. Billy himself was bored and longed to be back in his office, pipe in mouth. The gentleman could not resist the opportunity of impressing his views on the natives. Finally old Two Bears said something out loud. The other Indians laughed. Turning to the interpreter the gentleman asked:

“What did my good friend say?”

“Wall,” said Richards, as he hemmed and hawed and tried to evade the question, “he jist spoke like Injuns often do.”

“Yes,” persisted the speaker; “but I want to know what he said.”

“Well, Mister, if you must know, Two Bears said, ‘Give us more presents and less talk.’”

XIV.

THE MARRIAGE OF TONDA.

Three weeks of very cold weather ensued. Indeed, it was daily below zero, and the Indians kept within doors. They had plenty of meat, but as soon as the January thaw came they all visited O'Donnell and drew rations.

Strong Heart was nearly well. He came down to see Tonda.

"Richards has been very good to you," said Tonda. "What do you intend to give him for his services?"

"Father gave me a good horse for him, and the next time that I see him, I will go to the corral and present him with the pony. That will be pay enough."

Tonda thought, as she looked across the stream at the fringe of timber upon the other side, of the young man who sat beside her, and wondered whether he would propose a date for their marriage. As he would soon be entirely well, this important matter should surely be settled. He sat in moody silence, blowing great clouds of blue smoke from his catlinite pipe, high above his head. He, too, was thinking of the same subject as the Indian maiden beside him, and wondering if she would consent to have it announced to the tribe that they were to put up their own tipi.

When two young people are thinking of the same thing, especially if the matter lies near their hearts, it does not take them long to come to an understanding. Indians, especially, are the most abrupt and decisive people in the world. There are few long courtships among them. Seldom, if ever, does one occur. Often young people are married within two weeks after their first meeting.

“Tonda,” said Strong Heart, at last breaking the silence, “I cannot wait much longer for you to become my squaw. The hours of each day drag by their tedious length. I sit and smoke, and try to amuse myself when you are away, but I fail. As our young men say, my heart is gone, for you have stolen it. If I tried hard I might live without you. But I don’t want to. My heart beats quicker when I see you coming.

“My totem’s spirit says, ‘there is the squaw for you, Strong Heart. She is finer than any one in the tribe.’ So, Tonda, let us put up our tipi in a few days. Why wait? I am well enough to work now. Tell your father that we are going to set up our own home; think how happy we shall be.”

“Yes, I will,” replied Tonda. “I have been thinking of this matter also, and I, too, am lonely when not with you. I should not care to put off our tipi-building longer than six or seven days.”

The young girl blushed as she said this, but looking up into the noble face of her future husband, regained her composure and confidence, and let him embrace and caress her as lovers are wont to do.

“It is winter,” he said, “but there is sunshine in our hearts. It will be warm for at least a week and we can build the lodge in that time.”

“Yes,” she murmured. “Go and tell your father. I shall tell my people.”

The week passed very rapidly, the time being spent by each in getting together the necessary articles with which to furnish the home. Strong Heart brought Tonda some bear and buffalo robes. They were partially tanned, but needed some additional work before they were in a fit condition for service. These, with the help of her mother, she decorated here and there with strings of beads, and

fringed with red flannel. In this way she adapted them for use as coverings for their couch and as seats for visitors. The large buffalo robes, which were to be used in building the tipi, were presented by Two Bears. Upon them Strong Heart, with Tonda's aid, drew pictures to illustrate to passers-by his exploits with the Crows and his success as a hunter.

He drew a rude scene, wherein was depicted a young man and maiden in a cave, furiously assaulted by many painted warriors, wearing upon their heads feathers, and upon their bodies marks denoting that they belonged to the Crows.

A second covering showed a rush of savages up a narrow ledge, where the young man, standing just outside the entrance of his retreat, killed many of his enemies. The next portrayed a heap of enemies lying upon the rocky ledge, the blood pouring from many bullet-holes, and coloring the stones around with a crimson hue.

In the pictograph that he considered his "master-piece," he, wounded, was supported by Tonda; the blood gushing from his wounds had stained the girl's dress. In the last scene the Sioux horsemen are charging up the rocky defile, and the enemies are being hotly pursued.

Thus was the dwelling of Strong Heart and Tonda decorated, and right beautiful did it look to Indian eyes. The warrior who was entitled to place these upon his tipi told no lie, and did not boast unduly as he thus vaunted his bravery. He had earned the right to so express his achievement. When he had finished his work and stood admiring its decorations, he said to Tonda:

"When we see soldiers marching or riding, there is a head man among them and he wears gilt braid on his shoulders showing that he is a great man and has seen hard service. The Indians and the Whites who come to

the village will see that I also am a great man and have vanquished my enemies.”

At last there broke the morning of a day long to be remembered by Tonda and Strong Heart. They were above the average intelligence of their tribe, and knew well the serious nature of the step they were taking. They did not enter upon it with the carelessness Indians usually display at such a time. The ceremony was very short and simple. Strong Heart and his mother had selected one of the most beautiful sites in the village for the tipi, had planted the center pole and stretched the others around it, braced them at the top, and then had taken the center pole away. They had stretched the buffalo hides tightly around the frame-work, with their decorations outward, where all could see them. This was all that they had done, save to pile the blankets and gifts in a promiscuous heap in the center of the lodge.

The sun had not been up long before every one was astir in the entire camp, and, as soon as the morning meal had been eaten, there stepped from the lodge of Rain-in-the-Face a young man, clad in all his finery, who walked, with rapid strides and head erect, to the lodge of his intended bride. He wore in his hair many eagle feathers, and carried in his hand, for good luck, a little medicine-bag filled with strange herbs which Wadaha had given him. This he was to hang high above their heads in the wigwam, and nobody was ever to open it to ascertain what it contained. Reaching the lodge of his loved one, he walked directly to the doorway, and calling to Two Bears, said:

“Father, I have come for your daughter.” Then, turning and peering into the darkness within, said to his sweetheart: “Your husband awaits your coming.”

Half shyly, and not without embarrassment, the maiden advanced, and stood in the entrance a moment before

joining her husband. Her mother came forward also, as did the braves of the family.

“ Good-bye, my dear mother,” said Tonda, tears springing to her eyes for a moment. Regaining her composure, she added: “ May Waukantanka, he who watches over us all, the God of the white man and the God of the Sioux, guard and keep my father and mother, and my sister. Make our home yours, and come to see us often.”

She caught up her little sister, Minnehaha, pressed her to her breast, kissed her; then turning, embraced her mother, her father; then turning to Strong Heart, she said: “ My husband, we will go.”

Strong Heart took her hand, and, leading her out of the entrance, turned to her father and mother, and said:

“ Two Bears, you are my father; Omaha, you are my mother now; Minnehaha, you are my sister.”—and he grasped each hand in turn with a warmth that denoted that the words he spoke were sincere.

“ You have given me your daughter,” he continued, “ and I will be a good husband to her. Remember that Strong Heart is ready to do whatever his squaw’s father and mother may desire, and that when old age shall come upon them, if Waukantanka permits us to live, he will stand by and protect, provide, and love, as long as strength remains in his arm and he has an eye to see. Good-bye, all. Come, Tonda, let us go.”

Turning away, he led her to their new tipi, while the Indians of the village, who had come to escort the couple to their abode, cheered and shouted in honor of the occasion. Some ran forward with little gifts, others wished the couple good luck. Taken all together, the reception was one which few young men and women in the Sioux nation had the honor to receive.

They walked homeward amid the good wishes of the

entire village. The wedding-march was the shouts of the assembled throng; the ceremony was the few words that were spoken at the bride's home, and the hymns sung were the songs in their hearts.

Having led his bride to the lodge, and the ceremony being over, they laid aside their finery and put on their every-day clothes. They set about putting the interior of the lodge in order, and, lighting the fire, made the things present as home-like an appearance as possible.

The days rolled by in perfect happiness, and the young couple spent the next two weeks as men and women spend their honeymoon, whether made man and wife by bishop or joined by mutual consent, as are the children of the forest.

XV.

MINERS ARE DISCOVERED.

It was rumored that a few Rocky Mountain sheep had wintered in the Bad Lands, having come down from the Black Hills. Indians prize the great horns of these animals. This, added to the fact that the sheep are difficult to approach, induced a party of warriors to set out after them.

Rain-in-the-Face gave consent. "It has been a long winter. My young men are restless. Such a trip will do them good," he said.

"Aow," agreed Gopher. "I go also. We need not tell Billy. It is on our own reservation. Can't we travel over the land we own?"

So a party of fifty, well provisioned and armed, left before daylight, passed some miles west of the agency and were unobserved. There was very little snow, and when the Indians halted, the ponies could paw out enough of the long, dry prairie grass to nourish themselves. At this season of the year horses are in poor condition, and the riders, recognizing this, did not urge their steeds, and frequently stopped. "There is no hurry," said Gopher.

In a week they were on the north side of the Bad Lands, seventy-five miles from home. A few lean deer and antelope and numerous prairie chickens kept their larder half filled. For days they searched the hills, gullies, and rocky cliffs, but got only five big-horns. Gopher said that they must do better.

"The people will laugh at us when we return. Let us hobble our horses in that nice valley a mile away, and put

in a whole day at surrounding. If our medicine works we ought to get a dozen that way. Certainly we can't do worse." So they scattered to distant points—some traveling six or seven miles away—and began to work to a common center, making noise meanwhile. The circle was irregular and weak, yet they succeeded in bagging a dozen deer, two or three bears and ten big horns, and held a feast lasting well into the night.

Next morning it was late when they got up and breakfasted. Strong Heart climbed a high butte to view the surrounding country. They saw him run hastily down, and approach, crying: "Two white men mounted are coming this way." Instantly there was surprise and curiosity. What were white men doing on their land? A half dozen warriors seized rifles and started toward the strangers. Other braves went to procure horses. Over rough country they passed for half a mile, then on coming out of a small cañon, found themselves within a hundred yards of two mounted white men, one of whom led a pack mule. These stopped their horses instantly, and Strong Heart called out, "Who are you? What do you want?"

"Go to Hell," cried one of the men. "You can't skeer us."

"You are on our land. You must get off." Both men pulled their Winchesters.

"Don't shoot," yelled Strong Heart, "or you will both be killed"—fair warning he gave them.

"Git out of our way, you red robbers."

"What did they say?" asked Gopher. Strong Heart told him. "Draw guns," commanded Gopher. "If they aim we'll all dodge about. But do not shoot until they do." There was no hesitation on the part of the Whites. Both aimed their guns, and the Indians danced about to avoid being hit. Each rifle was discharged, and Gopher felt the

wind of a ball. One Sioux received a wound in his side, the ball glancing along a rib but not disabling him. Several Indians shot and one of the men fell, instantly killed. The other turned to flee.

“Stop. Throw up your hands!” rang out Strong Heart’s clear voice. Momentarily expecting a bullet through his body the man dropped his gun and obeyed. They advanced, watching him narrowly, ready to shoot.

“Don’t move,” cautioned Strong Heart. The man could not, had he so desired. He was badly frightened, sitting on his horse like a statue, his hands elevated, his eyes set and terror stricken. The Sioux were amused — all Indians like to see a white man afraid — and grinned. Strong Heart seized the bridle, while other natives examined the dead man and took charge of his mule and horse.

“Get off and sit down here, we want to talk. We ain’t going to hurt you.” Greatly relieved at this, he dismounted. About him gathered the Indians. Gopher gravely filled his pipe, lit it, and offered the stranger a peace-smoke. The rest smoked. The man had not spoken; but the sweat stood out on his forehead. Gopher questioned through Strong Heart.

“White man, why did you two fire on us? We did you no harm. You behave as your people always do. Had you got away, the soldiers would come after us when they listened to your story of ‘Lakotas on the war-path.’ What do you here, far from white settlements?”

“I am a miner. George and I were prospecting in the hills. There is a camp ten miles north of here. We left two days ago to prospect, not knowing the country, and got out of the big hills yesterday afternoon. We were about to return when you saw us.”

“How many men are there in the Black Hills?”

“ Oh, three or four hundred. They are after gold, most of them, but some are building saloons, others running boarding-houses.”

“ Are they finding much gold? ”

“ A great deal.”

“ Where do you live? ”

“ I live in New York State and never was here before. If I get back alive I shall stay there. Other people are welcome to the gold. This is too rough a country for me. What are you going to do with me? ”

The Indian translated to his companions. He did not know where New York was, so he said, “ Washington,” for thus they usually designated the far East, in the buffalo days. The Sioux differentiated between the dead man and the living. One was plainly a miner, the other “ looked like a peace-commission man,” as Gopher put it.

“ Tell him,” said Gopher, “ that we are sorry his friend’s heart was bad. This man can go with us. We will take good care of him. He cannot return to his camp.”

The white man seemed satisfied. He did not care to travel alone in an unknown country. Moreover, he found these Indians decent fellows and not the blood-thirsty wretches he had heard them called. They impressed upon him that he was a prisoner, but could do as he pleased.

“ You can’t get away because you don’t know enough,” laughingly said Strong Heart. “ When we get home you can go to the agent, Billy, tell your story, and be sent East.” So they got up and moved over to where their ponies had been left, taking the horses and mule with them. Said the White to Strong Heart.

“ I want to bury my friend.”

“ What shall we do, Gopher? ”

“ Tell him the ground is frozen, and we can’t dig. But I will send warriors back to pile stones on the body; take

the scalp and any trinkets he has. We have not had a white scalp in some years. We killed him in a fair fight. Don't let this man see the scalp. Keep it hidden." Some youths returned and obeyed Gopher's orders. Presently they came back and all set out for home.

The White found his experience novel, and his first night was a sleepless one. But afterward he slept soundly and confidently. Nor did the Sioux lie, for he was well used, conducted safely to camp, and surrendered to Billy as the warriors passed the agency. Billy took the White into his home, questioned him fully, and sent him off on the stage next day.

After the stranger had gone to bed, Billy, Charlie, and Henry gathered in the office and talked far into the night.

"B'ys," said the agent in summing up, "here's the chance o' our lives. There ain't goin' ter be no war, so don't youse fret. Thim Injuns don't need the Black Hills; they don't go in 'em hardly iver. Its bad medicine. A man has been killed an' one captured. Yistiddy Oi give out the last o' the rations. More is comin' by freight to-morrow. Thim Injuns wouldn't suffer if the agency burned down to-night—they is not foine buildin's any way, as youse both knows." The men started. He regarded them with cunning eyes. "Now this buildin', the warehouse an' thim shacks about here, could go an' lave the store, the boss herder's house, an' so on. Oi might see an Injun runnin' away whin the fire got started. An' the Injun would start her from the windward."

"My God, Billy! You'll go to the pen if Washington tumbles. Where does it benefit you?"

"Don't youse lose slape. Sure an' Oi'd ha been in the pen long ago if Oi wasn't born niver ter go there. Where do Oi come in? Why, Washington will need new buildin's. Charlie here is the contractor, an' he moight make money

a buildin' o' them. When this tenderfoot wakes up he sees the agency on fire, and he may think thim Injuns done it." Billy winked. "He an Oi have a talk an' its loikely that Oi tells him as how treacherous thim Injuns is. They brought him in safely an' nivir harmed a hair o' his head jist ter jolly him over a killin' o' his pardner. Thin that same night they burns the agency over the hid o' their firm frind, the agint. The tenderfoot he spreads that East — whin he gits there. The newspapers howl: 'Protict the brave agint from thim rid divils.' Thin Washington sinds sogers here fur ter protict the miners an' agint. The Hills is opened, min come in ter git gold, sogers spind money, Billy, Charlie, an' Henry makes money an' iviry body is happy." Billy leaned back contentedly. It was a bold, wild scheme. They sucked in deep breaths in astonishment.

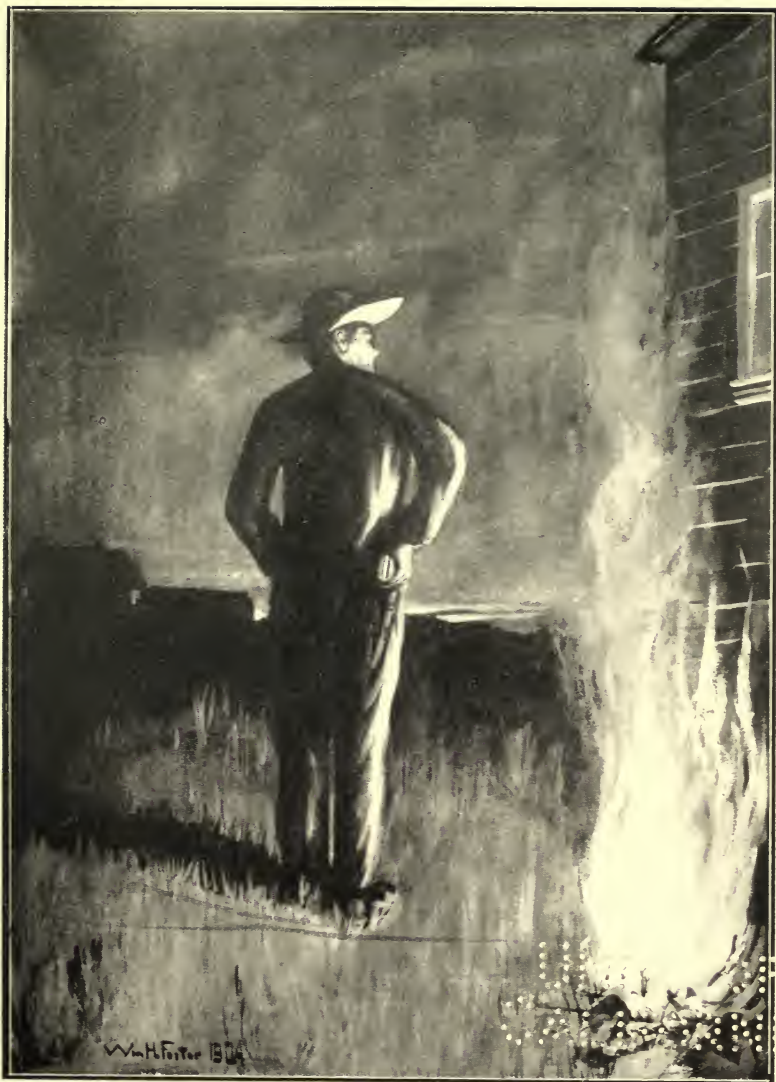
"But suppose we are found out?" ventured Henry.

"We can't be diskivered unless one of us squeals. An' we can't squeal. It's a case of hang together or hang siparately. Let's take anither drink on it."

"Billy, I don't want to git into no trouble," began Henry, "and I don't think much of your scheme."

"Billy leaned forward in his chair and gesticulated with his right hand to emphasize his words. His long index finger pointed now toward Henry, now at Charlie.

"A man kin testify in court only ter what he sees or knows. Youse fellers is in your beds. Youse don't see nawthin'. Youse hear the agint who is always lyin' awake nights feelin' the responsibility o' the governmint property. The agint roises up an' runs out an' yells, 'fire! fire!' Thin the faithful employees" — agin the finger pointed at each one — "an' the agint bestirred thimselves ter save the governmint property. The tenderfoot, he comes out, an' runs about oxcited loike. Charlie an' Henry an' the



BILLY BURNS THE AGENCY.

tenderfoot follow the agint's orders an' help move the most valuable things out. By that time the Injuns see the fire an' they come over. Whin the aginey inspector from Washington comes out, Charlie an' Henry was in bed an' all they know is that the aforesaid watchful agint called thim up an' saved thim an' the tenderfoot an' the boss herder an' his assistant. The house o' the boss herder was not hurt by the fire, bein' at some distance, an' thim men an' the stage driver an' the horses slept peacefully until they was aroused."

The men, rather dubious, were not in a position to go contrary to O'Donnell's wishes. Neither the stage driver nor the boss herder — who happened to be honest men — would O'Donnell dare take into his confidence. Billy kept his head fairly clear, but he sent his assistants to bed considerably under the influence of liquor.

About four o'clock in the morning a figure wrapped in a blanket, wearing moccasins and carrying a large coffee crate filled with kindling and paper, went down the stage road. In that beaten track he left no trail. Coming up to the Indian path which diverged from the road, he walked carefully, stepping only on the smoothest and hardest places. He faced about, left the trail, and made a bee-line for the west side of the warehouse. The person placed the box against a corner of the building, poured a quart of coal oil over it, leaned boards and other light material against the end, and opened the small window immediately above to create a draft. He scanned the plain in the vicinity — his hand ready to draw his gun should anyone appear — nothing in sight. The moon was bright and would not go down until long after sunrise. He struck a match, turned and ran in the direction of the village, endeavoring to make a trail as he went. He walked pigeon-toed as do most Indians. Reaching the

trail he came back to the road, entered his room, and went to bed.

Soon he smelled smoke. He went to the end of his building, observed a blaze six feet high at the end of the warehouse, returned to his couch, and waited five or six minutes. Again he looked out. The wind favored the flames and they were shooting ten or twelve feet into the air. The smoke began to drift into his residence. He leaped up, partially dressed — purposely to appear suddenly aroused from sleep — rushed forth crying, “Fire! fire! fire!” running first to the room occupied by Charlie and Henry and then to the house of the chief herder. The men assembled in a few moments. By this time the flames were beyond control.

Men who have led strenuous lives are cool in time of danger. The stranger was the only excited person present.

“Hyar, git an axe,” cried O’Donnell, and when the boss herder did so he cut through the end door of the warehouse — it had been nailed up. The flames had not eaten through the partition that divided the structure into two rooms, although they were raging fiercely on the other side. Through every crack and crevice poured streams of smoke.

“Do youse see anythin’ worth carryin’ out?” asked Billy, as they ran about the room.

“There’ ain’t nothin’ here that I see,” cried Henry. In fact the room was empty, as O’Donnell well knew. They ran out. O’Donnell’s quarters were separated from the warehouse by a space barely wide enough for a wagon to pass between. The wind was toward the agent’s residence, and the men realized that no power could save the building. The miner ran up:

“Haven’t you got any hose or buckets or anything we can use?” The men laughed sarcastically.

“What!” demanded Charlie. “Do you think we got a fire department out here? There ain’t nothin’ we can use except some old buckets, and as far as puttin’ out the fire with them is consarned, we might jest as well use tin cups.”

“Get a move on yer, b’ys, an’ carry out my stuff,” commanded O’Donnell. They opened all the doors in his house and office and worked like beavers, carrying out the records and the few valuables he possessed first, then devoting their energies to the furniture.

The squaw, Wawa, could not sleep well. About the time that the agency employees began fighting the fire, she looked out of her tipi to ascertain if morning were nigh. The agency being on higher ground, she plainly observed the glare of the flames and instantly aroused her husband. They hastily dressed and ran from one lodge to another crying that the agency was on fire. In a short time the people were on their way to render assistance. Naturally those on the fastest horses got there first, and as they all followed the short cut—the Indian trail—they obliterated the tracks of the incendiary, save in one spot.

As the Indians advanced, they saw the white men running back and forth, and lashing their horses, came as rapidly as possible. At first a half dozen braves dismounted and rushed into the threatened building, and presently a score of them were hard at work. The smoke drifted heavily and the white men were coughing and choking.

