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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK CAPTAIN CAREY; OR, FIGHTING THE INDIANS AT PINE RIDGE ***

CAPTAIN CAREY



""Great heavens!" cried Kit, 'it is the noble Wallace!'" (See page [87](#))

Captain Carey **OR** **Fighting the Indians at Pine Ridge**

BY
LIEUT. LOUNSBERRY

Author of "Won at West Point"

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CAPTAIN CAREY.

CHAPTER I.

UNDER ORDERS.

[Pg 3]

"Well, Carey, my gallant aide-de-camp and friend, I am to lose you, it seems; but then what is my loss is your gain, as you have been promoted to a first lieutenancy, and ordered to report at once to General Miles for special duty," said Colonel Crandall, commandant of an advanced military post upon the border of the Indian country, and he held in his hands an official paper just received by courier.

The one whom he addressed had just entered his quarters, having been sent for to report immediately to the commandant, and, at the words of his superior, his face lighted up with enthusiasm, and he said, warmly:

"All that I am, Colonel Crandall, I owe to you, for it was you that sent me, a border boy, to West Point, and gave me the opportunity of becoming what I am more proud of than anything else in life, that of being an officer in the Army of the United States. My advancement has been through you alone, sir, and though I leave you with regret, I am glad to go into the field once more, for I wish to win another bar, sir, upon my shoulder-strap."

"And you will, mark my words, Carey, for there is to be trouble with the Indians, as you predicted, for General Brooke writes me that your full report to him has been thus far proven correct, and that is why you are needed now, on account of your perfect knowledge of the country and the Indian character. But let me say to you that you place too much stress upon what I did for you in the past, for you had it in you to make yourself all that you have done, as otherwise you would never have gotten through West Point, and if I had my way to-day I would make you a captain. But you are to go at once, and bear dispatches as well, and your traps shall follow by wagon-train later."

[Pg 4]

"I will be ready, Colonel Crandall, within half an hour," was the prompt reply.

"No, not so soon as that, Lieutenant Carey, for I have a mission for you to perform, which I must ask you to undertake."

"Certainly, sir."

"It is to become the escort of Captain Foshay's daughter, who is most anxious to return to her home and be with her mother, now that her father is to go into service. She declared she would go with the courier alone, but then I could not hear to that, of course, but if you will be bored with her for a ride of fifty miles, I will be glad to place her in your charge, as the girl is determined to go, and, preparing, as I am, to send General Brooke all the men I can, I cannot spare one as an escort to her."

"I shall undertake the mission with pleasure, for Miss Foshay is a superb rider, fearless, and can use a weapon if need be, while if we have to run for it, I believe she would be no tax upon me whatever."

"You really think then the Indians may be hovering about the trails already?" anxiously asked Colonel Crandall.

[Pg 5]

"I had just returned from a scout, sir, and was coming to report to you when I got your order to come at once to you. I made a complete circuit, Colonel Crandall, and there are signs that the redskins are taking positions along the trails, and mean mischief."

"Then it will be dangerous for Miss Emma to go?"

"Hardly as much now, sir, and untrammelled, as it would be several days later with a wagon-train."

"You are right, Carey, and I feel that she will be safe with you, for I know all that you are. I will see her at once, and arrange for you to start within a couple of hours."

"I will be ready, sir. As I shall need my two horses, I will let Miss Foshay ride one, and you know their speed, sir."

"Yes, no Indian can catch you, that is certain. Now go and prepare for your journey, and let me tell you again how much I dislike to part with you. I owe my life to you, Carey, and you are well aware how much my niece, Kate, owes to your pluck, for you saved her from the Indians, from that traitor guide, and afterwards from a fate hardly less cruel, from being forced into a marriage with that scoundrel Nevil, whom, I am happy to say, you drove out of the service. No, Kit Carey, I can never forget you, and all that you have done for me and mine, and God bless you, my noble young friend, will be my constant prayer," and the voice of the brave old officer quivered as he uttered the words and turned away to go in search of Miss Foshay, and explain to her that she could go under the escort of the young hero, Lieutenant Kit Carey, to join her father, and from thence to her home, for while on a visit to him, Captain Foshay had been unexpectedly ordered to the front.

[Pg 6]

Kit Carey was, as he had said, a border boy, for he had been reared upon the plains by an old hermit hunter, who had skilled him in every kind of frontier craft.

He had saved Colonel Crandall, a party of soldiers, and the colonel's niece, who had been led into a trap by a renegade guide, and this act had gotten for him a cadetship at West Point.

He had fought his way through against every obstacle, and been ordered to the command of Colonel Crandall, as the latter's aide-de-camp, and at once had he rendered gallant services, which had made him famous as an Indian fighter.