“Go off to one side,” said Gopher. “You white men are full of smoke. We’ll save the things.”

The Whites were well-nigh exhausted, although they had been at work no more than twenty or twenty-five minutes. The Indians dragged various boxes and chests,

bedsteads, etc., to safety. More Sioux came up and rushed into the sheds where many and willing hands made quick work of the few articles and outfits worth saving. The smoke and the glare and the heat were now unbearable, and all withdrew out of danger and left the buildings to their fate.

They watched and hung about for several hours. At last they could approach the end of the warehouse where the fire started, and the agent's quarters were burned out, but the embers glowed and gave out intense heat.

"The fire started in the west end," said Billy. "Look fer tracks."

Some of the old men who were good trailers went there. Ashes and cinders extended out for one or two yards on all sides, obliterating all tracks within ten feet of the building. In the soft ground farther to the south they found the imprint of a moccasin, five feet beyond that another, then one or two more, and then the trail disappeared. The Indians grunted in astonishment and gathered about.

"How old is the trail?" asked Billy.

"I think it was made early this morning." That was all O'Donnell asked. He called the white men to witness the moccasin prints. All the Indians saw them and were depressed thereat. They could not imagine what Indian should be so foolish as to burn up his own supplies. Apparently an Indian had committed this crime. They stayed no longer, but mounted their ponies and rode homeward.

"It seems to me," said Two Bears, "that Waukawsica is injuring us just now. Everything is no good."

O'Donnell at once telegraphed to Washington that three of the agency buildings had been burned; that in the morning he discovered a moccasin track leading away

from the warehouse; that a miner had been murdered, and one captured about seventy-five miles north of the agency. He wrote a long letter setting forth additional particulars. He suggested that while he did not ask for troops, being unafraid of Indians, yet it might be well to have them present.

The Indians talked it over informally among themselves, and in a day or two sent Richards to the agency. His mission was to play the spy and learn all he could. O'Donnell did not know of Richards' part in outwitting the horse-thieves. In fact he knew less of Richards than of Le Moyne; and while he thought the former the straighter man, he was inclined to place him in the same category with other squaw-men. Richards spent half his time during the next three or four days in hobnobbing with the agent.

Two or three weeks passed. It was now the end of February. Custer was wintering the Seventh Cavalry down at Fort Laramie. The Secretary of War notified him that there might be trouble and that he must have his command in readiness to be moved. Custer was greatly pleased with the prospects, for he loved action, and replied, "I am ready by day or night." He advised a friend that, although he did not like winter campaigns, yet as he expected only one or two more cold snaps, he did not object to taking the field.

Rain-in-the-Face and Gopher went up to see Billy. In spite of the lack of buildings he had managed to crowd the supplies into the remaining sheds, and stored in some unoccupied Sioux lodges the less valuable property. With some tact the agent informed his wards that he had notified the Great Father, and that it was just possible that soldiers might come to the reservation. The chiefs did

not reply, but their faces hardened and they strode out. Charlie remarked a moment later:

“This is bad business, Billy. You should not have sent fer troops.”

“The Injuns can’t do nawthin’.”

“You’ll see,” said Charlie sententiously.

Immediately upon their arrival the chief called a council, to be held that afternoon. Those who were at his tipi left for their homes, and told their neighbors what had been done, for in such a case there was no secrecy. There was great excitement throughout the camp in consequence, and that afternoon there was an enormous gathering at the large council-house. The matters at stake were of such vital importance that even Sioux women were present. Those who could not crowd into the building stood outside. Those in the doorway repeated what was said to those without, and thus all were acquainted with the details of each speech.

XVI.

CUSTER COMES.

As Rain-in-the-Face left the agency he saw Richards, and, glancing about, observed that no other white man was in sight. As he passed Richards he whispered: "Come to the village at once." So when they were in the council-house the chief commanded, "Richards, tell us from the beginning what you learned of Billy." Richards cleared his throat and gave a comprehensive statement of all the incidents and disclosed much new information. "You know," he said in conclusion, "how we cared for him while he built the new buildings. We fed him even when we were short of food ourselves and loaned him tipis in which to store goods. He is now living in a half completed house."

"Aow," commented the Indians present. "The rumor that gold hunters are in the Black Hills is true and there are many men there now. Billy notified the Great Father, but he thinks that we burned the agency buildings."

"I told Billy that we did not want the Great Father to misunderstand us, and that he must at once send word that the soldiers must keep the white men out of our country, or that there would be trouble. The agent laughed at me and said that the white men must get gold, whether they came upon the reservation or not, and that he would send word to the Great Father when he had time. He told me to go back and tell Rain-in-the-Face that it would turn out all right."

"Chief, I am a white man, but have done much for the Lakotas. I want to see you prosper. You cannot

have yellow-metal hunters on your land. Let us tell Runner to ride as fast as he can to the railway station and telegraph Washington to withdraw the gold hunters from our reservation. I have done."

"Richards speaks the truth," said Rain-in-the-Face; then turning to Runner: "Get your swiftest horse and come to the lodge instantly. Strong Heart, go get Tonda and have her come here with paper and write my words." Strong Heart went in search of his wife.

Runner selected his two best ponies; knowing that he must change mounts as they became tired, and appeared at the council-house.

Tonda came also. She sat down and wrote out the telegram. Rain-in-the-Face and Gopher gave Runner several silver dollars. He put the paper carefully inside his shirt and pinned it there. It read:

"General Grant, President of the United States:

"White man coming into our reservation. Wants gold. Agent thinks we set fire to agency, but we did not. We are good Indians. Keep soldiers and white men out of our reservation. If soldiers and white men come through reservation they will be killed. Ogalalas very angry.

"Chiefs Rain-in-the-Face and Gopher."

They gave him a great cheer as he mounted and started upon his long ride. The third morning, tired, but ready to go yet farther for duty's sake, he entered the office. Of course the operator was surprised, and stoic Runner marveled at the strange instrument and its "medicine clicking." He gave to the operator the message, and it was sent forthwith. Then he leaped upon his horse and turned his face homeward.

When the dispatch was received in Washington the officials passed it about and laughed over it, not knowing

of what great importance it was to the Sioux nation. It lay upon the table of the Secretary of War several days, and was officially pronounced by one of the Indian fighters to be the work of some squaw-man and of no consequence. This same Indian fighter told the Secretary that, in his opinion, the Sioux had caused the destruction of the agency buildings, and that they were very hostile to all the Whites in Nebraska and Dakota. The Secretary concluded that it would be best to send the brave and dashing General Custer through the heart of the Sioux country, into the Black Hills region. The matter was referred to one of his subordinates, and General Custer was duly notified to march through the Indians' land and be ready to end hostilities. Thus was the plea of the Sioux nation treated in Washington. Little did the officials who signed the orders dream what would be the cost to the United States in human lives and valuable property during the next five years, and that Custer himself should fall.

The Commissioner of Indian Affairs had telegraphed O'Donnell that Custer would be at or near the agency within a week. The agent rode over to Rain-in-the-Face's lodge and delivered the information, cautioning the Indians not to attack the troops. Then he returned and held a jollification with Charlie and Henry.

A council was immediately called. It was a matter of moment, of life or death to the Sioux, and so they deliberated and debated for hours. Strong Heart's spirit had been restless within him, yet he had steeled himself to silence. At last he arose, and a murmur of approval ran through the audience, for there were many who loved the youth.

Saluting Rain-in-the-Face as chief and not as his father, he addressed them :

“Chiefs and young men of the Ogalala, I have never said much in council. The old men should talk, and the young men act. My medicine tells me that this is a matter of life or death to us. We need our great man, Red Cloud, here. (Cheers.) I speak for the young men and they want Red Cloud and Sitting Bull and a hundred head-men and dog-soldiers from both reservations. (Aow.) Our chiefs have spoken quiet words, but our old men know that Washington never gives us increased rations and never treats us like men until we have fought. (Aow.) Speaking for the dog-soldiers and all the young men, I say send twenty of our best riders north to our brothers in the other bands and have them come.

“The white man that was captured said that there were at least three hundred rough white men in the Black Hills. If they stay there who knows but that death may be coming upon us?” Even the chiefs were carried away by the contagion and joined the young men in their yells.

Rain-in-the-Face got up, named twenty young men who were to go with Runner and take orders from him. In two hours they had provisioned and started.

“Listen. Every man here and all those outside the lodge, tell the women and the boys that no word of this must reach Billy’s ears.” They agreed to tell no white man, but as the boss herder was out looking after some stray cattle he met the messengers ten miles east of the agency.

“Where are you going?” he demanded. The Indians looked at Runner.

“We’re goin to get eagle feathers,” and all the Sioux laughed.

The boss herder understood the language imperfectly

and failed to grasp the idiom. He opined that they made sport of him. When he reported to Billy, the official interpreter explained that as eagle feathers were worn by brave men only, the sentence carried two meanings. Probably Runner meant that they were going on a foray which only brave men dared attempt. Billy rushed to Charlie and Henry, shook hands with them and said:

“Hurray! Things is comin’ our way! Oi shall wire Washington that contrary ter my orders the Injuns wint raidin’ north. B’ys, this is bully.” He did so, and the officials telegraphed Fort Laramie. A courier, conveying a copy of the dispatch, was sent after Custer.

Custer had won great reputation among the Indians. They gave him a distinguishing name. General Crook they called “The Gray Fox,” because he slipped upon them unawares. Custer had long, almost yellow hair. In the field he frequently dressed in buckskin. Other long-haired men were familiar to the Sioux, but none of them had hair of the color of Custer’s, so they called him “Long Yellow Hair.”* They feared him and wished to whip him at some time, because he had killed the women and children when he attacked Black Kettle’s camp on the Wichita in 1869.

There were two warm days. The ground dried and became dusty. Custer had several hundred men, well mounted, plenty of provisions, and all the ammunition necessary. The first intimation that the Indians received of this march was the news brought in by a party of scouts who were out some twenty miles southeast of the camp. They had seen an enormous cloud of dust, and thinking it was buffalo, galloped to a ridge near-by in

* The Cheyennes called Custer “Creeping Panther.”

order to observe the movements and extent of the herd. Judge of their surprise and consternation at beholding three hundred and fifty cavalrymen, led by the renowned Long Yellow Hair, moving in good order northward. They watched the column for a few moments and then retreated cautiously, until they had placed several miles of broken country between themselves and the Whites, when they lashed their ponies into a dead run and flew across the prairie with unabated speed until they arrived at the Sioux camp.

One dashed to the chief's lodge, another to the council-house, and a third rode through the village, crying out the startling news: "Three hundred whites are marching up the valley, led by Long Yellow Hair, with two big guns and many rifles. They are mounted on cavalry horses, and look as though they meant to fight."

Some ran to the council-house, while others crowded around the messengers. Rain-in-the-Face rushed out and sounded the war-whoop. Hastily calling a messenger, he mounted him on his own pony and charged him to ride for his life to Sitting Bull's camp and notify him what was happening, and to tell him to send messengers every few hours, in order that each might keep informed of the other's movements. Rain-in-the-Face cautioned his warriors to begin no hostilities unless the Whites should offer to attack, but to see that their arms were in good condition, and to be ready to jerk down their tipis and to move to Sitting Bull's village at an hour's notice. He told Gopher and Strong Heart to mount their best ponies and take a white flag, which the Whites would respect, intercept the column, and hold a conference with Long Yellow Hair.

While these preparations were going on in the village, the two messengers rode post-haste toward the southeast,

to meet Custer and ascertain his intentions. They had gone fifteen miles only, when they came in sight of the column. The troops moved leisurely, and the army wagons lumbered along in the rear. The scouts were in advance and General Custer and Captain Brown rode with the main body.

The two horsemen with the white flag rode boldly down the ridge and advanced to meet General Custer. Seeing them coming, he sent out two orderlies to meet them. They stopped when within a hundred yards of each other, and Strong Heart, who was to act as spokesman, cried out in English, "What do you here? Is General Custer there? I want to speak with him."

"If you are unarmed," replied one of the orderlies, "we will conduct you to General Custer, and you may speak with him."

Laying their rifles upon the ground, they approached the General. He advanced from the column to meet them, and they held a parley lasting for some little time.

"General Custer," said the Indian, "what are you doing on our reservation? Why are the soldiers here?"

"I guess I shall take my troops wherever suits me," replied Custer, and added, "Who are you?"

"I am leader of the dog-soldiers, and we want peace."

"A queer kind of peace you observe," replied the General. "The Great Father ordered me here because he intends to stop you people from killing white people and burning agencies."

"We did not burn the agency, nor have we killed Whites save in self-defense," replied Strong Heart.

While the parley ensued, other troops came up, among them being a famous scout and old timer, California Joe. This man had been with Custer for many years, and idolized the General.

“How far is your village from here?”

“Fifteen miles.”

“Are all your warriors in?”

“All,” replied Strong Heart — Indians think nothing of telling a lie when it is necessary.

“What did you come out here for?”

“To see why you are here and why the Great Father at Washington does not drive the gold hunters out.”

“You seem,” replied Custer, “to be speaking the truth, but I must see the agent at your reservation and talk with him. If he says that you have told the truth, I will report to the Great Father that you are good Indians and should be left alone. If I receive orders to drive the white men out, I will do so. Go back to your people and tell them that I will not attack them at present.” With that Custer rode back to the column, and the Indians, satisfied with the interview, picked up their arms and returned to the camp as fast as their tired ponies could bear them.

The council was in session when they returned, and the news they brought was received with shouts of delight. Runners were dispatched to Sitting Bull's camp with the intelligence, and all were greatly gratified that Long Yellow Hair meant no harm to them. Many of the warriors went to the agency to learn what the result of the interview between the agent and General Custer would be.

Tonda remained at home anxiously awaiting Strong Heart's return, and impatient to learn what course her people would adopt in so important a matter. She was not kept long in suspense, for her husband, as soon as he could leave, rushed from the council, and running quickly to the tipi, burst through the entrance and told in a few rapid sentences all that had taken place.

"Strong Heart," said she in a pleading voice, "Don't try to fight the Whites unless they attack us. Even if Custer is here, I don't believe he will attack us. Don't lead the dog-soldiers into any foolish action, for we shall all be killed if you do. I know the white man's land well and have seen his strength: how he lives in great cities, how many warriors he has, and how many guns. I have seen houses so large that many hundred people live in one; therefore listen to the advice of your squaw, dear husband, and do not fight without just cause."

"Dear Tonda, I will do as you wish. Long Yellow Hair will stop at the agency for two weeks or longer, and will hold a council with our people. You must not be anxious if I am there most of the time, for I must have a long talk with the General. We must drive out those old gold hunters. He is a great man and has won many battles. I think he will keep his word."

Custer and O'Donnell had a long conference. Charlie and Henry had little to say, but the herder and the stage driver, not knowing the particulars, substantiated O'Donnell's claims. Custer went into camp at a favorable spot ten miles down the river. A few days passed and about eight o'clock one morning, Red Cloud, Sitting Bull, other chiefs and five hundred warriors of the Sioux nation arrived and advanced within a hundred yards of the agency buildings. The main body of the Indians stood near, close enough to hear most of the conversation that passed. The General and his staff came forward to meet the Indians, accompanied by the agent. After considerable hand-shaking, Custer opened the conversation by saying:

"Chiefs Red Cloud and Rain-in-the-Face, you have come to talk with me upon an important matter, and I trust that we shall reach an understanding without

difficulty. Your agent has informed me that some Indian caused the burning of the buildings, but it cannot be directly laid at your door. He has also told me of your kind treatment of himself and employees and your assistance at the time of the fire. I have just sent two messengers to the railroad station to telegraph the Great Father in Washington these facts, and it will be only a few days before all will be right. Do not disturb the miners. Let them pass through your lands for the present."

Sitting Bull and Rain-in-the-Face looked at each other a moment, then turning to the interpreter, Sitting Bull drew himself up to his full height, looked about him, and began:—

"Chief Long Yellow Hair, we have listened to what you have to say, and are glad that the news of our good feeling has been sent to the Great Father. But there is one thing which you do not understand. The men who have come upon our reservation seek to injure us by killing our game and driving us from our land. Chief Long Yellow Hair, they have not driven us from our land yet, but if they are allowed to stay, it will be a question of time only before they do drive us out.

"You know Red Cloud, chief of all the Sioux. He wants no trouble. He whipped Fetterman and Kidder and at various times took a hundred wagon-trains. Powell whipped him. You have whipped our people, we have never whipped you. But our hearts are strong and we are not afraid."

"Aow," shouted five hundred voices.

Custer smiled and Brown pulled his mustache.

"Interpreter, be careful to interpret truly."

"Yes, Gin'r'l."

"Sitting Bull, Red Cloud and the rest. I do not think

that your medicine-man's heart is good. He always talks war. If you Sioux want a fight you can get it very quickly. You must do as I say."

The Sioux growled in disapproval.

"I am head chief," said Red Cloud, "and I know you are a great man. You have struck us hard. But some day you are going to strike once too often. (Aow.) I have made peace at Laramie and you and my agent Billy and Washington know that I never broke my word. (Aow.) My young men may fight, I shall remain in my cabin, for I have made peace.

"We seldom beg. We now ask you to take away those yellow-metal hunters. If you do not, there may be trouble. Why do you white men keep forever crowding us toward the setting sun?"

Custer consulted his officers a few moments. Then he said:

"Do nothing rash. Restrain your young men. Meantime I shall send words to Washington over the lightning wire setting forth your claims."

The chiefs talked among themselves several minutes, and then Rain-in-the-Face said: "Chief Long Yellow Hair, we will not molest these men until you have orders from Washington, provided they do not steal our ponies or shoot any of our young men. We regret very much that you cannot run out those metal hunters at once."

The chief, at the end of this remark, walked nervously back and forth, muttering to himself. General Custer saw that no good could come of prolonging the interview further, and so shaking hands once more, he turned to his officers and gave orders to mount.

The Indians drew together and began talking among themselves. The cavalry moved in good order toward their camp, the gallant Custer, with his long hair wav-

ing in the wind, riding on ahead. As the heavy horses lumbered out of sight, the Indians mounted their light, fleet ponies and returned, disappointed and disheartened that the general had not at once turned north and removed the Whites from the reservation.

Strong Heart did not go to his father's lodge, but to his own. His wife saw from his downcast face that the interview had been an unpleasant one, so she tenderly threw her arms about his neck and drew him to a seat upon the bear-skins, saying, "Tell me all about it."

He told her what had taken place, and she listened to every word with great anxiety.

XVII.

RUNNER AND THE WOLVES.

Le Moyne would doubtless have been turned out of the Sioux village when the natives suspected his part in the Confederate bill deal, but for a curious circumstance. He had come from Canada many years before, bringing with him a pair of steel skates. These he carefully preserved, even going to the trouble of having the agent send them East to be repaired. In the north Le Moyne had learned to skate, and every winter put on heavy shoes — the rest of the year he wore moccasins — strapped on the skates, and to the amazement and delight of the Sioux, skated up and down the Niobrara river. Runner, naturally an athlete, became much interested in the spectacle and begged Le Moyne to teach him the use of those “iron ice-shoes,” as they were called. Le Moyne did so, and although the stiff leather hurt the Indian’s feet, yet he did not desist until he had become even more proficient on the ice than Le Moyne himself. Indians were known to come from far and near to see Runner skate. Le Moyne in his precipitate departure failed to take the skates with him. Runner wished to purchase them and promised the squaw payment when goods other than food were to be distributed in the early spring, and received from her these coveted articles. He borrowed a file from the agency blacksmith and sharpened them.

During the March thaw of this year there was more warm weather than usual. Some rains fell and the snow ice of the Niobrara was thoroughly drenched. Later in March a blizzard followed and the surface froze solid — a

glistening expanse on either side, farther out by a hundred yards than the ordinary channel of the river, and capable of bearing up a man at any point. This was the first winter in the memory of old men that Sioux had been troubled by wolves. Buffalo herds, disturbed by white hunters, had migrated far to the south, and many wolves, both prairie and the larger and fiercer kind — the gray wolves — ranged about the country seeking what they might devour. They killed a number of ponies and tore to pieces some Indian dogs almost within sight of the village. Gopher cautioned the natives to go armed and to avoid traveling alone.

Minnehaha was taken ill. At first the symptoms were not alarming, but as she grew worse and called for water continually, her parents became worried — and Indians seldom concern themselves unless there is real trouble. Two Bears went for Tonda and Strong Heart. Said he:

“Come to our lodge at once. Bring with you some of the medicine which was so powerful to restore Strong Heart to health, and see if it will not bring back the smile to the face of your little sister, Minnehaha, and the bright flashes to her eyes. She fell ill two days ago, and seems very feverish. Do not delay, but come at once.”

Tonda rose quickly from her seat, and taking several bottles from a little medicine-chest, hurried to her father's home.

Tonda saw at a glance that Minnehaha was very ill. She had been playing along the edge of the stream on the ice, where the Indian children went nearly every day, and had slipped into a water hole. Being a delicate child, she took a severe cold from the wetting. She continued to play and romp all day, often getting overheated, and then sitting down still clad in her wet clothes. The exposure

was too much for her, and she caught a heavy cold, which soon developed into a raging fever.

Tonda drew near the bed, and knelt beside her.

"I am glad to see you, sister," said the little sufferer. "You will stay with me a while, won't you?" and she looked up into the face of her kind-hearted sister, with a most piteous expression.

"Yes, Minnehaha, I have come to bring you some strong medicine, good medicine, which will speedily make you well again. You must take it whenever mother tells you to, and lie still and be patient, like a good girl."

"Yes, sister, I will take the medicine and will lie still. You must come and see me often. Do not leave me long, Tonda."

Tonda held Minnehaha's hand and told her several little stories to amuse her and if possible make her forget the burning of the fever. She stayed with her sister nearly two hours. When the time came for her to return to her own lodge, she smoothed the hot brow and kissed the parched lips, and then, with a parting instruction for the little one to take plenty of cold water, she went home.

But Minnehaha did not get better. Next morning Two Bears again summoned Tonda and Strong Heart. Omaha insisted upon having Wadaha also, so they called that worthy. He examined the girl and diagnosed the case as follows:

"Friends, listen! She has a small evil spirit in her. I must drive it away. I know that Tonda does not believe in the power of my medicine, but I shall show you all that Wadaha is a great and powerful man." He went home, got his medicine sack, his sacred drum and other paraphernalia, and in company with the neophyte, his understudy, returned. Then ensued a long incantation accompanied by much singing. Poor Minnehaha became

more feverish, and tossed about on her couch. Tonda offered to give her water, but Wadaha said that water would spoil the efficacy of his charms. As soon as he departed Tonda ran to the river, filled a bucket, and in spite of Omaha's protests gave her all the water she craved. Then the family conferred together.

"We must do something," said Tonda to her father and mother.

"What can we do?" asked Omaha.

"I have no faith in Wadaha," replied the girl. "His noise disturbs the little one, and Strong Heart and I think that, although he is my grandfather, he cannot cure her."

"See here," said Strong Heart, "there is a doctor with the soldiers who are, as you know, ten miles down the river. He is a great white doctor and can make any one well. We want to get him here quickly. The snow has drifted. I can ride there, but I think that Runner can go on his iron ice-shoes much faster. I think you should send for the white medicine-man."

"If he can make her well, get him," said Two Bears. "I will give him a good pony, or even three ponies, if he can help her, and all my ponies if he saves her from death."

"Strong Heart," said Tonda, as she looked at her sister's flushed face, "run quickly to Runner's tipi and get him started."

The Indian leaped up and ran as fast as he could to the crier's lodge. "Runner," said he, "I want you to go down to where the soldiers are on your iron ice-shoes, because you can go faster than I can on a horse. Minnehaha is very sick, and we want the white medicine-man."

"Aow," grunted Runner, diving into his little buffalo-hide trunk and dragging out the skates, "I will show you how fast I can go. The Whites have shod horses; they will not slip on the ice, and the white doctor can ride

up the river easier than he can plow through the drifts." They walked to the river bank together. Runner sat down on Strong Heart's blanket and adjusted the skates.

"Help pull the straps tight," and Strong Heart did so.

Although it was cold Runner did not take his blanket, but drew a belt tightly about his waist, confining his coat so that it could not flap.

"Want your gun?" asked Strong Heart.

"No," said he. "I don't want to carry anything. Must go light."

People came down to the bank as the long, lithe form of Runner shot out on to the clear ice. Strong Heart told them where he was going, and they marveled and watched him out of sight. There were many bends in the river, and the wind, although not strong, was keen and chilly, but Runner was warmed by his work. He swung around the great bend just below the village, and although the distance was not a mile, because of the curious topography of the country he could neither see the tipis, nor could the villagers observe him. A movement in the bushes attracted his attention. Two great, gaunt, gray wolves ran out behind him and loped along after him, but keeping on the snow ice near the shore. Runner thought this strange, for he had never known wolves to follow a man.

"Huh!" he grunted. "They must be like antelopes for curiosity, which run up to a white or a red flag only to be shot down. They never saw a man on skates." He swung around a short bend and the wind carried his scent back to the animals. Now thoroughly aroused, they quickened their pace — for they had been dozing in the bushes — one of them raised his head and gave the long-drawn cry of assembly. Several other wolves heard it, and they, too, gave tone, ambled out of their hiding-

places and came down to the river, trailed in behind and soon caught up with the leaders. Runner still regarded the incident as merely curious. He was no coward, and although he had heard vague stories — mostly folk-lore — about how wolves in the olden times used to pursue men and tear them to pieces, he was not apprehensive. There was a straight stretch and the wind favored him. He took long, even strokes, bent over and looked at his skates, observed that they were securely fastened. More wolves answered, and presently the leader appeared, a great whitish fellow, lighter in color than the others. The Indian swung sharply around the narrow bend, getting a full and clear view of the wolves before he entered another straight course. There were thirteen of them, and they ran doggedly and persistently, keeping the rougher ice in order that they might not slip.

“Huh,” growled the Indian, “if they want to race with me, they’ve got to hurry.” Still he did not suspect that the wolves would attack him. On and on he skated. The shoes began to hurt his feet. His soles were more callous than those of the white men, but he was unaccustomed to this kind of footgear, and the straps pinched and chafed. He did not hurry. Most Indians are vain, and he flattered himself as he glanced down upon his muscular legs, working in rhythmic fashion, reeling off stroke upon stroke evenly, gracefully. Less strong skaters have won in championship races, and had he trained according to the white man’s standards he would have made his mark in the athletic world.

It was cold enough to cause contraction in the ice. When ice contracts curious sounds are heard on pond and stream. They are unlike anything in nature, and man’s inventions do not reproduce them. Not unmusical are they: deep and clear; again, short and sharp; long drawn,

like thunder, yet different in tone; mellow, ringing and suggestive of power. But they never inspire fear as does thunder. Only in the far northland, or at certain altitudes, may one hear them and wonder thereat.

In the broad stretches as the pursued and the pursuers swept along these sounds followed. "Devils are at work," thought the Sioux.

The wolves gained a little. He observed the patter of their feet—he had not noticed it before, and when he swung around another bend, he heard the scratch of their toes on the ice. Some of them slipped, but in the stretch they recovered and came nearer. The truth began to dawn upon him, and he shivered. But it was only for a moment—fear was unknown to Runner.

"Huh," he grunted, "I believe they're after me." He was getting warm but increased the speed. It was perhaps six miles to Custer's encampment, and the Indian now realized that he must conserve his strength and employ all his skill as a skater. There was no appeal from this conflict and defeat meant death. The wind blew against him. He looked ahead and saw that it was nearly a mile to the next bend. The wolves being nearer the ice, and not affected by the wind, increased their gait. Runner glanced back and saw the leader in the act of opening his great red mouth, and the man turned and lengthened his strokes. The sound came; fierce, merciless, and pregnant with death. Down the mile course flew the wolves and the man. He unbuttoned his coat, tore it off, and flung it back. There remained only a thin deer-skin undershirt about his body. The wind cooled his chest and revived him. The leader stopped, seized the coat, tore it about in his jaws and flung it backward to other wolves, who in turn bit it, pawed over it, and then raced on after the skater.

The bend was a three-quarters circle of half a mile circumference. The neck was no more than three hundred yards wide. As Runner came to it he realized that here would be the first struggle. The wolves took to the shore and cut across. Runner spurted, taking twenty-foot strokes as he entered the bend, the wind favoring him. The wolves encountered drifts, and thereby Runner's chances were improved, for only half of them awaited him as he came tearing down the stream. He swerved sharply and avoided the first three. The leader barred his path immediately beyond. In dodging he lost speed, and then he spurted while traversing the forty or fifty feet between the first animals and the leader.

You have seen an expert skater start suddenly, and have heard that peculiar sound as the skates cut into the ice when he spurts. You have seen him, when coming at full speed, suddenly throw his body to one side so that it seems to the beholder as if he would surely fall. The feet are close together, the skates are inclined against the ice and plane off the surface, shooting the spray some yards ahead. He dodges at an abrupt right angle. Runner did all of this and more. Snap, went the jaws of the white wolf as he sprang, but they closed upon empty air; and before he could gather himself for a dash, the Indian had sprinted and bore down upon the remaining four wolves. Here the ice was clear and blue for two or three hundred yards. He simply turned in their direction, going faster and faster, and as they raced to catch him, dodged to the left, and although the wolves braced their feet against the ice, and dug with their toes, they slipped several yards before they could recover from the momentum. Runner became exhilarated and called aloud to the creatures to come on. On they came, keeping one or two hundred feet behind him. As he approached bends

he quickened the pace and thus drew ahead. He was getting a little tired, and Custer was still four miles distant. But the wolves were also tired, for they had run harder than they ordinarily do in pursuit of game. There was one more dangerous bend a mile and a half this side of the troops. If he could pass that he was safe. A monotony settled down upon the chase. He leaned over and worked steadily.

The last bend was at hand. His great thigh muscles began to ache. His breath was coming rapidly, and soon he would be unable to keep up the pace. Never had he skated so fast, never had the wolves run so far at such a speed. He was a firm believer in his medicine, and he prayed to his particular totem, "Great thunder-bird, help me. Strengthen my legs and make my wind hold out." He felt encouraged, and gathering what strength remained he hit up the pace. The brutes also knew that once around the bend men's tents would be in sight. A man they might catch, but men were to be shunned, for men carried something that made a noise, belched smoke, and killed. Therefore, the white one gathered himself for a final burst, and called aloud to the pack in his deep, sharp tones — for he too must needs save his wind — to come on.

The sun shone brightly. Save the occasional ice tones, all nature was still. The cut, cut of the skates, the scratch, scratch of horny toes upon the ice were the only sounds. There was now no wind. Into the bend he shot. Across the bend leaped the wolves. There were few drifts, but the snow lay a foot deep, blown inshore from the river. Again this circumstance helped him.

Through the bend he flew, skating fast, his reserve strength exhausting rapidly. At the narrowest part were the wolves, this time ten of them lined across and some

fifteen feet apart. Near the shore was snow-ice, with a rough, hard surface. Could he skirt them and not cut through sufficiently to trip? It seemed his only chance. Possibly the men in camp could hear him, and he emitted a short but piercing cry. One hundred feet away was the line, expectant, confident. They stood still, ready to spring. Their shaggy bodies worked backward and forward swayed by tremendous heart action, and their sides heaved. Two miles more at high speed they could not run.

“Waukantanka, help me,” and he opened wide his mouth to get more air, cried aloud, and dashed at the line. He must dodge to one side or else they would get him. He came down upon them like an arrow, and even as the central wolf leaped, Runner himself leaped four feet into the air and fifteen feet forward. The jaws snapped quickly and cut out a piece of flesh from his side as neatly as if taken by a knife. But he hesitated not and sped on toward safety.

Two officers on horseback, bent on pleasure, were coming up the river. They heard the cry, saw the wolves. Their newly-shod steeds did not slip as they raced up the river. Runner, too, saw them and his heart took on new life, his eyes almost snow-blinded by the glare fixed steadily upon the goal, and he wavered on. The ferocious animals also saw and they stopped, turned, and sought hiding places on shore. The riders were General Custer and Captain Brown.

“By George,” said Custer, “that was magnificent; did you see him jump? Hurry up!”

“There,” cried Brown, “he’s down. Wounded, too. I see the blood. I never thought an Indian could skate.” They rode rapidly to where Runner lay, and dismounted. Half a dozen men in camp seeing that something unusual

had happened mounted, and were galloping the horses of the famous old fighting Seventh Cavalry to the scene of action. Meanwhile Custer and Brown raised the Indian, wrapped him in a blanket, brought him to consciousness, gave him a drink of whiskey, and made him as comfortable as possible until the others came up.

"Here Joe, talk Sioux to this fellow and find out all about it," commanded Custer. But Runner's breath came in gasps and he was too weak to talk. So they put another blanket about him, carried him to the camp, established him in one of the tents, and sent for the surgeon.

"Gin'r'l," said Joe, "he has got something important to say. He never skated here fer fun."

Again Joe spoke to the Indian. This time in broken sentences he made known his mission. The white men were deeply impressed. Up came the physician and dressed Runner's wound. Later they feasted and cared for him as he had never been served before.

"There, Custer," said Brown. "Never again say that only dead Indians are good ones."

"Yes, I'll admit I am wrong for once. He must have made a grand race. Wish I knew the time. He is all right," and the General's eyes sparkled. Custer ordered the surgeon to ride to Rain-in-the-Face's village with six soldiers at once and attend to the sick girl. They went up the river rapidly, but the wolves did not show themselves. They reached the village safely, and their entry caused no little commotion. Curious men, women, and children came out to see the cavalymen who had defeated a village on the Wichita and killed so many warriors. The chiefs shook hands with them and good-naturedly answered (through the interpreters) the trooper's bantering.

Meanwhile the doctor worked over Minnehaha.

* * * * *

“Joe,” said Custer, “How many years have you been on the Plains?”

“Wall, Gin’r’l, I can’t say fer sartin, but I think about thirty.”

“What do you think of this Indian?” Joe was not given to long speeches, and Custer had never heard him say more at one time than he did now. He shifted his quid into the other cheek and spat generously upon the ground.

“Wall, Gin’r’l, this Indian is an Ogalala. The Ogalalas is the bes’ Sioux. They never was well licked except when Major Powell got under them iron wagon beds an’ the Sioux couldn’t take the sodgers. Ef you ever has to fight the hul Ogalala tribe it won’t be no Sunday School picnic. This hyar Indian has done somethin’ I never heard tell on.”

“How fast do you suppose he skated?” asked Custer.

“Wall, Gin’r’l, I can’t say fer sartin as I know nawthin’ ’bout skatin’, but them wolves shorely come on a hard run and they was big timber wolves. I wouldn’t like to resk a man on a hoss — or you on yer hoss, an’ you is a good rider, Gin’r’l,—fer in that ten mile them wolves would shorely ketch a man no matter what hoss he rode.”

“How fast would you say he skated, Joe?” persisted Custer.

“Wall, Gin’r’l, I can’t say fer sartin, but I jest think that them wolves will run at a fifteen or seventeen mile clip. I wouldn’t resk no man in this hyar company — an’ you got good men — on skates or on a hoss. Them wolves would shorely git him. Nobody but this hyar Indian could ha’ done it.”

XVIII.

THAT CORK LEG.

The officers of the Seventh Cavalry varied the monotony of camp life. They roamed the country exploring and hunting, visited the scene of Strong Heart's gallant stand, made themselves at home in the Sioux village, consulted and joked with Billy.

A retired officer named Long, who loved action and never missed a chance to see or take part in a fight, was visiting Custer. They had been comrades in arms. Long had lost a leg and also wore a glass eye — for he was in Forsyth's famous fight against the Cheyennes — but as Kipling would say, that is another story. They sat in Custer's tent.

“General,” said Long, “Do you think there is a possibility of fighting?”

“Well, comrade, I don't think so. These Indians are objecting to the miners and are naturally incensed against the horse-thieves, but they seem inclined to be peaceful.” “Joe,” said the General, turning to his scout, “What do you think? You've been about the village and in the trader's store and have heard the Sioux talk.”

“Wall, Gin'r'l, I can't say fer sartin, but it seems ter me that we kin git a scrap ef we wants it.”

“Do they talk much?”

“Not much, Gin'r'l, they feels sore over them miners. They is goin' ter have a big feast, Gin'r'l, and when they does, you officers better go.”

“You think that would please the natives?”

“Yes, an' it would make their hearts good ef you got

some terbacco an' sugar of Billy an' sent them ter the blow-out as comin' from the Gin'r'l."

"You go over to the village and find out when they're going to have the feast and then see that Billy remembers to send the presents in my name."

"Yes, Gin'r'l," and Joe departed.

In a few days a regiment of infantry marched in and camped by the agency. These troops were to remain as guards in case the cavalry wished to move. Custer was well pleased.

Captain Brown was in a reminiscent mood in his tent that evening. "Your brother, Tom, always used to tell with great relish a story of an eastern professor. You have heard it several times, but these other officers haven't. The Indians are becoming less superstitious every year, but not so very long ago a captured man, if he had his wits about him and possessed anything in his pockets that the Indians had never seen, by working a supernatural dodge might escape.

"When Red Cloud was raiding the Platte and Santa Fé trails, his war parties covered an extent of territory fully five hundred miles northeast and southwest. They held up numberless trains and the census of both Indians and travelers killed in these actions will never be known. Just before the Civil war a steamboat coughed and puffed its way up the Missouri, carrying the usual number of traders, trappers, and gamblers. When they came to the great bend — which you know is some sixty miles around and only five or six miles across the neck — a gentleman asked the captain to be put ashore. Said he, 'I am a naturalist from Harvard and I wish to make a collection to enrich our museum series in entomology.' The captain swore and the traders told the professor that they did not know what he meant, but that at any rate he must be a

blamed fool. The country was infested with Sioux who were on the war-path, and the quiet old scientist would certainly be knocked in the head.

“However, he persisted and his request was granted. They gave the old fellow a lunch, ran out the plank, and, armed with his tin collecting box and a butterfly net, he went ashore. They had given him the direction carefully and he proceeded on his way. It was June, and the bugs, beetles, and other winged creatures drifted about in countless numbers. The scientist made the best of his opportunity and soon had a valuable collection stored in various bottles and compartments. He was so engrossed in his discovery of new types that he did not observe the approach of a war party of Sioux. In spite of the old gentleman’s protestations they took him to their temporary camp some miles distant. Once there they debated regarding his fate. Not a few were for staking him out at once. Others said: ‘Wait until the hunters come in.’ The medicine-man put in his appearance and examined the net, and endeavored to open the tin box, but not understanding the mechanism was unable to do so, although the fastenings were simple. ‘This is no ordinary white man,’ he said. They took an old knife and after several attempts succeeded in forcing the lid. At this the professor started forward to save his treasures, but the young men grasped his arms and restrained him. Out of the box flew beetles and bugs and butterflies.

“‘Bad medicine, bad medicine!’ shouted the warriors.

“‘Bad medicine nothing!’ cried the medicine-man. ‘He is crazy. Any man who would come into this country on foot, and carrying not even a pistol with which to defend himself, and with little or no food, and fill a box with bugs, must be crazy. Therefore, turn him loose.’

“As Indians have a horror of the insane, the man was

led to the outskirts of the village, threatened with knife and tomahawk, and turned loose on the prairie, whence he made his way footsore and weary to the meeting place just in time to catch the boat. His pack and net were carefully destroyed by the shaman as bad or inexplicable medicine. The old professor had neither humor nor gratitude; for when he returned East safely after having made another collection, he never ceased to lament the loss of his box and valuable specimens."

"It's rather dull," remarked Custer a few days later. "I was thinking last night that probably these Sioux never saw a cork leg or a glass eye. We might enliven things by visiting the village. Major Long shall be our medicine-man and through his powers set all the tongues a-wagging."

"Splendid," cried Brown. "They half think now that Long Yellow Hair is supernatural. Long will confirm that view. Run a long steel awl into your leg and take out your eye at the proper moment. Do it carefully and ostentatiously."

Major Long was pleased to consent and they visited the village that day. They went direct to the council house, California Joe accompanying them as interpreter. Leaving their horses outside, they entered. Indians saw them coming and crowded about. All the chiefs and dog-soldiers came. Wadaha passed the pipe.

"Who is the medicine-man?" asked Custer.

"I am that one," replied Wadaha. "I cure the sick, make buffalo come, and stand between the people and both good and evil spirits."

"We have a great medicine-man," began Brown. "He is greater even than Sitting Bull"—the Indians shook their heads—"Look upon him. Behold his medicine!"

Long exhibited a big needle such as the packers use in sewing up bags and gravely passed it through his leg. Again he did the same trick this time nearer the knee. No blood followed.

"Great medicine," shouted the natives. Wadaha came over and he passed the needle through, so did Gopher. The Indians grunted in astonishment.

"Behold our medicine-man now," said Custer. "I command him to take out his eye." Breathlessly the red men leaned forward. Those in the entrance passed the word back. Silence reigned. Deliberately Long removed his eye and turned the sightless orb upon his audience.

"Behold, he puts it in and sees again," and Long replaced it.

Wadaha came forward. "Let me see the leg."

"Oh no," replied Custer. "That would destroy the medicine."

"Can you see as well with that eye as with the other?"

"Oh, yes, Wadaha, I can see well."

"Give me the eye." The officer took it out and handed it to Wadaha. He examined it gravely, turning it over and over in his hands. They passed it from one to the other entirely around the council house. When it came to Strong Heart he cried aloud — "it's glass, he can't see through it." Brown and Custer laughed aloud, some Indians grinned, others did not relish the deception.

Rain-in-the-Face got up. "He is bad medicine," he shouted. "Put him out," and in spite of protests on the part of the white men they pulled him up and would have thrust him without but for Wadaha.

"Don't do it. Let him stay. I want to show what my medicine can do." Order being restored, Wadaha made his way to the door. "Oh, people, do not leave the medicine lodge until I return. I am just going to my

tipi to get my wonderful medicine bone." Wadaha ran off, procured the mysterious rib and also picked up a long darning needle belonging to his wife. He came back to the lodge and lighted the fire. He showed the white men his trick rib. They observed that there were no marks upon it. Then he gravely laid it before the fire and heated it, and ran about and showed them clearly the figure of the buffalo bull. After a moment Custer said:

"Let me see the rib again."

"No," replied the Indian. "Your medicine-man would not explain his mystery, neither will I explain mine." Brown nudged Long.

"That's one on you," said he.

Rain-in-the-Face began a short speech. Wadaha crowded back among the men, getting next to Gopher. Unobserved he whispered to him: "I am going to run this needle into the officer's other leg. I think he has got a wooden leg on one side such as I have heard that the Whites make and wear, but a good leg on the other. I will show him that he cannot fool us. I go over and sit on his left side. You sit on his right side so that he cannot strike or hurt me." Wadaha seated himself on Long's left. Carefully and imperceptibly Wadaha drew forth the needle, concealed it in the palm of his hand, slowly moved the hand down his side ready to give the officer a sudden and severe stab. Gopher was watchful and ready to seize Long's hands should he attempt to injure the medicine-man. There was a pause at the conclusion of Rain-in-the-Face's remarks and Wadaha suddenly jabbed the needle a full inch into Long's leg.

"Oh! Ouch! The devil!" exclaimed that officer, leaping to his feet and jumping toward the center of the lodge. The Indians set up a great shout and the white men, fear-

ing trouble, got up. Wadaha called out in Sioux what he had done. Custer leaped to his friend's side.

"What's the matter? What's the matter?"

"The old rascal ran a needle in my good leg." At this all the white men broke into loud and hearty laughter and good humor fell upon both sides.

Said Richards: "The Indians say, 'You can't fool us,' and the next time that you have got a man with a wooden leg and a glass eye, leave him at home."

"Gin'r'l," said Joe. "Ef you ain't got no business here let's go back ter the camp. No use ter rile up the Injuns." The white men left the council lodge. As they rode homeward Custer remarked;

"Well, old Wadaha was no fool. But for him we had been 'great medicine.' It was worth something to see their faces when you ran the needle through your leg and took out your eye."

"Yes, but it was worth more to see everybody's face when Wadaha stuck the needle in your real leg," said Brown. "I think that the honors are with them."

"My leg is sore as the deuce," said Long. "The old rascal needn't have run it in so far."

"Gin'r'l," said Joe, "ef you'll take the advice of an old friend o' yourn, don't you play no more tricks on them Injuns."

The story was sent to eastern friends and everybody enjoyed it. But Long did not tell how the Indians turned the tables on him.

"Custer," said the officer, "Did you ever hear of an Indian who really became civilized? It seems to me that this girl Tonda is going to relapse."

"Oh yes. I once knew a young buck called Bob-tail Coyote. He went East in buckskin and speaking only his mother tongue."

“He remained during the stipulated time, gradually becoming a white man to all intents and purposes. But no greater transformation was manifested, when he returned to his people, than that of his name, which had evolved from the savage ‘Bob-tailed Coyote,’ to that which appeared on his neatly engraved visiting card:

MR. ROBERT T. WOLF.”

XIX.

DEATH OF MINNEHAHA.

The surgeon's medicine helped the child and she passed a better night. Next day he came again. The elder sister had gone home after the surgeon's second visit. About eight o'clock that evening, as Tonda was sitting in the wigwam, embroidering with porcupine quills and bright beads a beautiful hunting shirt for her husband, her mother entered suddenly in great excitement. Strong Heart, sitting in the corner of the lodge, smoking his pipe and thinking over the events that had taken place during the past few days, did not notice her approach until she was within the lodge.

At the first sight of her he sprang to his feet, and with his usual hospitality, said, "Well, mother, welcome to our home; what news bring you?"

"Oh, my child," she cried dolefully, paying no attention to Strong Heart. "Bring your medicine and come quickly. Minnehaha is very sick. Something must be done for her at once or her spirit goes to the land of the great Waukantanka."