Years had passed, and he had faithfully rendered services to the Government, until he had won promotion, and on account of his splendid record had at once been ordered to the front to perform special service.

A dashing soldier, fearless to recklessness, handsome as an Adonis, and a hero, it was no wonder that Kit Carey was popular with his brother officers and the soldiers as well, and it was predicted that if there was another Indian war he would win still higher promotion, in spite of his youth.

Such was Lieutenant Kit Carey, a gallant soldier of the Seventh Cavalry, who was again to face death in its worse forms in fighting the treacherous Sioux, who knew him well and feared him, yet respected him as well, for never had he broken faith with them in war or peace.

CHAPTER II.

THE PREMONITION.

[Pg 7]

In just two hours after receiving his orders to go to the front, Lieutenant Carey rode up to the colonel's quarters and dismounted, and an orderly led behind him a horse equipped with a lady's saddle, while groups of soldiers stood about and shook their heads ominously at thought of the daring venture to be made by the young officer and his fair charge.

Lieutenant Kit Carey was splendidly mounted, and ready for the field, when he presented himself before Colonel Crandall, for he had on his sword, a revolver in his belt, and a pair of Colt's, of heavy caliber, in his saddle holsters.

A blanket rolled behind his saddle, a pair of leather pockets attached to his saddle, and an army overcoat, made up his equipment, for he was going "light," as the soldiers say.

There was a revolver in the holster attached to the lady's saddle, a pair of leather pockets, a closely-rolled *serape*, and no more, for Miss Foshay's and the lieutenant's baggage was to follow by wagon-train a few days later, when a force was to go from Colonel Crandall's post to reinforce General Brooke in the field.

"I am ready, Lieutenant Carey, and must thank you for being willing to submit to my company on your long ride," said Emma Foshay, a beautiful girl of eighteen, with a face that revealed a noble nature.

Her form showed its graceful proportions well in her close-fitting riding habit, trimmed with brass buttons and gold lace, and upon her head she wore a slouch hat with a broad brim, looped up with a pair of miniature gold sabers.

[Pg 8]

"I am happy, indeed, Miss Foshay, to have such pleasant company upon the long, and, permit me to say, rough ride. But I deem it my duty to tell you that it may be one of great peril, and that the ride may be an all night one."

"I thank you for the warning, Lieutenant Carey; but I have weighed the situation well, and I am ready to put up with all the hardships you may have to undergo, while the danger but adds a charm to the ride. Candidly, though, my mother is a great invalid, and I only stole a few weeks' respite to come here and visit papa, who had to obey orders, and if my mamma should not have

me near her, knowing the situation, I feel for the result, so I am determined to go, visit father for an hour in camp, and then hasten on to the station to take the train for home. Now you understand my position, Lieutenant Carey."

"Perfectly, and am wholly at your service as an escort," and turning to his commander, Kit Carey continued:

"I report for orders, sir."

"Go with all dispatch to General Brooke, are General Miles' orders, Lieutenant Carey, to enter upon some special service he has in view for you. Here are dispatches for the commandant, giving all views from my standpoint of the situation, and you can explain the positions of the Indians. That is all, Carey, except I beg you to take care of yourself and this sweet girl, whom, I candidly say, I would not trust to any but yourself. Good-by, and Heaven bless you both."

[Pg 9]

Farewells were said, and leading Emma Foshay to her horse, Kit Carey raised her to her saddle as easily as he would a child, for he was a man of phenomenal strength.

Leaping into his own saddle, without aid of the stirrup, he raised his hat as farewells were waved, and then came ringing cheers from the soldiers, as an officer called out:

"Three cheers, men, for Lieutenant Kit Carey of the gallant Seventh!"

At a canter the officer and the young girl rode away from the post, and anxious eyes watched them until they disappeared far away across the prairie, while old soldiers shook their sage heads in a way that was a foreboding of evil to come.

If Kit Carey felt any anxiety he did not show it, for his face was as sunny-hued as ever, and for himself he held no fear whatever, but for his fair companion.

Emma Foshay had won many hearts while on the short visit to the post, and yet, if she had a preference herself for any one officer, she was one to keep the secret hidden in her own heart.

There were some who said that Kit Carey was her favorite, and that she had taken up her cross in life when she heard one day that he was engaged to a fair young girl in New York, one who had been his companion in boyhood, and whose meeting had been a strange romance.

But if Emma Foshay felt that life had lost its charm through a love unrequited, she did not show to others the aching heart she bore.

Without following a trail, Kit Carey led the way across country, and seemed only anxious to reach the beaten track to the agency before night should fall.

[Pg 10]

After a ride of a couple of hours a halt was made upon the banks of a stream, and the two ate a cold supper, though a good one, and enjoyed it, while the horses were staked out for rest and food.