Tonda dropped her work instantly, and seizing her small medicine-chest, the three of them ran quickly to Two Bears' lodge. Their hasty passage through the village aroused comment and the word flew from one tipi to another that Minnehaha was very sick. People flocked thither and stood about in respectful silence. The scene in the lodge as they entered was portentous of death. In the corner sat a girl companion, at the bedside crouched her father, holding his little daughter's hand in his own,

and occasionally uttering a low but pitiful exclamation, "Oh my daughter, my little Bright Eyes!"

Tonda poured out a spoonful of the most powerful stimulant she possessed, and Two Bears, raising tenderly the head of the delirious child, opened her mouth and poured the draught down her throat. The medicine seemed to do the little one much good, for she looked around upon those about her, and as her mother and sister knelt down by her side, she whispered:

"Are you here, Tonda?"

"Yes, my dear, I am here to stay with you. Do not be afraid. I will not leave you."

"I am so hot," murmured the sufferer; "I am as if on fire. Give me some water, mother."

Omaha ran to the stream, and soon returned with a cup of cool, delicious water for the parched throat and feverish lips. The child lay upon her bed for some moments, nothing being heard meanwhile save her loud and labored breathing, and the sobs of both mother and daughter, who realized the hopelessness of her condition.

"Tonda," gasped the little one, "I am not going to get well. I am going away, far away."

Emotion overwhelmed the women and they could not speak. Strong Heart, the mighty in war, one able to die on the field while singing his defiance chant, gulped and went outside. Runner was there.

"I'd rather be shot than see this. I can't stand it," and he walked nervously up and down. The child was temporarily sustained by the draught.

"Tonda, give my dolls and book to Wana."

"Yes, sweetheart. Your little friend shall have them, and I shall read stories out of the book and make the girls good."



MINNEHAHA.

“Is our good God’s large house and the white man’s the same? You said good girls would go there.”

“Yes, dear.”

“Is there room?”

“Yes, Minnehaha. You will go there. God will take care of you. It is true. There are no bad spirits there. You will be happy forever.”

“Will the white man’s God receive in His house a little Sioux girl?”

“Yes, dear, the white man’s God and our great Waukantanka are one and the same great and good spirit. They watch our every action, they forgive the wrongs that we have done, if we are truly sorry. Believe in this great spirit, Minnehaha.”

Poor Omaha and Tonda found little consolation from their sorrow in the great tears that coursed down their cheeks. Even the stern father and inflexible Strong Heart felt the water springing to their eyes, in spite of their efforts to control their feelings, and they too wept.

They gave her more medicine. The draught partially restored her, and by the dim light of the fire she recognized her friends once more. She stretched out her hand feebly toward the loved ones, and beckoned to them to come close to her side. They gently came around to listen to the last few words she might have to utter, for all saw that there was now no hope of saving her.

“I am going, mother,” she whispered, “to the great Waukantanka, and you must not cry or weep when I am gone. I believe what the good book says, and know that there will be room for a little Indian girl in the great house of the good spirit. I am not afraid to die now. Good-bye all, I ——,” and the child tried to speak again. But the words refused to come, she gasped once or

twice, her hands twitched convulsively, and then her spirit sped away on its long journey to the house of Waukantanka. Then Omaha began the child's death song that her mother and grandmother had sung before her. There was absolute silence until she had finished it. Like statues sat the mourners; like motionless sentinels stood those without the lodge.

“ The child is gone and comes no more when I call.
 Her little feet enter noiselessly my home nevermore.
 Her sweet voice is hushed.
 She calls not to her playmates,
 Never will she run to me,
 With flowers in her hands.
 Never will she smile when birds sing in the trees.
 She was a good girl and helped me work.
 She was plaiting out of wild grass a mat for her father;
 Then sickness seized her and it is but half done.
 When we look upon it we think of Minnehaha.
 She has gone to the hereafter;
 She is in Waukantanka's fine house.
 I shall guard her grave and weep for her.”

Scores of friends came to the house of death. Women sat down and caressed the relatives, and cried. Men stood about sad and serious. For two days they mourned.

Then Minnehaha was prepared for burial. Fitting were the preparations—for she came of a good family, and the gifts must needs be of the finest materials. So they lavished their costliest robes and garments upon her. Through the village the cortege moved, young girls carrying the remains. After the family came her playmates, and among them little Wana weeping much, but bearing in her arms the two dolls.

Down to a cotton-wood grove, where were many scaffolds, for the Sioux at that time buried in open air, they went. The dog-soldiers had built a platform on poles ten feet

above the earth. When those who bore the body had reached the side of this, the young men carefully raised the body of the child upon it, and wrapped it in all the robes which the friends had presented. There Minnehaha was left until nature should have done her work.

After these last sad rites were performed, the friends returned to the camp. Tonda and Omaha alone remained to weep and wail near the body of the loved one, to bemoan her untimely death, and to pray to the Great Spirit to receive her unto Himself.

There, on the ground, near their dead, for several nights, sat the two mourners. The women came frequently and ministered to them, but the men did not come, for it was not customary. Speechless, and full of sorrow, they remained at home. Until the last night of the mourning, the women did not speak to each other, although Omaha frequently sang a long and improvised death chant. At last Omaha broke the silence.

"Death, my child, is like sitting out here in the night. It is cold and it is dark, but there is nothing to be afraid of. The wind rustles about the scaffold, and the spirit of Minnehaha whispers to us through the sound. She is comforted, for we are here. Only in the still night the spirit comes. Then it wants company, and it is made happy when it sees that we have not forgotten Minnehaha. I am glad to be near her. Are you, Tonda?"

"Yes, mother."

And, having thus spoken, they again sat motionless and silent, nor was the vigil broken until the sun had lifted himself over the hills, and flooded the Niobrara valley with his light.

* * * * *

And yet there are "civilized" white persons who confidently affirm that the Indians have neither religion nor affection!

XX.

TROUBLE IN THE NORTH.

The Sioux of the other reservation kept well informed and prepared — for trouble soon came. It is not necessary to go into detail other than to say that three miners were sent from the Black Hills camps to carry the mail to the Missouri river. Some Indian scouts found them, and ordered them off the reservation, whereupon they fired at the Indians, killing one and wounding another. Of course the Sioux retaliated, and killed two of the miners, but the third escaped, and returned to the camps. The miners held a meeting and appointed one of their number who had had experience in scouting to notify General Custer. He reached Custer's headquarters after days of alternate hiding and traveling, and gave the General a highly-colored and inaccurate account of the engagement.

“Just as I thought,” he commented, when the miner had ended. “These Sioux must be whipped. Do you know who killed them?” Now, the prospector did not know the individual names of the Indians, but he promptly replied: “The sub-chief, Dull Knife, who lives in Sitting Bull's village done it.” Custer questioned the man further, and having no reason to doubt his story, consulted his officers to ascertain if they could suggest better plans than the one he had in mind. They expressed different opinions, and Custer, as usual, made his own decision, and sent a hundred men north with orders to take Dull Knife, the sub-chief, and others. His brother was to establish headquarters nearer the agency, and when op-

portunity presented itself he would by some means get Rain-in-the-Face and a few of the braves to visit the store, and take them prisoners to be held as hostages.

These hundred troopers left the encampment before daylight, without the knowledge of the Indians, and traveled unmolested to Sitting Bull's village. They took Dull Knife and a number of other leading warriors prisoners in spite of their protests, brought them back to the agency, and imprisoned them under guard in the corral.

The squaws insisted upon accompanying their husbands. A total of forty persons were taken. Custer himself accompanied the men and intrusted to his brother, Lieutenant Tom Custer, the execution of the plan to capture Rain-in-the-Face. The Sioux did not miss the General for two days, and even then did not know where he had gone. Lieutenant Custer possessed a great deal of ability, both as a soldier and as a frontier detective, if one may use the term, as we shall see by the way he succeeded in taking Rain-in-the-Face.

The next morning Lieutenant Tom broke camp, moved to the agency, and placed his troops in a semi-circle around a small stream. Then he sought O'Donnell, and they were closeted in the agent's inner room.

"There is no use in talking," said Custer, "we have got to catch Rain-in-the-Face, and keep him from killing any more whites. Sitting Bull has a devil of a temper himself when once roused, but he is nowhere when compared with this fellow. I hear too, that Rain-in-the-Face has a young son, who is married to one of the prettiest girls in the whole Sioux nation."

"Yis. His son is Strong Heart, an' he is well named. I niver seen a braver mon — white or rid."

“What did he do to be called brave?” Billy told of the young man’s exploits, adding:

“Him an’ his squaw is foine Injuns. The Ogalalas set store by him. He is a straight Injun an’ has a pull with the young min an’ dog-soldiers. If youse git him on our side, all right; if he foights again us he will niver be taken alive.”

“Well,” said Custer, “he must be a deuce of a fellow. I should like to see him.”

“Youse seen him the day the two Injuns come out ter meet the Giniral with the flag. He done the talkin’. He is six foot tall, weighs two hundrid pounds an’ behaves himself. His squaw is agin me. She talked disrespectful loike one day an’ I called her down.”

“How would it do to have him come up here for a pow wow?”

“It would not do. He is sharp as the divil. He will tell youse ter your face what he thinks o’ youse. You better lave him alone for the prisint.” Custer thought a moment, then an idea struck him.

“Suppose you send word by an employee to Rain-in-the-Face, that you are writing a letter to Washington, and wish to know what he has to say about rations. Tell him that you want more meat and flour for his people, and that if he will come up and let you know how many rations he requires, you will specify in your letter accordingly. Tell him also that we will keep it a secret from the nation until the first shipment comes. That is, have a little sort of surprise arranged for them, you know.”

“Tiptop,” said the agent, slapping his companion on the back and offering another fragrant weed, which had he not been an Indian agent, he could not have afforded in this far-off portion of the country.

Having lighted their cigars, they arranged the details. All this time Rain-in-the-Face was lounging idly in his wigwam. Suddenly there dashed up to the door of the tipi one of the agent's employees and called him out.

"What do you want?" demanded the Indian.

"Chief," said he, "the agent is about to write a letter to Washington. You might get more rations. Come and see Billy."

"Aow," replied the chief, "I come at once. There is much our people need, our stomachs are never full, and if the agent is going to write the Great Father, I want him to put my words in the letter."

Rain-in-the-Face summoned several youths to accompany him, mounted his pony, and calling out to Wawa that he was going to the agency, started out with the employee at a brisk trot, and they were soon in front of the buildings.

Dismounting, Rain-in-the-Face drove a peg into the ground in a spot where there was considerable grass, and tied his pony. He then entered the store and took a seat upon an empty nail-keg.

Up to the present time there had been no indication of any intention to capture him, nothing to make him feel in the least suspicious. Several other Indians who had seen him start, leaped upon their ponies and followed him to the buildings, wondering what was to take place. None of them came armed save one, who had a hunting-knife stuck in his belt.

"How," said the chief, as the agent entered, and, rising grasped the white man's hand: then to the attendant, who acted as interpreter, he said, "You sent for me to talk about provisions for my people. We are much in need of many things. I am glad you are going to tell Washington that we should have more."

As the interpreter translated each sentence, Custer, who was in the back room with several soldiers, said to them, "Hear the old rascal talk. One would think he was a saint instead of a blood-thirsty murderer."

"Yis," replied the agent, wishing to keep up the deception a few minutes longer, "I was thinkin' about writin' a letter ter the Great Father ter ask him ter give youse many things which youse need. Now till me what kind o' grub youse is short of."

The chief, nodding toward the interpreter, said: "More flour, more meal, a keg every week for ten persons, more live beef, and some blankets —"

At this moment, the young men who had been without the door entered, and each said "How" to the agent. They were about to be seated, when young Custer and a dozen cavalymen, with sabres and pistols, rushed into the room, fearing, from the presence of more Indians, that the Sioux were coming in large numbers to hear the interview. As they entered Rain-in-the-Face dashed for the door, but a sergeant had him in a twinkling, and the interpreter called loudly — "Stand! Move not! You are prisoners."

They were astonished and awed for the moment. The chief glared upon one and another of the Whites. Billy had discreetly withdrawn out of sight when Custer entered.

Then the young Indians made a threatening movement, but they were unarmed, and, upon the cavalymen cocking their revolvers, they stood in silence, while Rain-in-the-Face was roughly seized, and his hands bound behind him. The soldiers at once hurried him to a small building two hundred yards distant, locked and guarded the door. In order to awe his attendants and prevent an attempt at rescue, Custer had had the cavalry assemble in the rear of the building, and, as the capture was made, they dashed out in

front in full force, with the bugles sounding. Custer addressed the young men through the interpreter, told them that the United States government would not permit the murder of her citizens, that their chief would probably be hung, and that they had better not attempt rescue. The natives mounted and rode home. But a friend had preceded them.

Rain-in-the-Face paced restlessly back and forth, looking about him, and taking in, in a few rapid glances, the walls and ceiling of his prison. There was but one small window in the room. He knew well that the news of his imprisonment would soon reach camp and alarm the village, and that it would be but a few moments before all should learn of his misfortune.

The ever-present Richards saw and divined the purport of Custer's action. He turned his horse toward the village, trotted for half a mile to allay suspicion, and then ran the beast at full speed. As he approached he set up a series of yells. Hearing these, every man, woman, and child, with a common impulse, rushed out from the tipis and crowded around the horseman.

"Listen," cried he: "Chief Rain-in-the-Face has been captured, and is held in a small room at the agency. Custer's brother has done this. To the council house, every one."

As the speaker finished he threw the lariat to a squaw, rushed toward the central square, followed by an excited crowd.

"Order! Order!" cried Gopher. "Be still and hear what our friend has to say." The Indians did not seem to realize what a disaster had fallen upon them, and it was not until Richards had made a lengthy speech that they took in the situation. At first the Indians seemed stunned. They did not know what to do. Sitting Bull

took his usual position and spoke energetically and to the point. This was his opportunity and he soon worked himself and his hearers into a passion.

“Long Yellow Hair has gone away. My dog-soldiers found this out. Where has he gone? Some of the soldiers are missing. I think that death is coming upon us. We have had talk enough, we have sat still here. Our hearts were good, Long Yellow Hair’s heart is bad. He fought us before, he is going to fight us now. It is time to act. I hear the war eagles cry; they say: ‘Make medicine, Sitting Bull, Make medicine, Wadaha. Make war medicine, for you have a long fight before you. If your hearts keep strong you can whip Long Yellow Hair. Fight, Fight, Fight!’”

Instantly pandemonium broke loose. Thunders of cheers shook the council house. Hundreds of women and children and warriors outside joined in. It was heard far off in the agency. Old Rain-in-the-Face heard and he also gave the piercing Sioux war cry. The guard pounded upon the door of his prison and cautioned him to be still, but he continued to whoop.

Red Cloud got up, and waved his arms for silence.

“I made peace. I cannot fight, but I can advise. I am head chief. We got to get Rain-in-the-Face out. We can do it. Sitting Bull speaks well. We got to fight. Long Yellow Hair has done nothing. I know him well. He will not break his word, his tongue is not double like Billy’s. But he will write Washington and the Great Father will wait and wait and wait! Now listen; let all the dog-soldiers, warriors, and every man who has a Winchester and a good horse prepare. Let their young squaws able to travel and work get ready. Let everything needed for two moons be packed and taken. Let the old men, old women, and children stay here. The Whites will not attack the village as long as I live here and stand

for peace. Let this body of twelve or fifteen hundred fighting men move to-morrow night. Custer will never move those yellow-metal hunters. He will keep us shut in. He will attack us, for he likes to fight.

“I am like the wolf; I escape, I have cunning. This is my plan. Breathe no word of it to the white man. All the dog-soldiers of the united tribes keep watch on the outskirts of the village. No man, no woman, and no child is to visit the agency. Let everybody keep silence if any white man comes here.

“Rain-in-the-Face is in a small building. There is no moon these nights. To-morrow let the wise young squaw Tonda go and see Long Yellow Hair’s brother. She knows how the Whites act. She can make his bitter heart sweet. He lets her visit Rain-in-the-Face. She tells him what we are to do. Late to-morrow night we release Rain-in-the-Face. As soon as it is dark and before we go to get him let all the village help the warriors and young women take down lodges, catch the horses, and make ready. Then when Rain-in-the-Face comes all of you move swiftly to the northwest.

“Long Yellow Hair is not here. His brother cannot take the soldiers and pursue us. Richards, is that true?”

“Yes,” said Richards. “The brother cannot move the soldiers without orders from the big chief.

“By the next morning you will be many miles from here. You go to the Big Horn country where we whipped Fetterman. That is good medicine for us. The Whites never whipped us in that country. Runner and some others of the best riders go to-night to the upper agency and tell the young men there to come to the Big Horn country and join us. Then we shall have three thousand men. Long Yellow Hair cannot attack us unless he gets more soldiers.”

“Aow,” was the unanimous shout of the assembled host.

“Brothers,” said Sitting Bull, “Chief Red Cloud was born in the winter-in-which-star-passed-by-with-loud-noise.* His body is covered with scars. He is a brave man. His head is filled with wisdom. His heart is good and sweet. My heart is good and sweet. I have long waited for this day. We are better armed and provisioned than we ever were before. We are going to be free men. You young men will have glad hearts. Hearts that beat quick as you capture the wagon trains. You will find in them fine blankets, much tobacco, beads, guns, red flannel, and everything you want for you and your squaws.

“It is well to send Tonda alone to the agency. The bad-hearted brother of Long Yellow Hair will speak soft words to her because she is a good-looking young woman. But she will outwit him even as the wolf steals the meat from under the head of the sleeping man.

“We must be careful. We should dance to-night, but Billy and California Joe would hear us. We must not dance. We must keep still and wait.”

“Dog-soldiers, out war song!” commanded Strong Heart. They sang it softly; but love of action glowed in every face —

“The War eagle screams on high,
He whets his forked beak,
Raise, raise the battle cry,
'Tis fame the young men seek.”

* 1822.

XXI.

TONDA RESCUES RAIN-IN-THE-FACE.

Scarcely had the noon meal been finished that day, when a young Indian woman, riding a spirited pony, was seen by the men around the agency to gallop up to the very front of the store, dismount, tie the animal to a post, and enter.

She was well dressed and seemed bent upon some important mission. Tom Custer did not know her and she pretended not to recognize him. Approaching him, she asked in very good English:

“Where can I find the brother of General Custer? I want to see him.”

“Right here,” replied Custer, looking up. He saw before him one of the prettiest girls he had ever beheld. He noticed her black and piercing eyes, her long, dark, wavy hair, and her strong but frank face. Taking in these points, as well as her shapely figure, at a glance, he put on one of his best smiles and said:

“Young woman, what do you wish?” Tonda looked about, then said in a low voice:

“Come outside, I have a matter of importance to speak of.” The Lieutenant and Tonda withdrew out of ear-shot of those inside.

“You have, sir, my husband’s father, Chief Rain-in-the-Face, shut up. I ask permission to talk with him this afternoon. Please do not refuse me. His people are very sorry at his capture, and will do all in their power to have him released. Two of our young men would even

offer themselves in the chief's stead, as hostages, if they would be accepted."

"Well," replied Custer, "it is against the rules to allow any one to see an Indian prisoner. There have been many escapes and rescues in past years through the thoughtlessness of officers in allowing some of the friends of a prisoner to visit him. If I were certain that you would not use this interview for any other purpose than that of condolence, I would grant your request, but I am afraid I shall have to refuse you."

"Do I look like one who would deceive you?"

"Well," replied Custer, "I must admit that you do look like an uncommon nice Sioux girl, but it would not be right for me to break the rules of the regiment. By the way, have you not been to an Eastern school? You do not look like the other Indian women."

"I have been educated, but am a Sioux woman for all that. I beg you to let me see my father for an hour."

"Can't do it." At this the young woman put on a most pitiful and woe-begone expression, and, looking up into his face with eyes full of tears, said, "If your father were in jail, the jailer would let you talk with him."

"Yes, but my father behaves himself and does not get in jail," and Custer's eyes twinkled.

"Don't jest with me," said Tonda; "it's a shame for you to refuse me this privilege. You are the brother of gallant Custer and yet won't let a poor Sioux girl see her father for fear she will let him out. Perhaps I had better go back to my people and tell them what you have told me."

"Well, suppose you did, what could they do?"

"They might come here and do a great deal." She was

easily excited, and Custer became amused as he observed her concern. He attached no importance to her words.

"Nothing would suit us better. Tell your people to remember the Wichita fight."

"We shall never forget it," she retorted with spirit. "Our young men are quiet. But it will need just about a dozen strong words from the wife of the principal dog-soldier to bring a thousand brave men about your buildings here. They will carry death and destruction among your men and release their chief." Custer laughed.

"I came here simply to ask to see my husband's father; you have refused me, and there is nothing but for me to return." The young woman, whose eyes had flashed, and whose bosom had heaved during this outburst, turned toward the door, and, with sorrowful countenance and heavy footsteps, was about to leave.

"Well, Sioux woman, you can see him. It is against the regulations, but you can't get him out — so we're safe," and Tom chuckled. "Follow me." Passing a line of tents he summoned two orderlies, who followed a short distance behind to see that nothing out of the way happened. There was not the slightest evidence in the young woman's countenance of the secret joy which filled her heart. Custer unlocked the heavy door, allowed her to enter quickly, then swung it shut, locked it, and returned to the building, where he spent the afternoon in speculating upon the interview, and in wondering what was the history of the beautiful girl whom he had met.

When Tonda entered, Rain-in-the-Face, who had been lying upon a miserable buffalo robe in the corner, sprang to his feet and rushed forward with a smile upon his broad face, and said in subdued tones — for he did not know who might be listening:

“ Oh, my child, how glad I am to see you ; I had thought my people had forgotten me.” They sat down on the robe, listened for a few moments, but heard no soldiers about.

“ Oh, Chief, I had great trouble in getting this interview, but at last Long Yellow Hair’s brother let me in ; so here I am. I have much to tell you,” and she related her story.

When she had finished he became furious, and uttered some terrible threats against the Whites who had, in spite of his great dignity as chief, imprisoned him like a common soldier. After the old man had calmed down, he asked :

“ What are you going to do after you get me out ? ”

“ The old men and women and those who do not care to fight, together with children, stay in the village. The rest flee to the Big Horn country, taking you. After dark the tipis will be taken down, horses caught, meat packed, blankets rolled up, and everything made ready for a quick journey. Sitting Bull and the rest can tell you all about it when you get with them.”

“ If I get out of this prison safely I will be a most bitter enemy of Long Yellow Hair’s brother, and some day I shall hope to meet him in battle and be revenged for all my insults.”

“ What will you do ? ” asked Tonda.

“ Never mind what I will do,” added Rain-in-the-Face significantly.

Tonda had finished her mission, and looking through a knot-hole called to the guard. He had been given the key, for at her words he produced it, unlocked the door, made her step out quickly, and then fastened it once more. Without noticing the men, who had stared at her, she mounted the pony and galloped across the plain toward the camp. As her pony bore her swiftly homeward with

easy motion, she could not help thinking how she had outwitted young Custer, and laughed loudly as she remembered the pitiful expression with which she had begged the interview.

Strong Heart was in the wigwam, and he accompanied her to Two Bears' lodge, where they found the medicine-man and the chiefs. Every one received the news with intense satisfaction. A rider made ready that evening, and as soon as the rescue was effected he started on his long journey, and presently informed their kinsfolk in the north of the successful termination of Tonda's efforts.

Tom Custer turned in about ten o'clock that night. However, his slumbers were soon rudely broken, for shortly after eleven o'clock an orderly pounded hard upon his door, and called out the startling news.

"What is it?" cried Custer, leaping up.

"Sir, the Injuns has tuck Rain-in-the-Face away. The sergeant asks for orders."

"Tell the watch to get the men up. I'll be there in a moment."

A group of three figures left the tipi of Strong Heart about ten o'clock that night, and, mounting their ponies, rode quietly across the plain in the direction of the agency.

They were all well-armed, Strong Heart himself having his Winchester, bowie-knife, and revolver. The medicine-man carried a rifle and a knife also, but no pistol. Tonda had a six-shooter, but no other weapon. In one hand she held firmly a small sack in which was a file, cold chisel, and hammer, with which they expected to force an entrance, in case planks could not be removed by other means.

They rode slowly across the plain for nearly one hour, until the buildings could be seen looming up in the dark-

ness. The night was quite dark. When they were within several hundred yards of their destination, the ponies were tied to bushes, so that they would be out of sight of any one who might happen to pass that way. Having made the horses fast, the trio went forward on foot, keeping very near the fringe of trees which lined the banks of a small stream that trickled past the agency, two hundred feet from the nearest buildings. Back of these, about two hundred yards, was the camp of the soldiers. As the three Indians cautiously made their way along the stream, they heard the cry of the sentry.

The door was strongly made of oak, hung with heavy hinges at top and bottom, and secured across the middle by an iron bar. It would be almost impossible to break it open without a crowbar. The window was too small to admit the passage of a body as large as that of the chief. So the party of rescue was at a loss to understand what was the best course to pursue, and they consulted for some time before they arrived at a definite plan of operation. Leaving the medicine-man and his squaw at the back of the house, Strong Heart went to the fringe of cottonwoods and cut a heavy stick about five feet in length and four inches in diameter.

Rain-in-the-Face heard the approach of his friends, and knowing that they would attempt his release, placed himself in one corner where there was a slight crevice between the boards, and whispered:

“Look out for the guards. They come here every little while. As soon as you see them approach you must run back to the timber. They came here some time ago, and you had better not do anything until they go away the next time.”

The medicine-man explained that Strong Heart had gone to the timber after a heavy stick, and that they

would make the attempt to pry off two of the wide boards in the rear — planks about fourteen inches wide, extending from the rafters to the sills. As soon as Strong Heart returned he was told about the visit of the guards, and the three withdrew out of range of possible discovery. Scarcely had they disappeared when two soldiers approached, walked around the building once, and then retired. The backs of these guards had barely been turned before the Indians ran quickly from their covert, and telling the chief to be ready to push with all his strength against the boards, they placed a large chunk of wood at the bottom of a plank that looked rather insecure. Strong Heart inserted his lever, bore down with all his might, and sprung the bottom of the board forward some four inches. As the end of his lever was bent to the ground in doing this, he could not move it out farther. Tonda slipped a stone into the space, and so left the stick free to be withdrawn. Moving his fulcrum higher up, he again inserted his lever, and aided by the chief, who was pushing with all his might from within, sprung the plank from its lower and middle fastenings. Tonda put in stones to hold it out, and a second board was sprung in like manner. Then the three friends seized the lower ends of each board and ripped them off. One they were able to keep from falling, but the other tumbled over with a loud clatter upon the ground. Rain-in-the-Face immediately leaped through the opening, and the four ran swiftly to their ponies. Scarcely had they mounted — and they had brought the chief's favorite war pony for him — when shots from the sentries reached their ears. The white men's camp was soon aroused. Custer was at a loss to know what to do.

“What do you think, Joe?”

“Wall, Lieutenant, I can't say fer sartin, but I think

that them Injuns has gone ter their village. If you send the scouts you e'n easy find out."

"What is your opinion, Captain Brown?"

"Well, Lieutenant, I would send the scouts ahead, and follow with a body of the troops. There is no telling what they are up to. Something important, for it is unusual for Plains Indians to travel at night."

"Boots and saddles!" The bugles blew, and the troopers ran to the long line of horses, selected their mounts, and prepared for action.

"Joe, take the scouts and go on ahead. Report to us at once."

It was perhaps a half an hour after the escape before the troopers, some two hundred strong, left camp and proceeded toward the village.

Craftily did Two Bears, Gopher, Runner, and a score of other responsible persons go about the village, telling every one, "No noise, now. Keep your mouths shut as soon as they come. We must have no fight in the village. You must not rejoice until after daylight tomorrow. Let every person stay in his lodge except those who are to run away." Richards, too, gave his advice:

"The scouts will come to find where Rain-in-the-Face is, but they won't know before morning how many Indians have left. Tell them you don't know where he is."

After the rescuers had been gone half an hour Gopher gave the command:

"The young men and the young squaws, with their travois, and all who wish to flee toward the Big Horn country, gather on the plain in the far end of the village, on the north side of the Niobrara." There they waited. Hearts beat rapidly, and ears were strained to hear the welcome sound—the return of the chief. Sitting Bull was there making medicine in the council house entirely

by himself. He would go with them, but Wadaha would remain. Tonda would remain. Two Bears was too old, but Strong Heart could not be restrained even by the pleadings of his wife. It was not long. They heard the hoof-beats on the dry prairie, and in a moment Rain-in-the-Face was with them. Strong Heart seized Tonda in his arms and bade her good-bye, even as the procession moved, for there was no delay.

On an uncertain mission went they into the far northwest. They hoped for peace and good hunting and happy days on the upper Missouri — their old hunting grounds. But no man could foretell, and certainly while Sitting Bull claimed his medicine augured success, many persons had a presentiment of trouble. The women cried very softly to themselves. Little children plucked at deer-skin dresses and asked in subdued whispers where father was going, and why he should depart in the night.

And so they moved silently and rapidly away, and the blackness of night swallowed them up.

XXII.

PRISONERS ARE KILLED.

Scouts reached the edge of the village. The dogs, heretofore silenced by the continuous hiss of the women — a peculiar and savage sound — now began to bark. California Joe's deep bass voice rang out:

“Where is Rain-in-the-Face? The commanding officer is coming to talk with him.”

Richards and Two Bears, divining that scouts would reach that end of the village first, were both there. Richards got inside of the lodge, and as he entered whispered to Two Bears:

“You do the talking.”

“I don't know where the chief is. The last time I saw him he was going to the agency. I heard that you shut him up.”

“You know very well he has escaped.”*

“Who are you to come down here in the middle of the night, asking to see our chief? Why don't you wait until daylight?”

“Where is Rain-in-the-Face?” persisted Joe.

“Go find him,” retorted Two Bears, and he got into the lodge. The other Indians were listening, but obeyed Gopher's orders to make no noise. Many of them chuckled and giggled.

The scouts rode back and reported to Custer. In a few moments the column reached the village. In the darkness they could do nothing, see nothing, and were

* California Joe, when speaking Sioux, spoke grammatically.

greatly handicapped. They must find out from the Indians where Rain-in-the-Face was, and capture him. They could not arrest the entire village.

"Who is head man here now?" demanded Custer.

"Rain-in-the-Face is head man," said Two Bears.

"Well, fetch him here."

"Very well," said Two Bears, "I will go to his lodge. He is in bed at this time of night. What does Long Yellow Hair's brother here? Can't you even let us poor Indians sleep?" As Joe interpreted this, the other officers were amused.

"Put out the trailers," suggested a young officer fresh from West Point. Custer laughed, and Joe was shaken by boisterous mirth.

"Little use of trying to trail, this night. There is no telling whether that red scoundrel came direct to the village or went somewhere else." The Whites did not dream that the entire fighting force of the village had moved. Richards came out. If he could delay the Whites, so much the better.

"Lieutenant," said he, "I kin show you where the chief lives, ef you wants to talk with him."

Richards walked in advance and the others followed, the troops picking their way with difficulty among the lodges. Now and then a horseman found himself almost against a tipi. Every doorway was full of heads of all ages and both sexes, peering out anxiously, and trying to see.

"Thar's Rain-in-the-Face's lodge," said Richards.

"Go in and see where he is, Joe," commanded Custer. Joe entered and struck a match.

"Get out of here!" cried Wawa. "If my husband was home he'd put a bullet through you."

"He isn't here, Lieutenant," said Joe. Custer carried

a dark-lantern, and turned its beams about among the lodges, and discovered many persons hiding here and there.

"Joe, ask them why they were up and dressed this time of night." There was a moment of silence.

"Brother of Long Yellow Hair," cried Wadaha, "can't we even dress or undress to suit ourselves? You come down here in the night and ask why we wear our clothes. Don't you s'pose we heard you coming?" The Indians laughed sarcastically, and Brown remarked:

"Custer, there's something brewing this night. It seems to me that the best thing we can do is to go back and wait for daylight."

"And lose an hour and a half, for it's ten miles trip from here to the agency and return. I am in no humor to be fooled. 'Captain Brown,' he ordered, 'take a detail of men, go back to camp, bring pack animals and supplies sufficient for three or four days'" (he consulted his watch). "It is now half-past one. I shall stay here with the troopers until daylight, and then follow the trail."

Half an hour before dawn Custer called an informal council. They were all agreed. The infantry was left to guard the agency. As soon as the General returned he would issue orders, in all probability, for the Seventh to follow and attack the fugitives, Tom Custer thought. Meanwhile, if the troops could provoke a fight without actually firing the first shot, so much the better. Daylight broke. Whenever Indians flee they are invariably designated "hostiles," whether they committed any crime or not, and so they were called by the Seventh. The people in the village were up and about. They could not conceal their satisfaction. Broad smiles greeted Custer's questions. Joe and the other scouts circled about on the plain, and soon found a broad, heavy trail. Joe returned.

"Great Scott, Lieutenant, half the village must ha' gone. The trail is as heavy as ef made by a thousand ponies and travois." Bugles blew, the troopers mounted, and set out on a lope. The guidons fluttered gaily, and the men were well pleased, for the famous old fighting Seventh was at last going into action. They soon passed out of sight.

Two Bears, Richards, and Gopher conferred. "They can't catch up," said Two Bears. "Rain-in-the-Face will ride the hardest. All of them will hurry until daylight."

"He is twenty-five miles from here now," said Richards. "He can make the rough country by the time the troops are up with him, which will be afternoon. If he puts the bucks in the rear and keeps in the cañons, the soldiers can't get him. They got two hundred and fifty men, and he has got a thousand."

Secrecy was no longer necessary. The aborigines were in a good humor. Dances sprang up as if by magic. Tonda went over to the agency to see what she could learn there. Billy kept out of sight, but Henry and Charlie in the store would not talk. Each of them wore a six-shooter. The stage driver and the boss herder and other employees were all present, heavily armed.

The infantry regiment was made up of recruits from the East. None of them had ever seen service in an Indian campaign. With Billy and his interpreter, their commanding officer made a careful reconnoiter of the village to ascertain if possible how many men had left.

That evening a scout came in from General Custer and reported that he had made camp ten miles distant and would be in with his prisoners next morning. Billy and two infantry officers rode back with the scout and gave Custer the news. General Custer was a man of instant action and he ordered his two fastest scouts to ride to a

point five or six miles northwest of the agency and await daylight and follow the trail as soon as possible. They bore to the Lieutenant orders instructing him to return at once with his command. Custer had been marching leisurely, but he allowed his command little rest this night. At daylight he continued toward the agency and by ten o'clock the prisoners were safe within the corral and under guard. He summoned Two Bears, Wadaha, Gopher, and other prominent men to a council. Some of the leading women were also present.

"Chiefs," said Custer, "now that Rain-in-the-Face is gone I hold you men responsible for the behavior of the hostiles. Red Cloud made peace some years ago I know, but his young men may break loose. I want you to send after your friends who have fled and bring them back. If they don't return inside of ten days I shall make war upon them because war is my business. The Great Father will tell me to kill all Indians I meet who are not on the reservation."

"Chief Long Yellow Hair," said Red Cloud, "this is none of my doing. Your race began it. We had killed nobody. You know the yellow-metal hunters are here on our land; that they fired upon us first; that we did not burn the agency. You have brought Dull Knife and his friends here and shut them up. You shut up Rain-in-the-Face but he got out; yet you say your heart is good and until to-day you said you meant us no harm. Do you think my young men are going to stay here and be abused? You know that I speak the truth." Two Bears got up.

"If you will let out our young men and release Dull Knife and his friends, I shall ride after my friends and have them come back."

"I shall do no such thing," retorted Custer. "I propose to hold on to enough of your fellows to insure

peace." Some moments of silence ensued. "Have the rest of you anything to say?" asked Custer. Tonda arose. Custer was somewhat surprised, as he had never seen a woman take part in council. She observed it and explained her action.

"General Custer, sometimes women have a right to speak. Long ago among the great fighters of your own land, the Iroquois, men could not go to war if the prominent women were against such action.

"I know the white man's ways now that I have been East three years. I can't keep silent. I think it is a shame that you have brought your soldiers here on the slightest provocation, have listened to the exaggerations of Billy, and have begun to harry and abuse my poor people."

Richards interpreted in a low voice to the other Indians, for she spoke in English, and Omaha and Wawa became very much excited. Custer was a quick-tempered man and instantly jumped up and seized the young woman by the arm, saying:

"I allow no one to talk to me in such a manner — man or woman, red or white. Get out!" and he pushed her to the door of the warehouse. Omaha screamed with rage as Custer thrust Tonda through the doorway and leaping up attempted to seize his throat but was restrained by both Two Bears and Wadaha, who anticipated trouble, and had arisen the moment Custer laid hands on Tonda. Tonda was very angry and turned red and pale as she left the building.

At this moment screams and cries from the corral startled the conference. Everybody rushed out. Richards and Billy and other Whites in the lead, the Indians following. Scarcely had they left the house when several rifle shots were heard and then more screams — the shrill cry of women, angry shouts of men. Soldiers and Indians

ran toward the corral. An orderly rushed out of the corral gate, saluted Custer, and presented the commanding officer's compliments. "There's trouble in the corral and the Indians attacked the guards," he said. Custer ran to the gate and met the Colonel.

"What's the matter?" said he.

"Rumor reached us that a rescue of Dull Knife and the others would be attempted. We thought best to put Dull Knife, Big Head, and Fat Bear in a room in the agency, keeping the women and children and unimportant warriors in the corral, but they evidently misunderstood our purpose and fought."

Custer was now inside the corral. Armed infantrymen were guarding groups of captives. As soon as the General entered the stockade, prisoners rushed up to talk with him for this particular band knew him well. He soon learned the story.* A sergeant and the guard had gone to the captives but could neither converse with them nor make intelligible signs. Dull Knife and his friends apprehended that they were to be put in prison and later hanged—a death particularly horrifying to all Indians. Naturally the braves resisted with all their strength.

"All the women and children, witnessing the encounter, surrounded the officer, who had joined the soldiers as soon as trouble seemed imminent, and while he and the sergeant and men were trying to make their exit with the three chiefs, a general fight had taken place. The chiefs quickly drew from the folds of their blankets the knives they had been allowed to eat with. These had been surreptitiously

* Dull Knife and the men and women of his tribe were taken captive in the Wichita fight. He and another were killed in the corral, as described, but the author has taken liberties with both geography and history in making the incident part of the Sioux campaign.

sharpened and polished, and they flashed right and left as the braves plunged to and fro in their struggles. The squaws, similarly armed, threw themselves with wild fury upon the guard. An old squaw singled out the officer in charge, sprang upon him, and plunged her knife down the back of his neck with unerring aim. One of the chiefs leaped upon the sergeant and stabbed and gashed him in so horrible a manner that his life was despaired of. The remainder of the guard came to the rescue, but not before one chief, Big Head, had fallen dead, and another, Dull Knife, was mortally wounded by a bayonet thrust through the body. The third, Fat Bear, was felled by the butt of a musket, but was uninjured. The outside guard, by firing in, had quelled the mutiny among the women.* While Custer talked the women ran about wringing their hands and angrily and revengefully menaced the guards. He visited Dull Knife and explained to him what the guards were trying to do. The dying chief listened composedly and spoke as calmly as if nothing had happened.

“I would like the Colonel also here.” An orderly summoned the Colonel. “Now,” he continued, “I want you to let Long Yellow Hair put an interpreter here. We be all dead men if we have to deal with the walking soldiers. They do not know us. Horse soldiers do. But for these fool walk-much men I should be well.” He was not bitter and expressed few regrets. There was no horrible death-bed scene — only civilized people are afraid to die.

The Colonel consented and a squaw-man was called and given authority to visit the captives and communicate their needs to the Colonel. Dull Knife's women mourned

* “Following the Guidon,” Mrs. Elizabeth Custer, p. 106.

and cut their arms and legs with knives. They crouched down and cried and moaned. They begged the Colonel, through the interpreter, to let them go down to Rain-in-the-Face's village and live.

"Can't do it," said Custer. "This killing is bad business. Very aggravating at this time."

Having quieted the excitement as far as possible, he returned to the agency. At the gate were Two Bears, Tonda, Red Cloud, and the rest, permission to enter having been refused them by the guards. Women inside shrieked the news to them and they were far from being in a good humor. When Custer came up, Red Cloud addressed him:

"Are you going to attack the village?"

"See here, Chief, I attack no good Indians. If you people behave you will not get in trouble. These Indians resisted and brought their fate upon their own heads. You go back to the village and permit no disturbance.-- Richards, quiet the people there and assure them that I sha'n't attack."

"General Custer," began Tonda.

"I haven't time to talk to you. You are disrespectful to authority."

"What a great man of your own race once said, I now say to you," she cried, following after him, angry, trembling, and excited: "Look upon your hands! They are stained with the blood of your red brothers."

The stage came about six o'clock that evening, two hours after the tragedy in the corral, and halted in front of the agency. Four gentlemen from the far East climbed out and heaved grateful sighs that their long journey was at an end. They were distinguished gentlemen, for whenever the newspapers referred to them, "Honorable" was placed before their names.

“How now?” whispered Charlie to O’Donnell as they came to Henry’s door. “Is it a peace commission or is they sent out by Congress?”

“Domned if Oi know,” said Billy, “but we’ll soon foind out. They is certainly one or the other, fer whether pace commission min or congressmin does not matter, they is fat, bald-headed, an’ well kept an’ comfortable lookin’ an’ these fellers has all thim signs.” It was even so, for when Billy introduced himself they informed him that they constituted a committee sent out by Congress to investigate the condition of the Sioux. Billy told Charlie to notify the others, and that night the Colonel, the General, and others paid their respects. Charlie also rode over and told Richards.

XXIII.

THE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE.

Of course the commissioners spent the evening and until midnight conferring with the agent and the officers. There was little sleep for anyone. When the commissioners retired, Billy, Charlie, and Henry held a long consultation, the upshot of which was suggested by Billy's final sentence:

“Youse fellows keep yer heads shut an' let me do the talkin'. Don't give information onless asked.”

The employees bustled about and got the commissioners as good a supper as the larder afforded. Immediately afterward the party gathered in the office. The officers came, and all told, a dozen or fifteen persons of authority were present. The Chairman explained his mission and added:

“The Secretary of the Interior and the President, and I may say a majority of the honorable gentlemen in Congress, think that these Indians are costing us too much. We don't believe in this policy of continually harrying them. Undue leniency is not to be thought of, but, on the other hand, the experience on the upper Missouri which resulted in Fetterman's defeat and the destruction of our forts and the withdrawal of troops cost the government several millions of dollars. The Laramie treaty with Red Cloud was a good thing. General Custer's battle of Wichita brought the hostiles to terms.

“Now, we come empowered to act. We shall make a complete investigation and report upon our return.” He

continued in the same strain for some time. The agent and Charlie explained the situation.

“Do you mean,” asked the Chairman of the General, “that Lieutenant Custer has pursued the hostiles and that you have notified him to return?”

“I have sent two of my best men after him and have ordered that he bring in his troops. I have notified Red Cloud, head chief, to observe peace in the village near here.”

“That is well, General,” replied the Chairman. “It seems to me that we should persuade the hostiles to return at the earliest possible moment. There is no telling what they will do on the trail. Every hour counts, and if word can be sent them to-night through their friends from the village that the peace commission is here, it may save bloodshed and money.” At this moment Charlie appeared, accompanied by Two Bears, Red Cloud, Gopher, Richards, and some young men. The Indians were introduced and shook hands. Richards observed the official interpreter carefully, ready to correct him if any errors were made. The Chairman told the chiefs to bring all their prominent people to the agency on the morrow.

“Can you send the soldiers away?” interrupted Red Cloud.

“We will first get in all of your people and talk over our differences. If those can be adjusted then we shall send the soldiers in the Black Hills and they will remove the miners. (Aow, aow!) Then we shall talk with you about your land, about changing the agency, about sending your children to school.”

“Good words,” said Red Cloud; “where there are two men who are friends they talk honestly to each other. You have made the hearts of the Indians glad by coming here, but when you come to attend to business you

should notify us in time so we can prepare something to say."

"How much time do you want? Can't you call a council to-morrow? It won't hurt you to stay up to-night and talk over these matters in your village. You don't need sleep. You can rest after we leave." Everybody laughed. Billy tactfully distributed tobacco among the Indians. An excited young man leaped on his pony and rode back to the village with the good news that the peace commission men were going to do much for the Sioux. There was a delay. The Indians were thinking. "We want to hear you Indians talk. We have come from Washington to have a friendly talk with you. We have not come to take your land nor anything that you have. We want to hear your complaints. To-morrow when we hold council no harm will come to any Indian for what he says."

"Aow, aow," grunted the natives.

"The first thing," said Commissioner Logan, "is to bring in the hostiles."

"They are not hostile," said Two Bears. "The white people began this." And he briefly related the circumstances.

"We will not quarrel," said Mr. Logan — who, by the way, was rather peppery and aggravated the natives — "Have you got two or three good riders who can start to-night? We will give the leader a paper signed by us all so that if they meet the soldiers or white men they can explain."

"Yes," said Red Cloud. "Most of our young men have gone, but I can find three." Turning to a young man he rapidly told him to find and start three persons whom he named. Red Cloud gave explicit instructions, and while he did this, Custer wrote a note explaining the

mission in case the Indians should be held up by his brother. The commissioners and Billy affixed their signatures to the document. The young men left the village about eleven o'clock that night.

Next morning those who had a right to sit in council left the village and went to the agency. Many women and children also followed out of curiosity. Everybody was in a good humor in spite of the killing in the corral. Had the captives been of this village, instead of northern Sioux, doubtless the entire band had been on its way before now to the northwest. Things looked brighter, and Tonda voiced the sentiment of every one when she said:

"Just think, mother, perhaps all our troubles will end and happy days come once more."

The commissioners, the Indians, and the officers talked all day and parted on good terms. The military usually resented interference by civilians, but whatever might be said against the commissioners, certainly they came clothed in authority, and whether the officers would or no, peace must be made. Billy issued some extra rations. During the next two days there was feasting and rejoicing.