The sun was just an hour from the western horizon, when they resumed their way, Kit Carey having been off a short distance examining what he called "signs," and he muttered to himself:

"I don't half like them."

But as cheerily as before he raised his charge to her saddle, and said:

"Let us push on for the trail at a gallop, Miss Foshay."

"You have made some discoveries, Lieutenant Carey, which you do not wish to tell me?"

"No, I'll tell you frankly, that I believe we will run upon some band of redskins, but with what treatment at their hands I cannot tell. Be ready to ride like the wind, or halt and wheel for a race, Miss Foshay, for we had better run for it than trust to an Indian's humor just now."

"You are captain, sir, so give your orders to run, or fight and I obey," was the plucky response of the young girl.

Kit Carey smiled and remarked:

"I like your pluck, Miss Foshay, so will frankly tell you that if aught should happen to me, ride straight east until you strike the broad trail to the agency. Then wheel to the left and your horse will carry you in all right, never fear."

"But what could happen to you, Lieutenant Carey?"

"Well, should the Indians jump us, and crowd too close, I will halt to hold them at bay, and you must ride on—see! Here are the dispatches, and as a bearer of military dispatches, you must push on and obey orders."

[Pg 11]

"But you speak as though you had a premonition of evil," said Emma Foshay, as Kit Carey placed in her saddle pocket the dispatches.

"You can reach camp, Miss Foshay, and to have you do so I must hold the redskins in check, and come in later."

"And you expect me to desert you, sir?"

"It will not be a desertion, for you obey orders. Ah! it is as I feared," and just then dashed over the top of a distant rise half a hundred mounted redskins.

CHAPTER III.

THE SACRIFICE.

[Pg 12]

The young officer had not been mistaken in his premonition of danger. He had read the "signs" aright, and was sure that the band of Indians now coming toward them, were haunting the trails to cut off communication with Colonel Crandall's post, or reinforcements going from there toward the agency.

A few settlers' homes had been burned, several wagon-trains attacked, cattle run off and horses stolen, with here and there a fatal shot fired, yet there had been no open warfare yet.

Still Kit Carey knew that a chance to strike their pale-face foes was all that the Sioux needed, and he was well aware that they would do so now, if they supposed it to their interest to prevent a communication that might tell against them from reaching the military commander then pressing troops to the field with all dispatch to put them down.

With her army jacket and her hat, at a distance Emma Foshay would be taken for an officer, Kit Carey well understood; but he determined to push on, as he dared not trust to the Indians, not knowing their humor.

If he attempted to fly then they would soon show their intentions by opening fire, and in such case to run for it was all that could be done.

"We will not make their closer acquaintance, Miss Foshay, but do what the Confederates used to call skedaddle. If they fire on us, then our horses must show their speed."

[Pg 13]

"I am ready, Lieutenant Carey," was the calm rejoinder of the young girl, and the two horses bounded away together.

Thus far the Indians had only come at a run over the hill, though some of them had given utterance to a wild yell.

The keen eyes of Kit Carey saw that they were in full war-paint, and he felt that to fly was their only safety.

Had he been alone he might have been tempted to test their friendship by a parley, but with Emma Foshay along, he dared not.

He was not willing to fire the first shot, the Sioux must do that.

So away the two horses bounded, side by side, and the act brought forth a series of wild yells that caused the color to leave the face of the young girl, though she remained outwardly calm.

"Ride on, Miss Foshay, for I wish to get a better look at them."

"And you?"

"Will follow close upon the heels of your horse."

"No, you see what I do, that the Indians are preparing to fire, and wish to protect me by your own form. We ride side by side, Lieutenant Carey."

Kit laughed lightly, at being so understood, and glancing behind him saw the puff of smoke from a dozen rifles, followed by the reports and the whizz of the bullets.

"So that is the way a bullet sounds, is it?" coolly said Emma Foshay, as the leaden messengers flew by, evidently fired to frighten and not hit the fugitives.

[Pg 14]

"Yes, they make unpleasant music, Miss Foshay; but once we get over that rise we must try and press on out of range."

Soon after the horses dashed over the rise referred to, and were then put to their full speed, and rapidly gained upon the redskins, who, coming again in sight, now fired at their flying foes.

"Ha! my horse is hit, but I hope it is nothing serious," said the lieutenant, as he heard the thud of the bullet when it hit his horse, and felt the splendid animal writhe under him.

"There is the trail to the agency, Miss Foshay, and we will turn into it soon. The animal you ride knows the way well, should mine fail, and he will carry you there in a few hours, while I am sure no other redskins are between us and the camp. Ah! my poor comrade, you are feeling your wound," and Lieutenant Carey patted the animal affectionately as he felt him failing.