* * * * *

Rain-in-the-Face, Sitting Bull, Strong Heart, and nearly a thousand warriors traveled as fast as they could the night they left the agency. Shortly after daylight they halted, rested the ponies, ate a hearty breakfast, and then pushed ahead:

"For," said Strong Heart, "we must reach the cañon before the soldiers overtake us."

Before noon they entered a wild and broken country. The women and children and a few men advanced. The warriors brought up the rear. Sitting Bull knew the region thoroughly and selected a long cañon which could

be followed with more or less irregularity twenty miles; through ten miles of broken country they must pass and then a second cañon afforded a retreat of a day's journey farther. Dog-soldiers acted as scouts, Runner being conspicuous through his tireless ascent of ledges and buttes in order that he might look around and view the surrounding country. His energy was rewarded, for about four o'clock when they were half way through he descried the approach of the cavalry.

"It's a good place for a fight," said Sitting Bull; "they can't flank us, and they have got to go fifteen miles around to head us." Word was passed up front and the Indians halted. The women concealed the horses and children as well as they could, the men flocked to the rear, painted, stripped, and prepared for action. The best shots took cover under boulders, behind logs or in crevices.

"Better have a talk first," cried Strong Heart

"No time to talk now," replied Sitting Bull.

"But," said Strong Heart, "we do not want a fight if we can help it."

"Are you afraid?" asked Sitting Bull scornfully

"Afraid," he retorted, "I have killed more men than you ever did, you boaster. I do not want our home village attacked, and if we fire first, Long Yellow Hair's brother will say that we attacked."

"Strong Heart is right," cried Rain-in-the-Face. "You men all obey me. We must talk first and fight later."

Strong Heart, Sitting Bull, Rain-in-the-Face and some others advanced down the cañon half a mile, a cloud of warriors followed within supporting distance, singing their battle songs or personal chants, thus nerving themselves for action.

California Joe and a fringe of scouts were in advance,

picking their way along carefully. They halted. Strong Heart raised a large white cloth on a stick.

"How," he cried.

"How," responded Joe.

"Where is Long Yellow Hair's brother?"

"He's comin'," replied Joe. "You'll git enuf uv him."

The troopers were trotting and Strong Heart saw that they would soon be within rifle range. His young men ranged themselves across the cañon, and to the advancing column it seemed as if innumerable heads popped above every boulder. Strong Heart put down his rifle and ran down to where California Joe was, but observing that none of the scouts put down their guns he turned and ran back to the Indians. Joe and several scouts covered him with their rifles, and as they did so a score of Indians in turn aimed at them. No shot was fired. The Lieutenant and Brown halted.

"Why are you after us?" shouted Strong Heart.

"Surrender Rain-in-the-Face, Sitting Bull, and yourself or we'll wipe out your outfit."

"Fair warning, old Long Yellow Hair's brother," cried Strong Heart. "Behold this yellow boulder in the cañon. If your men pass it we shall drive you back." And he retreated among his braves.

"Now Lieutenant," said Brown, "here's your chance. Give them old Garryowen."*

Custer hesitated. He suspected that there were several times as many Indians as he had troops. What would the General say if he lost men and did not succeed in returning the hostiles? The troops, waiting quietly, were ranged in two lines across the cañon.

"Joe."

*Always sounded as the Seventh Cavalry charged. It was General Custer's favorite air.

“Wall, Lieutenant.”

“Take some scouts and go up on the bluff where you can see the end of the cañon and report how many Indians there are.”

“Yes, Lieutenant.” The scouts climbed up on foot and made their way to a point of observation. The banks were too rough and precipitous for cavalry and the range from them into the valley was so great as to prevent accurate shooting. There was some delay, during which the Indians strengthened their position. Joe returned.

“Wall, Lieutenant, I can’t say fer sartin, but I think there are nigh on a thousand uv ’em, and they are well armed.”

“It seems a pity to come this far without a scrap,” remarked Custer. “If it is too hot for us, we can go back, report the conditions, and the General can easily overtake them with the entire command before they reach the Big Horn country.” Turning he called to the expectant troops:

“Attention, men! Bugler, Garryowen! Charge! Charge!”

Great spurs ploughed the big, strong cavalry horses’ sides. The old Irish tune which had sounded the knell of Black Kettle’s village and had been heard by the Cheyennes when they were whipped, rang forth and penetrated into remote recesses. A hundred troopers went in advance, then Custer and Brown and the scouts, and a hundred brought up the rear, but they did not go far in close formation. Multitudes of Indians sprang up with red and blue and white blankets which they waved, and screamed. Scores of Indians made careful shots. A dozen men and twenty horses were down in a few moments. Other steeds stampeded, and Custer queried that if the natives fought so determinedly at the beginning,

what would they do when he should have penetrated the cañon half a mile farther?

"Lieutenant," said Brown, "you know what General Sherman said?"

"Yes, and he was right too. If I should break up this company of the Seventh, George would never forgive me. Things look very squally. I've got to retreat. We can form again and attack later. I have got twenty men down already." A bugler was riding not far from Brown.

"Tell him to sound retreat," commanded Custer. He did so and the cavalry galloped quickly down the cañon, the Indians following on foot but unable to keep up. The horses returned willingly for they feared blankets and yells more than they did bullets. The under officers reported their losses: Eight or ten killed and fifteen wounded. A number of men were dismounted.

"How many Indians were killed, Joe?"

"They got more uv us than we got uv 'em. You see, Lieutenant, they shot frum rests an' we couldn't shoot or use the sabres ter any good 'cause we didn't go fer enuf up the cañon."

The younger officers respectfully protested to Custer against the retreat, maintaining that he should have continued the charge.

"Well, we can charge again. They are all there yet. The action has just begun."

"Lieutenant," said Joe, "don't do it, you have not got men enough an' the cañons is full uv 'em an' they is all fightin' mad." At this moment the troopers farther back shouted, and Custer, turning in his saddle, beheld two messengers riding sweat-lathered horses. They looked wistfully on their brother troopers, longed to fulfill their mission and join in the fray.

"The Commanding General presents his compliments

to the Lieutenant," said one tired trooper as he and his companion advanced and saluted. He presented two envelopes which Custer at once tore open, read, and handed to Captain Brown. One was official in which the Commanding General peremptorily ordered his Lieutenant to return without attacking the Indians; the other was a personal note in which the elder brother mildly censured the younger, explained to him that it was not yet time for actual hostilities.

"Well, Brown, here's a kettle of fish."

"Wall, Lieutenant," said Joe, "I've knowed your brother fer years an' you ain't goin' ter make no mistake obeyin' orders."

"I'd like to have a good slap at them," said Brown, wistfully looking up the cañon.

"You'll shorely hev a chance later," said Joe.

Orders were given and the troops retraced the trail. No Indians followed, and they reached the agency two days later. *En route* they passed the messengers sent to notify the Indians of the arrival of peace commissioners, and heard more news from them.

Rain-in-the-Face and his companions were divided as to what they should do. So they sat down and debated for several hours. Some were in favor of returning, others believed that they should place no reliance in the promises of the Whites but push on to the Big Horn country. The matter was finally compromised. Strong Heart was appointed sub-chief and told to take the entire outfit some forty or fifty miles farther northwest, where there was good hunting, and await news. He would place scouts on all sides, eight or ten miles distant from the village, to give warning of the approach of enemies. Sitting Bull, Rain-in-the-Face, and a dozen prominent warriors would return with the Indian messengers. They rode their best

horses and proceeded leisurely. When ten miles from the agency they halted and sent to ascertain if they would be well treated. The commissioners instructed the bearer of this message to advise them that they would not be detained, but permitted to come and go at will, so they came in, and received an ovation in their own village as they turned toward the agency. The approach to the agency was dramatic. When about a mile and a half distant they halted and came on slowly, thirty-two of them abreast — for such men of consequence as remained in the village had joined them. As they advanced they chanted in loud tones a song of victory. A large crowd followed in the wake of the horsemen. The officers and commissioners came out of the agency and stood on the porch. When within half a mile, Sitting Bull gave the word and the horses ran. Every man was superbly mounted and dressed in his full war costume. They dashed up in front of Billy's headquarters, and as the last notes of the song died away, leaped to the ground and crowded about the commissioners and shook hands. It was a warm day and the ground was dry. Mr. Logan proposed that the council be held out-doors, so they all sat in a circle, the commissioners in the center and the people grouped about, listening. All day they conferred, and, having settled their grievances for the present at least, an era of good feeling prevailed.

“Colonel,” said the Chairman, “it seems to me that under the circumstances you can release the prisoners from the corral and warehouse, if that meets with your approval.”

“Orderly,” said the Colonel, “give my compliments to the sergeant at the corral and tell him to release the prisoners and remove the guards.” The Chairman adjourned the council and the Indians ran to the corral gate and joyfully received their friends.

Strong Heart and his band were not forgotten. Runners sent to him carried the good news, and within a week all the "hostiles" were back and under Billy's watchful eye.

The commissioners sent and received many telegrams — chiefly from Washington. They explained the situation fully, enlarged upon the bad effects of the miners' presence, and recommended that these men be removed, for they were a thorn in the side of the Sioux. So Washington was pleased to order Custer to deport the miners. He set out at once upon his famous Black Hills march, and without firing a shot he caught some hundreds of prospectors and took them to the Missouri river, where he warned them not to return upon Sioux land. Thirty or forty miners hid themselves and escaped detection. During the General's campaign no Indian objected to his presence or attempted to stay his progress. Custer returned to Laramie; the infantry went to some other post. The commissioners visited western and northern agencies, promising to stop at Rain-in-the-Face's village as they returned to the East.

The Sioux got on peacefully for some weeks. Spring came and the prairie became a carpet of flowers. The ponies fattened up and buffalo began to work northward from the southern ranges.

The few miners left in the Black Hills were joined by more recruits. As soon as Custer departed many men returned, new ones came up the Missouri, hidden by obliging steamboatmen in out-of-the-way places on their craft, and soon there were more men in the camps than formerly. Western congressmen took up the "rights" of their constituents and an agitation was begun which only ended when the Sioux had ceded the Black Hills to the insatiable Whites.



RED CLOUD AND PROFESSOR MARSH.

It was ration day. Billy, encouraged by the turn of affairs, had begun to substitute goods again. In Omaha and Kansas City the rice, beans, etc., were changed. The first time there was some complaint, on the second occasion a committee of Indians visited him. He would have paid little attention to it but for the presence of one man, Professor Marsh of Yale. Marsh had spent one or two seasons fossil-hunting in the Bad Lands. He had met the Sioux and treated them well. Red Cloud gave orders that Marsh — the Big Bone Chief they called him — be not disturbed, for Marsh had made some inquiries regarding the food issued them and had listened to complaints and collected evidence. He promised Red Cloud that he would interest persons of influence East in behalf of the Sioux. Noting a white man among the Indians O'Donnell advanced.

"This hyar stranger is Pefesser Marsh," said Richards, introducing him to Billy. "He is the man what got those two wagon loads of bones up in the Bad Lands last fall, and the Sioux thinks a powerful sight of him."

"Glad ter know youse," said the agent, shaking hands — but he was not glad. "What c'n Oi do fer youse?"

"Oh, nothing special," replied the Professor. "I came to see my friend Red Cloud. He assured me of his peaceful intention, and we were photographed as we held the peace pipe in common.* I wish to look about the reservation somewhat. I just called to pay my respects. I have permission from the Secretary of the Interior to work in the fossil beds twenty or thirty miles from here, and may make this place headquarters," and the Professor handed O'Donnell his credentials.

* The illustration is reproduced from a photograph in the possession of Miss Fannie Brown, of Andover. The date is uncertain; negative lost. The writer knows of but one other photograph. Supposed date between 1871-5.

"Yis, yis, Oi see. If youse needs anything, come 'round."

"Now I have something to say," said Two Bears. "The rations you issued us this morning were very poor. The beans were wormy, the coffee did not taste like coffee, the flour was caked and the rice is—" here the Indian made a horrible grimace and placed his hand on his stomach.

"These Injuns," said Billy, turning to Marsh, "is always kickin'. The government spinds millions o' dollars on thim rid rascals. We druv out the miners from the Black Hills, we brought a pace commission at great ox-pense, an' still they kick."

"Well," said Marsh, "seems to me they have occasion to 'kick.' When I was at the other agency last year I examined their food and saw samples of what the white men gave them, and what you issued them, and I must confess that yours is the worst of all. Far be it from me to interfere in matters that do not concern me, but I should think that the appropriation was sufficient for the purchase of good food which, if carefully and honestly delivered, would prevent suffering." Billy flushed and his eyes began to snap.

"Where did youse see the grub Oi give 'em? You ain't been in my warehouse."

"No, but I visited the village and saw the packs opened as squaws brought them in. I believe that any commercial person who submitted such samples at Washington would be refused the contract."

"Perfesser," said Billy, shaking his fist in the scientist's face, "you dig up all the domned owld bones youse wants ter but you keep your head shut an' keep away from this agincy. Oi will have youse rayported for makin' the Injuns dissatisfied. We's hed trouble enough an' Washin'-

ton don't want no more. If youse comes around here kickin' Oi'll have youse sint off in the stage." Marsh abruptly turned on his heel and walked away. The others followed. It was inadvisable to have a scene with the agent. He went back to the village and made up samples of the kind of food Billy issued, together with data as to families from whom he received them. Statements from witnesses were procured and that night he wrote a long letter to the President. In a few days it was necessary for him to visit the railroad and bring in supplies, and he personally mailed these packages and communications rather than intrust them to the stage driver.

Professor Marsh's report got into the newspapers and created a scandal. It caused the Secretary of the Interior to resign and brought about the defeat of the "Indian ring." After the Yellowstone campaign had ended, the food issued the Sioux visibly improved in quality and quantity.

XXIV.

EXELBY'S SCHEME.

During all this time Le Moyne was living peacefully with the Crows. He had sold some of his ponies to the miners, for the Crows were nearer the Black Hills than were the Sioux. In fact he had used up the money, and it was necessary for him to dispose of the remainder of his herd. He visited Deadwood, learned of General Custer's actions and met Exelby and Billy the Kid, who, having failed to reach Texas, had come up the Missouri, determined to make a stake in the mining camps.

"Wall, Le Moyne," said Exelby as he shook hands, "whar did you come from?"

"Let's go in here and irrigate and I'll tell you all about it." They entered one of the saloons, drank and sat down and Le Moyne told his story, not omitting Richards' treachery. Exelby told of the defeat of the horse-thieves.

"See here," said Billy the Kid, "Custer ain't comin' up here again and we hears that them congressmen is kickin' an' in favor of openin' this country. They want to git the Sioux out. It seems to me that we ought to square ourselves fer losing them ponies, Campbell, Jack, and the rest of our men. We is glad to see you, Le Moyne, ain't we, Doc?" Exelby expressed his gratitude in oaths.

"There is two others of the gang here," he said. "Before the sodgers got down on me," he continued, "I was a scout, as you know. I knowed Custer and I'll bet that he hated to give up fightin' the Sioux. I kept posted, an' I know that the peace commissioners done squared everybody, but the next time that the Sioux breaks out, Custer is goin' to come an' lick Hell out of 'em. There won't be no more peace commission men until after the fightin'.

"Now, Le Moyne, ef you ain't afeered, the five of us will go with a pack outfit down pretty near the agency an' be seen by the Injuns. When we went with the ponies we was hampered, an' that's why they whipped us. But the Sioux can't git us once we're in the mountains. Ef we lay around and nail a few of them, a bunch of bucks will take the war-path to clean out the miners. The Injuns don't like the Black Hills, an' they won't come clear to Deadwood, but they'll kill all prospectors they kin find in the foothills. This will raise the devil an' troops will be sent out. Moreover, there ain't no danger for us ef we work it right. Go light an' don't try to run off the hosses." Le Moyne and the Kid nodded. Exelby pounded on the table, a waiter appeared, and he ordered more whiskey. "I want to git square for Campbell an' Jack, an' also want to make business good. Ef the country is opened there'll be stages carryin' gold away an' lots of tenderfeet with money comin' in."

"Suits me O. K.," said Le Moyne. "The ponies I got from them Sioux is about gone. I need money. Get your gang together and let's start out as soon as we can."

So it was agreed. For the next few days Le Moyne enjoyed a protracted spree, and when all the arrangements were perfected five as fine rogues as ever lived calmly rode out of camp with the deliberate purpose of bringing on war between the Whites and the Sioux. They traveled slowly, reached a point twelve or fifteen miles north of the agency and encamped in the Bad Lands. They scouted continually, and in two or three days were rewarded by finding four young Indians who had gone out to gather herbs for medicinal purposes. Two of these they killed and purposely permitted the other two to return to the village with the news. Then the outlaws withdrew, and by the time the war party caught up with

them they were well into the foothills. A running fight ensued; the outlaws abandoned the pack animals, lost one of their number, but succeeded in checking the Indians, killing two and wounding several. The Indians pursued within thirty or forty miles of Deadwood and there abandoned the chase. On their return, roaming about the foothills, they fell in with a party of eight miners and killed them all. Then swinging toward the east, they struck the freight road between the Missouri and Deadwood, held up two or three wagons, taking the horses, killing the men, and loading the extra animals with all sorts of plunder, and returned to the village. Runners were sent to the northern agencies, and a great war dance was held in Rain-in-the-Face's village. Charlie saddled his mustang and galloped over on a tour of inspection, found the Indians engaged in their war dance, and reported it to Billy.

Billy, Charlie, Henry, and the stage driver were in the agency office that evening.

"It's clar," said Billy, "from what the young bucks say, that it's Exelby an' the Kid an' Le Moyne who made this raid. O' course they had no business ter raid, but the Sioux has got ter be lieked. Oi see it comin'. Ef they ain't whipped by the sodgers an' the Black Hills ain't opened there'll be the devil ter pay anywhere. Now they're dancin' the war dance, which they ain't done for some years. Oi'm goin' ter wire Washington to-night," and he drafted the following message: "Sioux broke loose again, killed a dozen miners and teamsters and looted freight wagons."

"Now," said Billy, "we've had enuf o' this hyar foolishness. That Perfesser from the East has got ter be brought in too or the young Injuns will kill him."

"He's safe," said Charlie, "since Red Cloud give orders to leave him alone."

"No he ain't. Lots o' the Injuns don't know him, an' they'd as soon nail him as any other mon."

"Well," said Henry, "we got to sit tight. What do you think, Charlie?"

"I've knowed Injuns for a long time, and these fellers is achin' for a good fight. What they need is a lickin', as Billy says."

It was after supper in Tonda's home, where were her parents and also Strong Heart's. The men were very glum. Omaha sang to herself an old folk song. Strong Heart moodily gazed into the fire. Tonda came over to his side, put her arm around his neck and said:

"Don't go. We have had fighting enough. We can't whip the Whites."

"Why can't they ever let us alone?" asked Wawa. "I would like to live in the northland. The Great Mother's* Indians are well treated."

"Yes," said Two Bears. "It is a fine land. But the buffalo are fewer."

"What matter, there are other animals," commented Rain-in-the-Face.

"Aow," agreed Omaha. "The traders are honest. If we ever can go there let us do it. Then Washington may send word to come back, and if we do the Great Father will give us more."

"Well, if Washington did, who would believe?" demanded Strong Heart.

"Don't say that, husband. It is not Washington or the Great Father, but his men who cheat and lie. He is good, they are not. His great council is honest. There are good and bad Whites. You must not think all are evil."

"Huh!" exclaimed Omaha. "I wish they would send some of the good ones out here. I would like to see one of them."

* Queen Victoria.

“Mother, the Whites in the far East are mostly good. They build great buildings for sick people. They feed the poor and do all manner of noble actions. But the folks who do these things have money, and they do not need to come to this country; that is why we do not see them. Sometimes they go on the cars clear through to the Western ocean.”

“I wish they would come up here and give us some of their money,” said Wawa.

“They know nothing of us,” continued the girl. “As the cars pass through a very poor, barren section of land and the people look through glass windows and see Indians they ask—‘Why, how can any one live in such a God-forsaken country?’ and some rich, western cattle or mining man replies—‘Oh, this is an Indian reservation. We gave it to the Indians because we cannot use it ourselves.’” The friends laughed.

When the message reached Washington there was a consultation. The news was communicated to the Secretary of War, who conferred with the President and the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. Two or three days later the miners sent word to their friends in the East. Billy wired the Congressional Committee and they replied, “Hold the Indians in check if possible.” Be it said to the credit of the committee that they immediately left, driving all night to reach the railway. One day on the cars brought them to the station nearest to the agency. Again they traveled all night, and at daylight pulled up at O’Donnell’s quarters. Charlie summoned the chiefs.*

*All interviews between the Commission and the Indians are modeled after Senate Report 283, Investigation of August–September, 1883. Forty-eighth Congress. Portions of speeches literal; but generally liberties have been taken. Most of Sitting Bull’s speech is a literal translation.

They needed rest, and their eyes were heavy, for they had not slept the past two nights. Everybody felt the tension. Both commissioners and Indians apprehended that serious trouble was at hand. The Chairman spoke:

“We supposed that everything was amicably settled when we left here some weeks ago. Now we come back because of very bad news. You have broken your promises and taken the war-path. You have murdered citizens and stolen goods. General Custer is coming with an army. He will pursue you and make you behave. I want you to send out and bring in your young men who were raiding. I want those responsible surrendered to the agent in order that the Great Father may punish them.” Scowls and ominous looks greeted the speaker. None of the chiefs replied.

Mr. Logan: “Interpreter, ask these Indians why they do not answer us. Are they willing to surrender those young men who have murdered citizens?” Two Bears got up.

“There is a man named Exelby who is a horse-thief. He stole hundreds of ponies from us. We told Billy there”—pointing his finger—“and he said he told Washington. The Great Father did nothing. Exelby came again, stole six hundred ponies, shot ten of our young men and wounded a dozen others. We followed and recovered the horses and killed six of Exelby’s men.

“Everybody’s heart was good until five days ago Exelby and Billy the Kid came down and shot two of our young men. We followed them and they shot two more of us. They went into the Black Hills, and we, following, found miners. Long Yellow Hair said the miners were gone. There are more miners there than ever before. We were very mad and we killed a dozen miners and took goods because the miners are in our land and fought us. Now we are mad. (Aow, aow.)

“I have been a good Indian and Billy here knows I have. All of the treaties from the time when I was a boy down to the present time have been broken. There was a council held some time ago at which there were present six or seven white men and a good many Indians, and this is something I keep in remembrance of that council (holding up a silver medal which he carried suspended from his neck). This medal and I are paupers. The promises the government made to us have not been fulfilled. The white men are taking everything away from us, and I am now a very poor man.”

The Chairman whispered to Logan: “It seems to me that it is useless to continue the council.”

“No, no,” replied Logan; “keep it up and let us ascertain all we can.”

The Chairman: “Interpreter, ask Rain-in-the-Face if he has anything to say.”

“Two Bears speaks wisely. We don’t want to fight, but we’ve got to fight because then you white men respect us and give us more —”

Mr. Logan: “Interpreter, tell him that that is not true.”

Rain-in-the-Face: “It is true. Look at the digger Indians and the mission Indians who have never fought. They are hungry half the time. They were never free as we have been. Miners want our land.”

Chairman: “Will you sell the Black Hills to the Great Father? You don’t go in the Black Hills, and you don’t need the country.”

“We hunt in the foothills. Game winters there and comes out on the Plains in the spring. After this the Great Father ought to let us alone about our lands. I have been all over this reservation and it is a very small one, and the Great Father ought not to take any of it

from us. All the people here say it is of no use for the Great Father to try to buy any of our lands again. It is no use for him to bother us about it hereafter. All of the Indians love their land. We sold the Great Father some land before, and he promised to pay us for it, but he has not given us that pay yet. We have a great many children, and we want our land for them, and we are very uneasy about them. If other people take our land, what will our children do? They cannot go on the Great Father's land and take up land there. You are wise men, and it is no use for you to try to bother us."

Logan: "What do you mean by bothering you?"

"I mean continually asking us to sell land. We don't want the poles on which you have strung the lightning wire between here and the railroad."

Chairman: "Well, you can talk about that to somebody else after we are gone."

Logan: "If you will surrender to Billy the men who killed the miners and raid no more, I think that the Great Father will forgive you." The Indians growled. At this moment Tonda and her mother entered the council circle.

Chairman: "Ask Sitting Bull if he has anything to say to the committee."

Sitting Bull: "Of course I will speak to you. I thought it was only such men as you desire to speak who must say anything."

Chairman: "We supposed the Indians would select men to speak for them, but any man who desires to speak, we shall be glad to hear if he has anything to say."

Sitting Bull: "Do you not know who I am, that you speak as you do?"

Chairman: "I know that you are Sitting Bull, and if you have anything to say we shall be glad to hear you."

Sitting Bull: "Do you recognize me; do you know who I am?"

Chairman: "I know you are Sitting Bull."

Sitting Bull: "You say you know I am Sitting Bull, but do you know what position I hold?"

Chairman: "I do not know any difference between you and the other Indians at this agency."

Sitting Bull: "I am here by the will of the Great Spirit, and by his will I am a chief. My heart is red and sweet, and I know it is sweet, because whatever passes near me puts out its tongue to me; and yet you men have come here to talk with us, and you say you do not know who I am. I want to tell you that if the Great Spirit has chosen any one to be the chief of this country it is myself."

Chairman: "In whatever capacity you may be here to-day, if you desire to say anything to us we will listen to you; otherwise we will dismiss this council."

Sitting Bull: "Aow; that is all right. You have conducted yourselves like men who have been drinking whiskey, and I came here to give you some advice.* We will not surrender the young men. We will go up into the Black Hills and drive out the miners. We will all go on the war-path until the Great Father treats us as he should."

Logan: "Interpreter, I want to say something to that man (pointing to Sitting Bull), before he sits down, and I want you to tell these Indians to listen to all that I say to him.

"Sitting Bull, this committee came here on behalf of the government, with nothing in view except to ascertain the wants of the Indians, and to inquire into the provi-

* Literal translation.

sions of the treaty recently made, and whether or not it was satisfactory to the Indians. We invited the Indians to come here to-day for a friendly talk, and they appointed yourself and two others to talk with the committee. When you talked you accused the committee of being drunk, you insulted them; and I understand this is not the first time you have been guilty of an offense of a like kind to a committee of Congress. You said to this committee before insulting them that you were chief of all the people of this country, and that you were appointed chief by the Great Spirit. I want to say to you that you were not appointed by the Great Spirit, nor has any one else been. Appointments are not made in that way. I want to say further that you are not a great chief of this country; that you have no following, no power, no control, and no right to any control. You are on an Indian reservation merely at the sufferance of the government. You are fed by the government, clothed by the government, your children are educated by the government, and all you have and are to-day is because of the government. If it were not for the government you would be freezing and starving to-day in the mountains.**

The Indians heard this in sullen silence. All those Whites present who knew anything about Indians expected the commissioners would be attacked. Most of the Whites were armed. While the tension was at its height, Tonda got up.

"Gentlemen," said she. "I have been schooled in the East and I speak for the women, who are of more importance in the tribe than you imagine. When I came home a few months ago every one was of good heart and we had no trouble—" and she told the story of the horse-thieves and the miners; the commissioners seemed impressed:

* Literal.

“Now I want to say this, I have seen your country and know your ways. You are rich and powerful. We are weak and poor. But we have spirit, and if you can't give us the few things that we ask — and ask in all justice — there will be the biggest war that the Plains have ever seen. You will whip us in the end, but there will be more white men killed than Indians.”

Logan: “Young woman, enough! We did not come here to be lectured.” Strong Heart, who had controlled himself with difficulty, now stood before the white men.

“This woman is my wife and has a right to speak. You men were never nearer death than you are at this minute. She knows your ways better than I do and she can talk to you. You have got to sit here and listen whether you want to or not. There are plenty of young men without our circle, and you will see that they are all armed.”

Strong Heart called: “Give them the war-whoop, brothers,” and the circle rang with its roar. The Chairman pulled his beard and thought of far off Washington. Would that he and his friends were at dinner in Willard's rather than here!

“Gintlemin,” said Billy, to the commissioners, “this looks bad, but there ain't nothin' ter do but fer youse ter sit aisy an' hear the gal talk. Don't none o' you make a move.”

“Now,” continued Tonda, “when you men get back East I want you to tell those in authority what we have said. You say that you have treated us well and that we have no complaints. I deny that. Professor Marsh has sent samples of the food that Billy gives us East and he is a man of influence and Washington will believe him. We are harassed on every side and when we defend ourselves you bring in the soldiers.

“Up north of us two hundred miles is an imaginary line which separates Canada and the United States. There are thousands of Indians there and few white people. Why haven't the Indians killed all the whites? Why haven't they robbed the Hudson Bay Company and the Astor Company and all the traders' stores? They have had good opportunity to plunder, for Canada is weak compared with us. You know why,” said Tonda, coming over near enough to touch the commissioners, and shaking her fist at one and then at the other. “You know why! Because Canada was not overrun by the scum of the East. Because agents did not cheat or rob. Because emigrants did not shoot any Indian they met on the trail regardless of the tribe to which he belonged. And those Indians are peaceable and are contented. We are going to Canada to live with the northern Sioux. Yes,” and she cried shrilly as she stamped her foot, “you haven't got the soldiers to stop us either. We are glad that you came here so that we can tell you just what we think of you and your methods, as we may never have the chance again.”

Billy's fighting blood was up, he feared not, he enjoyed the scene. All the rest were apprehensive. Billy relieved the tension somewhat by saying:

“That's a foine roast. The trate is on us an' ef we was goin' East together Oi'd make the Chairman set thim up.”

Sitting Bull got up. “In council ten winters ago I said that if they had a man in Washington who told the truth to send him out here. Everything told us is a lie. When men go back East they tell lies to the Great Father about us.”

Mr. Logan: “You should not call everybody liars. It is not the proper thing to do.”

“Huh,” grunted Sitting Bull. “We have talked long

enough. We have told you what we thought. Strong Heart, call the young men. Strong Heart, is the Big Bone Chief safe?"

"He is," answered Strong Heart, "and he is within half a mile of the agency now."

"Aow," grunted Sitting Bull. "That leaves us free to act. Our hearts are strong. We are going to strike hard"—here one commissioner trembled and seemed visibly agitated. "Don't be afraid," said Sitting Bull sarcastically, "we won't hurt you white men because you were sent to talk with us. But after we get on the trail, all white men are enemies. Tell Washington what I, Sitting Bull, have to say. We will go—the whole village moves this afternoon. Long Yellow Hair will come after us and we want him to come, for we are ready to fight him. Strong Heart, are the young men ready?"

"Aow."

Sitting Bull: "As soon as I finish this speech we all go to the village." Everybody listened breathless. Sitting Bull straightened himself and took a red catlinite pipe out of a fold in his blanket. "This is a peace pipe. See." He held it high above his head, dashed it upon a stone and shattered it. "I break with you. Now you men are fat and, like most peace commission men are bald-headed. Go back to Washington and tell them all that I have said. All white men are liars and bald-headed men from Washington are the worst liars of all,"* and he sounded the war cry and leaped without the circle, followed by every Indian present.

* Literal translation.

NOTE.—During the later eighties, after much practice, Sitting Bull learned to make his autograph. He affixed this to photographs and sold them to travelers.



Sitting Bull

XXV.

CUSTER MAKES WAR.

To the village they rode, singing the war songs, shouting to each other vaunts of what they would do. Young men had preceded them and the word was passed from mouth to mouth that Sitting Bull and Rain-in-the-Face had broken with the Whites. A great throng greeted the riders. Rain-in-the-Face, and the other chiefs, Runner and Strong Heart, carried orders from lodge to lodge that everything must be taken down, the travois prepared and all the baggage packed, and old and young — in short everything — taken to the Big Horn country, where they would later fight with Long Yellow Hair, who they knew would soon be upon them.

Tonda was too angry and excited to regret. The white man's training was now subservient to the Indian in her nature: and so they packed up and moved away and camped ten miles northwest at dark that night. For four days more they traveled, shooting buffalo and elk now and then, surrounding herds of antelope, and laying up great stores of meat. Six days they had been gone when Custer arrived at the agency. Well knew he that young men had left both of the upper agencies. The women and children and old persons, however, remained, and it was only our village that was depopulated.

The commissioners had gone East. Their account of Sitting Bull's and Tonda's stinging denunciations was given publicity in the press. Washington determined to subdue the Sioux. Officers Reno, Terry, Gibbon, and Crook were sent with commands up the Missouri on steam-

boats, and by the 10th of June two or three thousand soldiers were in striking distance of the Sioux rendezvous. Custer delayed his march. He had not sufficient men to surround the hostiles, but with the co-operation of the other officers the General commanding the department of the Missouri hoped to reduce to submission Sitting Bull's band at one fell stroke.

They were encamped not many miles from the Crow reservation.

"Gin'r'l," said Joe, "You know that them Crows and the Sioux is enemies. Ef you kin git some Crow scouts it seems to me that we kin git on better as the Crows knows the hul upper Missouri country. They used ter live thar afore the Sioux run 'em out."

"All right, Joe. You take the scouts and visit the Crow agency and procure guides." The cavalry rested that day. In the evening Joe returned with half a dozen well-mounted Crows and a squaw-man.

"None of us talk Crow," said Joe, "but this hyar man does."

"What is your name?"

"Le Moyne is my name, General Custer."

"You speak Crow?"

"Yep, General, and Sioux also."

"That seems strange, since the two are enemies."

"Yep, General, but you see I used to live with them Sioux, but we fell out and I joined the Crows. These here young Crows are anxious to show you where Sitting Bull's outfit has gone. We have run acrost 'em in huntin' and know where they are."

"Where are they, Le Moyne?"

"They are in the Little Big Horn and the Big Horn country. I cannot tell nigher than ten miles, but that is clost enough for you and we kin easy scout and find out."

"Wait a minute, Le Moyne," said Custer. "Joe, come out here." They walked out of earshot. "Is he all right?" asked Custer.

"Wall, Gin'r'l, I can't say fer sartin, but the agent said he was a squaw-man an' rather shady. But ef hé knows the country, our scouts kin watch him an' see there is no monkey business." They returned to Le Moyne.

"You guide us faithfully," said Custer, "and I shall see that you are well paid. No tricks, understand, or you'll get a bullet through you. Tell these Crows that the commissary will give them a feed and they can stay with us. You take your orders from California Joe and direct your men accordingly."

"All right, General," said Le Moyne. The Indians were fed and put in a good humor. They did not know the strength of their enemies, else they had returned to the agency that night.

After supper Le Moyne came to Joe's tent. "How many men is there in this command?"

"Over three hundred," said Joe.

"Sure you got enough?"

"Yes," growled Joe; "they have all seen sarvice an' thar ain't Sioux enough ter lick 'em. Moreover, four steamboats full of cavalry an' infantry hev gone up the Missouri an' will march from the Yellowstone."

"Well, Joe," said Le Moyne, "I don't know for sure, but I think there are two thousand of them Sioux. A lot o' Cheyennes has joined 'em also. There surely will be fightin' when we get there."

"Wall," growled Joe. "s'pose they is. I've been with the old Seventh an' the Gin'r'l fer years. Give us a chance at them Sioux once. They can't lick us," and as he brought his fist down he added, "an' Hell can't lick us, nuther."

Custer, his brother, and the officers sat about a large bonfire that night, for a scout had brought in the mail, and everybody was happy.

“At last we can do what I have always commended should be done: utterly thrash Sitting Bull, Rain-in-the-Face, Crazy Horse, Spotted Tail, and their followers.”

“It suits me,” cried Captain Brown, who had been asked to report East, the first of July. “I must have a slap at ‘em before I go. I’d like to have old Red Cloud’s scalp to take East.”

“You can’t do that. He stays on the reservation,” said Tom; “but perhaps you can get Sitting Bull’s.” A scout rode up and announced the coming of Major Reno and his staff. Custer received them gladly, asking:

“What’s the news, Reno?”

“The dispatch boat hailed me this morning and gave me orders from the ranking officer of this department, telegraphed from his headquarters. I had been with six companies of the Seventh Cavalry and had been directed to reconnoiter the valley of Powder River as far as the forks, then to cross to Mizpah creek, to descend that stream to its mouth. I was provided with rations for ten days, which were carried on pack saddles.” Custer tore open the envelope and read his orders. As they were the last he ever received, we may be pardoned for presenting them.

“Colonel:—

“The Brigadier-General commanding directs that as soon as your regiment can be made ready for the march, you proceed up the Rosebud in pursuit of the Indians whose trail was discovered by Major Reno a few days since.

“It is, of course, impossible to give you any definite instructions in regard to this movement; and were it possible to do so, the department commander places too

much confidence in your zeal, energy and ability, to wish to impose upon you precise orders, which might hamper your action when nearly in contact with the enemy. He will, however, indicate to you his own views of what your action should be, and he desires that you should conform to them unless you shall see sufficient reason for departing from them. He then thinks that you should proceed up the Rosebud until you ascertain definitely the direction in which the trail, above spoken of, leads. Should it be found (as it appears almost certain that it will be found) to turn toward the Little Big Horn, he thinks that you should still proceed southward, perhaps as far as the headwaters of the Tongue, and then turn toward the Little Big Horn, feeling constantly, however, to your left, so as to preclude the possibility of escape of the Indians to the south or east by passing around your off flank." *

"What is your opinion, Colonel Gibbon," said Custer, turning to that officer.

"Well, Custer, since the matter is largely left in your hands we shall faithfully follow your orders. All this Yellowstone country is a hard proposition. There are many hiding places, but with the troops we have at our disposal we can surely surround the Sioux. I would suggest that I be permitted to feel their strength."

"Granted," said Custer. "Don't attack the main village and don't bring on a serious action. I have here Le Moyne, a renegade squaw-man who was with the Sioux but has joined the Crows. He has five or six Crow scouts. Take his outfit with you."

Gibbon departed and spent some ten days examining the country near the hostiles' camp. He was fired upon

* From U. S. War Dept. records.

several times, but lost few men, although he inflicted some injury upon the Indians. He returned to Custer and reported. Colonel Gibbon had more infantry than cavalry under his command.

“We’ll leave your infantry,” said Custer, “in charge of the two supply depots, and as our column will be more mobile if composed of cavalry, the pack animals can transport the baggage.”

“Well, sir, the cavalrymen may be more mobile but my infantry are seasoned troops and I believe that they are quite as well disciplined as yours.” Gibbon and Custer frequently argued — always in a friendly way — as to the respective merits of the two branches of the service, and while they were talking, a cavalry scout appeared bringing news from some of Reno’s outposts. Just as he reached Custer his horse stumbled and fell, throwing the cavalryman clear over his head and sprawling upon the ground. His body had no more touched the earth than he was on his feet and without a trace of emotion gravely saluted and presented the dispatch. Colonel Gibbon looked on in astonishment. The whole thing was so quickly and neatly done that there was no breach of military etiquette. Custer noting the surprise in his countenance said:

“My dear Colonel, I have trained my men to always report that way.”*

After a council had been held between Terry, Reno, Gibbon, and Custer, a plan of campaign was decided upon in its details, the infantry were left in charge of the supply depot, and the commands marched to give battle to the Sioux. As near as can be learned all of the officers thought the report of the camp greatly exaggerated. Custer’s troops were within three miles of the village when they

* Following the Guidon, E. A. Custer.

were first noticed. Reno's troops were a few miles below, fighting a detachment from the village, whose object was to lure the soldiers farther up the valley so that they might be ambushed. The whole Sioux camp was on the alert, ready for any emergency, nor were they in the least alarmed, so accustomed had they become to the white man's mode of warfare.

XXVI.

THE WAR DANCE.

They were safe in the valley of the Little Big Horn. It was a region rich in all kinds of four-footed game and the streams teemed with trout. The dissatisfied elements among the Cheyennes and not a few squaw-men heard of the village and flocked thither. Unscrupulous traders furnished the natives with large numbers of Winchesters and many boxes of cartridges. Everybody was happy. There was plenty of food. There were no restrictions, and there was sufficient excitement to keep every one on the *qui vive*.

"Now, my daughter," said Omaha, "think how nice it is to be here! No Billy to give us orders and no soldiers to trouble us. If they will only let us alone."

"Yes, mother, but Custer is coming."

"Well, let him come. Do you know, daughter, that I have lived long and in my day have seen much fighting, but I never saw so many young men as there are here. Why, this village is five miles long and there are three thousand warriors and five thousand women and children. Look about you. Everybody's heart is singing. We have new lodges and new robes, for the buffalo are thick. You don't seem to like it. Walk about and see your friends."

So Tonda went out into the warm June air, her moccasins crushing flowers at every step, for the ground was covered with them. Certainly the village presented a scene of gaiety and animation. Everybody was dressed in his best and in good humor. Councils they did not hold, for

they had come to this far-off Missouri country for action and not to talk. And as Tonda met her husband she walked with him past hundreds and hundreds of lodges and observed the same war-like preparation on all sides and noted the determination of every one to resist Custer's invasion. She became enthusiastic.

"What are you going to do?" she asked Runner. He was stripped for action and mounted on a war pony.

"Oh, the Whites have their scouts out and so have we. A dozen young men and I ride to the hills every little while and look for danger."

"Is Long Yellow Hair so near?"

"We don't know where he is, but expect him every day."

Sitting Bull and Wadaha were in a secluded glen near a fine spring. They remained there for two or three days fasting, praying, and giving themselves up to weird incantations. Naturally they had worked themselves into such a frenzy that they were enabled to see visions and dream dreams. The people knew that they were coming back to inaugurate a national scalp and war dance.

Some days previously the squaws had prepared a level strip of ground, three or four hundred feet in diameter, burned it off and beat it down perfectly level. It was the largest dance-ground any of them had seen. Here toward evening, the dog-soldiers and warriors were assembled and patiently awaited. Multitudes of people crowded about and those who could not see seated themselves upon the sides of the adjacent hills. Sitting Bull and Wadaha and the neophytes who were to assist came in from their retreat. They bore between them a great buffalo-skin filled with the "medicine," but so tied that no one could see what was inside of it. The people crowded back, and made a narrow passageway through which the medicine-men advanced. The dog-soldiers stood close together, forming a compact

circle. A few in the direct East stepped out, and through this gateway the procession entered, advanced to the center and erected a small framework, built a sacred fire, and each priest hung upon the rack his own sacred medicine sack. Silence reigned, and the scene was quite dramatic.

Sitting Bull got up, laid aside his medicine robe, and walked round and round the framework, while by the fire crouched Wadaha and the assistants. In his hand he carried a large eagle feather, and he waved it slowly back and forth in the faces of the dog-soldiers and captains.

“Wadaha and I have not tasted food for fifty hours. The Great Spirit came to us in a vision last night and he said, ‘Dance hard all night’—meaning to-night. ‘Long Yellow Hair and other men will come and it will be a hard fight.’

“I have made the medicine and the Great Spirit has said it is strong. Put it in your sacks and wear it about your necks; the bullets cannot hurt you, knives cannot cut you. Now I begin the dance and let every one take part and dance and sing.” The two shamans struck up a doleful tune, pitching it in a high minor key and repeating it over, and over, and over. For two or three hours this same plaintive air was continued by the musicians. The shamans having started it, devoted their attention to other matters.

To a listener, particularly a white man, the air is excessively monotonous, but if he watches the dance intently and hums to himself one or two hours, a something akin to hypnotic effect is produced. The drums kept time with the singers and the whole air seemed to throb with the drum and sway with the notes.

As the circle of dog-soldiers slowly revolved the medicine-man carried the buffalo robe over to one side. Each dog-soldier on passing threw down his medicine

sack. Wadaha arranged them in order, as they had been received. They spread a small blanket over the robe and an assistant held up one side while the others thrust their hands within and took out small quantities of the medicine. These particles of ingredients were stuffed in the medicine sacks and in one or two hours all were filled and returned to the owners. Each man on receiving his medicine tied it up without looking inside, as to look upon one's medicine destroys its potency. The dog-soldiers fell back and the ordinary warriors advanced. Sitting Bull had prepared a kettle full of paint and as each man paused before him and bared his breast, he dipped the sacred brush of eagle feathers and hastily daubed a certain mystic sign over the heart. Now the preparations were completed, and the men began to dance in earnest.

After an hour Sitting Bull and Wadaha left the fire. Soon they returned, bearing a great pole which they set up in the center. It was now quite dark and the squaws, anxious to do something, brought wood. They heaped it up just without the circle and every few moments warriors caught up sticks and cast them upon the central fire. It shed a bright and ruddy light and illumined the weird night scene. Every one rested, and Sitting Bull told Wadaha to talk.

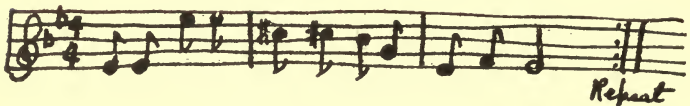
"See the pole," he cried. "At the top are tied scalps of Whites and Crows. They show what brave men we have been." Then they sat down and sang and prayed while the circle of dog-soldiers and yet a second circle revolved, ever moving toward the left. Behind them yet other lines of common warriors circled about and soon nearly every one was dancing and the thunder of the war-song could be heard two or three miles away. Faster and faster they began to dance, louder and wilder grew the cries. Sitting Bull and Wadaha worked themselves into an unnatural

state of mind. They groaned and cried, their faces became contorted, passionately they besought the gods, their voices were choked by anguish, and great beads of sweat rolled down their faces.

“Great God, hear us! Great war spirit, help us,” cried Sitting Bull.

About midnight, when they were becoming tired, Sitting Bull told Wadaha and the neophytes to stop the dance, that he was ready to make known to them his great medicine. It was some time before the assistants succeeded in quieting the people. More wood was heaped upon the fire; the floor was flooded with light. The dog-soldiers and prominent warriors formed a great circle and the central space, save for the fire and Sitting Bull, was cleared. The men were panting from their exertions. Sitting Bull came forward slowly, bending almost to the ground and straightening himself; deliberately he advanced. He carried something in his right hand and a medicine pouch made of beaver-skin in his left.

“I shall teach you a new song,” said he. “The war eagle, the great thunder bird, taught it to me last night. It is to be our war-song.” And he sang the following notes:



A more primitive, wild, strange air cannot be imagined. Then he sang loudly the same song; now he asked the people to sing it and told them the words they were to use. Then he told them to stop, and they obeyed. He got down on all-fours, and moved about slowly.

“Long Yellow Hair is advancing like this,” he said.

He continued creeping on his hands and feet until across the circle. "Now," he shouted as he leaped to his feet, and threw the beaver medicine sack back into the crowd, "this is the way we are to charge on Long Yellow Hair," and he gave the war cry, not very loud because he was weak and exhausted, but what it lacked in volume he made up in the hideousness and fiendishness of his facial expressions. Out of the medicine sack he had drawn a new scalping knife. Across the floor he ran brandishing this. The people gave a tremendous shout and drowned his cries. When they were still he said:

"Behold!" And raising his left hand above his head he held three white men's scalps. "These we took at the Fetterman fight. One is that of Fetterman himself! This knife will take more when Long Yellow Hair comes. Now give the Sioux war whoop," and the united roar penetrated far and near.

"Listen to the new war song," and he sang it again. "Now everybody sing it. It will make your hearts strong." The circle revolved again. They took up the new song, repeating it for hours.

Back of the dancers women, children, and old men formed circles and sang. There was a continuous volume of sound.

* * * * *

Ten miles away lay Custer's force well-guarded by sentinels, resting as only tired men can rest. They were near the village, they knew, and to-morrow they would attack — they slept peacefully and soundly, for it was their last sleep on earth.

* * * * *

In sharp contrast to Custer's quiet camp was this inferno of mad Indians. Nothing to compare with this savage dance has been seen before or since in America. Made

fanatical and desperate by their wrongs, the warriors needed no urging. On and on about the fire they whirled, beseeching the gods to help, crying to the spirits of dead relatives to assure them victory.

The scene baffled description — the red fire, the fringe of timber darkly outlined by fire flashes, the mass of beholders looking on and praying in their hearts for victory. Earth trembled as hundreds of feet beat furiously in unison upon the hard-packed ground. Not savages simply thirsting for blood — more than that. They were aborigines deadly, strenuously in earnest — praying and dancing even as their fathers and mothers had taught them to do.

As the night wore on the better known men became wearied and were replaced by fresher if less prominent warriors, and so there was no cessation. From pure exhaustion the priests and neophytes withdrew and went to bed. Daylight broke, and with one accord they began a last mad whirl. Then everybody went home, and until eleven o'clock there were no people about save some women and the guards. But before the men lay down they put their guns, cartridge-belts, and knives alongside the couches, confident that Custer could not render their medicine impotent.

XXVII.

THE DEATH OF CUSTER.*

The spot selected by the Sioux for their village was admirably adapted for defense, and also to serve as ambuscade, or as a cover for retreat in case of defeat. It was flanked by large ravines, had almost impenetrable underbrush bordering on each of these gullies and was naturally a wild and romantic spot, unequaled perhaps by any country outside of Yellowstone park. It was so isolated, that white men, having never visited it, knew naught of its appearance, and were ignorant of the topography of the surrounding country.

Sometime before noon several squaws were out some distance from the camp for the purpose of gathering wild turnips, a favorite food with the Indians. Seeing a heavy cloud of dust moving toward them in the distance, they ran quickly back to camp with the intelligence that horsemen must be coming. They said that as buffalo always travel in the valleys so as to cross the large streams at right angles, it was not possible that this cloud could arise from a herd of those animals. Runner was mounted and riding his horse slowly through camp ready for action in case anything should happen. He saw the women coming, heard them crying the news, and rushed over.

“What is it?”

“Soldiers are coming.” He brought his quirt down

* Compiled from interviews with the Sioux, at Pine Ridge agency, November-December, 1890.

hard upon his war pony's flank and raced the animal across the hills. Yes, it was true. Under the shelter of a friendly ravine, he approached near them and plainly saw Long Yellow Hair and the cavalry. They were three or four miles from the village and had stopped to rest. Some of the scouts were in advance and Runner recognized California Joe and — could he believe his eyes? Yes, there was Le Moyne. He estimated the troops at three hundred, noted some Crow scouts, and then turning, ran up the gully, mounted his horse and rushed back to the village. Those in the tipis and about the fires became excited as a saddleless pony, with a bit of rawhide about its lower jaw for a bridle, dashed in and out among the lodges for five long miles.

“Long Yellow Hair is coming and the Crows are guiding him.” And when Runner saw any of his own band he added: “Le Moyne is with them and so is Long Yellow Hair's brother.”

The hornet's nest was stirred, the warriors broke forth. There was no delay in seizing ponies, for they were near at hand.

“Tell everybody,” cried Rain-in-the-Face; “take Le Moyne and Long Yellow Hair's brother alive if possible.” War-whoops echoed and echoed throughout the valley and never ceased until late that night. The women cried and moaned. Tonda, overcome by emotion, attempted to restrain Strong Heart, but he, as leader of the dog-soldiers, must show no weakness.

“Don't talk to me,” he said, “I can't stop. I won't be hurt. Don't you worry. Help the other women move to safety.” Richards ran up.

“Tonda, I'll help you. I ain't a goin' ter fight against the Whites, but I kin help move.”

“That’s right,” cried her husband. “You see that they get away. We don’t ask you to fight.”

Richards was greatly relieved. He did not wish California Joe to find him in arms against his own people. Richards superintended while the squaws took charge of the children, old men, and cripples, and retreated into the high hills a mile or two away, taking the greater part of the stock with them, where they were to remain until the result of the battle should be known. Warriors did not pause except to equip themselves and mount, for it had all been talked over before. Rain-in-the-Face issued the orders and took command of the right: Gall and Spotted Tail were to advance to the front, and the brave Cheyennes, although few in number, were such desperate fighters that they were given the center.

Just at this moment Chief Crazy Horse and a number of warriors dashed into camp, saying that they had forced Reno to throw up an intrenchment upon one of the bluffs, and that leaving the men surrounded by most of the warriors, so that he could not escape, they returned to the village for further orders from Rain-in-the-Face. Word was sent back by a messenger for the warriors to keep Reno shut up until Custer had been whipped. This they could easily do, for there were hundreds of armed men everywhere. Crazy Horse and his men, together with four or five hundred others, were placed in the bushes some distance below the center of the village. Riders were galloping incessantly from the upper end of the village bringing the news. Custer halted, rested his men, and then cautiously advanced. As they came in sight, Sitting Bull and Wadaha went to the opposite side of the river from Custer’s position and beat upon the sacred drum, sang and shouted until the battle was half over. Strenuously did they shout; they threw their whole souls into the

action. Above the song-prayers rang sounds of strife, but Sitting Bull's cry never wavered. His favorite verses were:

"Make my medicine sure, O good God. Let my charms turn the bullets.

"O evil God, make Long Yellow Hair's horses stumble.

"Make them to rear and plunge when my youths wave blankets."

And that weird song, pitched in a high minor key, was heard by many a young man. It nerved him to action. He believed in the power of Sitting Bull's charms, and fearlessly charged the soldiers. Truly it was Sitting Bull's medicine that defeated Custer.

The cavalry advanced in good order. They saw the ponies and travois and the long train of women and children passing over the western hills. The upper end of the village was almost deserted, and the tipis were far apart; so Custer formed company front, the buglers blew Garryowen, and on came the fated Seventh. California Joe rode up alongside.

"They is sartinly runnin', Gin'r'l. The bucks is gatherin' somewhar, but the ole Seventh will shorely lick Hell out of 'em."

"And I get old Sitting Bull's scalp, sure," chuckled Brown. A Crow scout had raced his pony ahead. Presently he came tearing back and shouted to his comrades. They fell back in the rear.

"Them Crows ain't got no belly fer fightin'," commented Joe.

"They must have seen Sioux," said Tom.

"Wall, they can't git away now. They got ter stay by us."

Now a few warriors began to shoot from ravines and lodges. The fighting was still desultory, but as the troops

advanced they encountered thickly clustered lodges and somewhat broken ground, many of the horses became unmanageable at the sight of meat, buffalo carcasses and untanned skins, which strewed the ground in places, emitting a strong odor.

On flew the cavalry, passing deserted lodges, until that portion of the village was reached best prepared by the Indians for the ambushade. The horses here, in order to avoid the lodges, swerved to the right or left, and thus the column became more or less broken. Half-naked men leaped out of tipis, screeched and waved blankets. This, together with the sight of so much meat, caused the steeds to rear and plunge, and confusion ensued.

"Hold the horses," roared Custer.

"Steady, boys," yelled Brown, and Tom and other officers endeavored to pacify men and animals. Just as the blanket waving began, as if by common impulse, the war-whoop in all its stunning din pealed from hundreds of lips.

Half the fighting men in the Sioux nation were there, and they rushed upon the field, pouring out of the ravines, gullies, thickets, and brush heaps. Custer saw his fatal mistake. Spurring his horse forward he rode alongside of the buglers and issued orders to his officers to notify his men to keep in squads, and under no circumstance to separate. He did not know positively as to Reno's location, but sent three of his most trusty scouts down the stream to find that officer. They were not out of sight before Custer, with his own eyes, saw them fall. He sent three more, watched them anxiously, saw one man go down and then a second, and because of a depression he could not see the third, but presently a riderless horse galloped over the distant hill and Custer knew that it was impossible to procure help.

"Let me try, Gin'r'l," said Joe. "I believe all the Injuns in Ameriky is here. Ef we kin cut through, I kin outrun 'em." The buglers blew and the troopers rushed to the hills, made an opening and California Joe, spurring his great bay, dashed through the line. But there were Indians even back in the hills and California Joe never reached Reno.

Custer should have remained in the broken country, but instead he charged down the valley, skirting the base of the hills and forded the river, hoping to escape on the other side. Multitudes of Indians crossed after him. Soldiers were dropping every few minutes. The Crows' hearts sank within them and they fled the field but were seen, pursued, and overtaken. Le Moyne's face blanched as he heard exultant shouts, "Le Moyne, we've got you now!" Desperately he lashed his pony, but his horse stumbled and threw him, and before he could recover eager hands seized him and tied him. That night he was killed.

"My God, this is awful," said Brown. "We got to get out of it." Custer said little, but on his face was an anxious, worried look. The troopers fought magnificently, but for every Indian that went down, a dozen seemed to leap up in his place. Tom's face was white, but with Sergeant O'Brien beside him he rode here and there, a six-shooter in each hand. They could not save themselves. There had been more fighting than riding. Custer saw that he still had a hundred men. Again the bugles sounded and the Seventh raced down the stream for half a mile.

"General," said Tom, "ford the river and intrench."

Custer glanced across the stream. The ground looked favorable, and the troopers swung to the left and crossed. But the Sioux sweeping down on either side of the stream



THE DEATH OF CUSTER.

soon surrounded them. The buglers blew. "Halt! Dismount!" Now the famous fighting Seventh was battling not to win a victory but to preserve itself. Furiously they fought, crouching behind dead horses, using revolvers and carbines, calling encouragingly to each other. The lines of naked, screaming warriors advanced and retreated. About the bluffs they circled like flocks of birds, now swooping down to the attack, now retreating, hanging low against the sides of the ponies away from the foe.

Strong Heart was a demon that day, and he bore a charmed life. "Long Yellow Hair, your time has come," he shouted in English as he dashed up. Custer shot quickly, but the Indian was ready, and as Custer raised the pistol, with one foot inside a rope purposely tied loosely about the animal's body and his left hand firmly grasping the mane, Strong Heart threw himself down and the protecting side of his war pony saved him.

"Kill that fellow," cried Tom. "He's the worst of all." They shot at the daring warrior, but he dodged and lay along the body of his pony. He seemed to know when to drop, rather by intuition than by sight.

"Damn him!" exclaimed Custer. "He's a leader." He was indeed, for when he charged, the bravest dog-soldiers also came. There was a moment's lull in the fight. The Indians fell back and bunched as if by common impulse and rushed straight up to the troops. There never was such a fight between Indians and Whites on the American Continent. It was not a massacre as the public erroneously has called it.

"Here they come," cried Tom, and the cavalymen shot so fast that a bluish-white cloud of smoke settled upon them. Up swept Strong Heart, Rain-in-the-Face, and innumerable others. Then a new war cry rang out and Custer looked at his officers when he heard it, for

every Indian who could speak English was shouting: "Remember the Wichita! Remember the Wichita!" They shot Strong Heart's pony, but he was remounted in an instant. Down went Tom, shot by Rain-in-the-Face, for the chief had sworn to kill him. A squad of men remained here and there. The buglers were no more. Through a little opening Sergeant O'Brien, bleeding, forced his way to Custer. He led a horse, and while his comrades rallied and emptied carbines, he cried:

"General, for God's sake, mount quick!" Custer did so and they all turned to flee, but escape was not for them. A hurricane of warriors and a tempest of cries pursued them. Down went the horse, pinning Custer's left leg to the ground. A bullet tore through his cheek as he propped himself up with his left arm and shot carefully five times. His fifth shot killed a dog-soldier, but even as he fired it, a wounded Indian crawling along shot him with a pistol, and General George Custer fell back among the dead. And now a sea of warriors poured over the hills and down to death went the last of them — all that was left of the Seventh Cavalry.

The Sioux did not scalp Custer. He had cut off his hair just before the campaign and wore uniform instead of a buckskin suit. Neither was Brown scalped. Around these two bodies they stuck eagle feathers, denoting that brave men had died, and thereby they paid to them a tribute. Other white men they did scalp, and Rain-in-the-Face with his own hand scalped Lieutenant Tom — for had not Tom shut him up in the guard-house?

A day later when reinforced columns were following the Sioux, Captain Benteen and the troops visited the scene of Custer's defeat and buried the bodies. When the troops reached the field, as if by common impulse they stopped and every man stood at attention with un-

covered head. Right here, within sight of the dance-ground, where the weird war song had been sung by hundreds of voices, a quite different melody floated out upon the evening air. Captain Benteen glanced about him and said quietly and solemnly: "Buglers, sound taps;" and the three musicians sounded this sweet and sad requiem for the dead.

XXVIII.

CONCLUSION.

A year passed, during which the hostiles were split up in bands and driven from place to place by the United States forces. Sometimes they whipped, but more often the troops vanquished them, and in the end all were returned to the agencies and compelled to make peace.

Sitting Bull and his band, fifty of the dog-soldiers, Strong Heart and Tonda went to Canada. They lived there in peace and contentment for some years, when a commission was sent to Canada to induce the irreconcilables to return to the United States. Just why the Washington authorities wanted them back no man may know.

The Sioux did not even hold a council, when the committee came, but met at the British headquarters informally. There was no bitterness; they simply talked "straight from the heart," as Tonda said. She and her husband were present, and Strong Heart, Jr., a fine boy born in the winter of '76, was also there, reposing in a profusely beaded cradle, and gazing with wondering eyes upon the great, bearded white men.

General Terry stated his mission, concluding with:

"The President invites you to come to the boundary of his and your country, and there give up your arms and ammunition, and thence go to the agencies to which he will assign you, and there give up your horses, excepting those which are required for peace purposes. Your arms will then be sold, and with all the money obtained for them cows will be bought and sent to you." *

* Century of Dishonor; Mrs. Jackson.



STRONG HEART, JR.

Sitting Bull spoke:

"For sixty-four years you have kept my people and treated us bad. It is the people on your side that have started us to do these depredations. We could not go anywhere else and so we took refuge in this country. I would like to know why you came here. You have got ears and you have got eyes; you see that I live peacefully with these people in my Great Mother's house (shakes hands with the British officers). I wish you to go back."

Then Omaha had her say. "I was long in your country. I wanted to raise children there, but you did not give me time. I came to this country to have peace." (shakes hands with British officers).

The Indians were about to leave the room when the commissioners inquired:

"Shall we say to the President that you refuse the offers that he has made to you?"

Strong Heart arose:

"Since we shook hands with your soldiers sixty-four years ago we have had nothing but trouble. My band of Ogalalas you have moved eight times in twenty years. My squaw and I were glad to take your road, but since you have killed so many of us we will stay here with these good men of the Great Mother."

In the official report, with a naive lack of comprehension of the true situation of the case the commissioners say, "We are convinced that Sitting Bull and the bands under him will not seek to return to this country at present."*

Tonda and Strong Heart lived for years among the Canadians. Happy years were these. But evil days fell upon them after Sitting Bull was persuaded to return to the United States.

* Century of Dishonor.

Red Cloud's words to the writer in 1890 were prophetic: "They (the Whites) have it all — four great States we used to own. And some day they will take even the little that remains — our reservation. I want to sleep with my fathers, for there is nothing for me here." And even as these lines are written the Rosebud reservation is being divided up among settlers, and land agents are clamoring for Congress to give them Pine Ridge and Standing Rock.

EPILOGUE.

Years later Mr. O'Donnell sat in his gaudy parlor overlooking the boulevard in St. Louis. Charlie and Henry, also prosperous, had run in from Kansas City, and were calling upon him.

"Here's the paper," said his buxom wife as she passed through the room. "It has something about your old Indian friends in it."

O'Donnell read:

"The Pine Ridge Sioux are starving."

"Well, boys," quoth he, when Mrs. O'Donnell had withdrawn, "'spose them Injuns is starvin'? We is now livin' aisy an' comfortable-loike, on the money we made off 'em. Let 'em go ter the divil an' take keer o' thimsilves. What the Hell do we care?"

APPENDIX.

In a work of this nature an appendix seems out of place. It may be named — as Mark Twain called a preface — “that part of a book which nobody reads.”

However, a few persons may wish to see what Reno was doing during Custer's defeat. The author, therefore, presents a portion of his official military report, made at the time.

Why Major Reno did not support General Custer in the charge or try to rescue him in his retreat, are questions which Indian logic cannot answer. He certainly heard the firing from his position and the yells of the exultant savages. The author is inclined to believe with the Sioux, that Reno was much safer intrenched upon the bluffs than in the valley attempting a rescue of his fellow-officer. The Sioux claim that they could have killed many more soldiers. If he had gone down he might have saved Custer. On the other hand, he too might have lost his entire command.

(Extract from a report by Major Reno, to Captain E. W. Smith.)

“The command moved down the creek toward the Little Big Horn valley, and Custer with five companies on the left bank, myself with three companies farther to the left and out of sight. As we approached a deserted village in which was standing one tipi, about 11 A. M., Custer motioned me to cross to him, which I did, and moved near to his column until about 12:30 P. M., when Lieutenant Cook came to me and said the village was only two miles above and running away: to move forward at as

rapid a gait as prudent and to charge forward, and that the whole outfit would support me. I think those were his exact words. I at once took a fast trot and moved down about two miles, when I came to a ford in the river. I crossed immediately, and halted about ten minutes or less to gather the battalion, sent word to Custer that I had everything in front of me, and that they were strong. I deployed, and with the Ree scouts charged down the valley on my left, driving the Indians with great ease for about two and one-half miles. I, however, soon saw that I was being drawn into a trap, as they would certainly fight harder, and especially as we were nearing their village, which was still standing; besides, I could not see Custer or any other support, and at the same time the very earth seemed to grow Indians, and they were running toward me in swarms and from all directions. I saw I must defend myself and give up the attack mounted. This I did. Taking possession of the front of woods, and which furnished near its edge a shelter for the horses, we dismounted and fought on foot, making headway through the woods. I soon found myself in the near vicinity of the village, saw that I was fighting odds of at least five to one, and that my only hope was to get out of the woods, where I soon would have been surrounded, and gain high ground. I accomplished this by mounting and charging the Indians between me and the bluffs on the north side of the river. In this charge, First Lieutenant Donald McIntosh, Second Lieutenant Ben H. Hodgeson, and acting Assistant Surgeon J. M. DeWolf were killed.

“Succeeding in reaching the top of the bluff with the loss of three officers and twenty-nine enlisted men killed and seven men wounded, I had the men dig rifle pits, barricade with dead horses and mules, and boxes of hard bread the opening of the depression toward the Indians


(in which the animals were herded), and made ready for what I saw would be a terrific assault the next day.

“All night the men were busy, and the Indians holding a scalp dance underneath us in the bottom and in our hearing. On the morning of the 26th I felt confident that I could hold my own, and was ready as far as I could be, when at daylight, about 2:30 A. M., I heard the crack of two rifles. This was a signal for beginning a fire that I never saw equaled. Every rifle was handled by an expert and skilled marksman, and at a range that exceeded our carbines, and it was simply impossible to show any part of the body but it was struck. We could see, as the day brightened, countless hordes of them pouring up the valley from the village and scampering over the high points of the place designated them by their chiefs, and which entirely surrounded our position. They had sufficient numbers to completely encircle us, and the men were struck from opposite sides of the lines. I think we were fighting all of the Sioux Nation, and also all the desperadoes, renegades, and squaw-men between the Arkansas and east of the Rocky Mountains. They must have numbered at least twenty-five hundred warriors.

“The fire did not slacken until about 9:30, and then we found they were making the last desperate effort, which was directed against the lines held by Companies H and M. In this charge they came close enough to us to use their bows and arrows, and one man lying dead within our lines was touched with one of the coup-sticks. When I say the stick was only twelve or fifteen feet long, some idea of the determined and desperate fighting of these people may be understood. This charge of theirs was gallantly repulsed by the men on that line, led by Colonel Benteen. They also came close enough to send their arrows into the line held by Companies D and K, but

were driven away by the light charge of the line, which I accompanied. We now had many wounded, and the question of water was vital, as from 6 P. M., of the previous evening, until now, 10 A. M., about sixteen hours, we had been without it. A skirmish line was formed under Colonel Benteen, to protect the descent of volunteers down the hill in front of his position to reach the water. We succeeded in filling some canteens, although many men were hit in doing so. The fury of the attack was now over, and to our astonishment the Indians were seen going toward the village. But two solutions occurred to us for this movement: that they were going for something to eat, more ammunition, or that Custer was coming. We took advantage of this lull to fill our vessels with water, and soon had our camp kettles full. They continued to withdraw and all firing ceased, save occasional shots from sharpshooters, sent to annoy us about the water. About 2 P. M. the grass in the bottom was set on fire and followed up by the Indians, who encouraged its burning, and it was evident to me it was done for a purpose, and which purpose I discovered later on to be the creation of clouds of smoke, behind which they were packing and preparing to move forward. It was between 6 and 7 P. M. that the village came out from behind the dense clouds of smoke and dust. We had a good view as they filed away in the direction of the Big Horn Mountains, moving in perfect military order. The length of the column was fully equal to that of a large division of the cavalry corps of the Army of the Potomac such as I have seen in its march.

“We now thought of Custer (of whom nothing had been seen, and nothing heard since the firing in his direction about 6 P. M., on the evening of the 25th), and we concluded that the Indians had got between him and us



and driven him toward the boat at the mouth of the Little Big Horn river. The awful fate that did befall him never occurred to us within the limits of possibility."

* * * * *

Respectfully submitted,

MAJ. M. A. RENO.

Seventh Cavalry.

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