"Quick! Lieutenant Carey, mount behind me!" cried Emma, as she saw the wounded horse staggering.

"I will try it at least; but if we cannot keep ahead then you must go on alone."

He tore off his holsters as he spoke, leaped from his saddle just as his horse stumbled and fell, and with a spring was behind the young girl.

The redskins yelled with savage triumph, and pressed their ponies harder.

Turning into the broad trail to the agency the horse held his own for a while, though bearing his double weight.

At last Kit Carey spoke, and his voice meant all he said:

[Pg 15]

"Miss Foshay, no horse can stand this, and to force him to it will end in untold misery to you, as well as to me. I shall drop off at yonder ridge, and you must go on, not pressing your horse too hard, for I will check the Indians for awhile, at least."

"And leave you to sacrifice yourself for me?" was the indignant response of the brave girl.

"It is a sacrifice I command you to take advantage of— No! you must obey, for I shall only be taken prisoner, and you can send a relief party from the agency to rescue me."

"Oh, can I?" and her face brightened.

"Yes; and you the Indians would not give up," he added, significantly. "Here we are at the ridge, so keep right on, sparing your horse all you can."

He slipped from the back of the horse as he spoke, at the same time striking the animal a sharp rap with his hat, which caused him to bound forward with increased speed.

"Good-by! but I can never forgive myself for this sacrifice you make for me," came back to the young officer, as unable to check her horse on the run down the ridge, Emma Foshay went flying away, leaving Kit Carey in the trail to stand at bay against fearful odds.

Knowing the country as he did, he had chosen well just where to leave the maiden to go on alone, for the nature of the ground was such just then that the Indians could be held at bay for a few minutes at least, while they could not make a flank movement of his position without a ride of half a mile out of their way.

This would give Emma Foshay a long start, which, with the greater speed of her horse, she could hold. [Pg 16]

But what was to be his fate, Kit Carey did not know, though he was ready to meet it, be it what it might.

CHAPTER IV.

AT BAY AGAINST BIG ODDS.

[Pg 17]

The pursuing redskins were all of a third of a mile from the ridge, when the double-weighted horse disappeared over it.

With a delay of a few minutes, and relieved of his double load, Kit Carey was assured he could force the Indians to give up their chase after the young girl.

A glance showed him that the animal was running well, and then he sprang to the shelter of some rocks and laid the two holster revolvers before him, for they were long range weapons.

"This is for the forlorn hope," he said, grimly as he patted the smaller revolver in his sword-belt.

On up the trail came the redskins at full speed, yelling like demons, and feeling confident of their prey.

As the leaders rushed over the ridge they beheld a sight that was wholly unexpected to them.

There over half a mile away was flying along the trail the horse upon which Emma Foshay was mounted, and right in their path, to bar their way, upright, determined, and at bay, a revolver in each hand, and but his head and shoulders seen above the rocks, stood Kit Carey.

There was a look upon his face that was dangerous—a determination to fight it out right then and there against all odds.

Kit Carey, a soldier of the Seventh, was at bay, and that meant that there would be no weakening on his part. [Pg 18]

Still he did not fire. He simply stood with revolvers ready, fingers on trigger, fearless, and not to be beaten back.

The Sioux were unprepared for the fight.

Had one man stopped there to fight them, or were there others ambushed among the rocks?

So quickly had those in advance drawn up their ponies that several went down, and those pressing on behind fell over them, until it became a mass of struggling warriors and mustangs.

Quickly the braves were upon their feet, neither hurt nor bruised by the fall, and many sprang back to cover over the ridge.

But Kit Carey had not pulled trigger, and by one of those strange circumstances wholly unaccountable, not a warrior had fired either.

There was a pony with a broken leg lying upon the trail, a feather head-dress and a Winchester rifle, but that was all.

What the result would have been was hard to tell, had not the young officer quickly taken advantage of the lull to call out in the Sioux tongue, which he spoke perfectly:

"Why are my red brothers seeking to kill one who has been their friend in times of peace, if their foe in times of war?"

His clear ringing voice reached every ear, and there were those now among the band of pursuers who recognized him, and calling him by the name he was known in their tribe, Chief Crow Dog answered the question like a Yankee, by asking another:

[Pg 19]

"Why did the White War Eagle fly from his red friends?"

"The one with me was not a soldier, but a woman, and the war-cries of the braves against their friends alarmed her. If they were friends, why did they fire upon me? Did I kill the great Chief Crow Dog, and his braves, as I could have done, when they came over the hill?"

"White War Eagle speaks well; but the great medicine chief, Tatanka Yotanke, is near, and must hear his words. If Tatanka Yotanke^[1] says it is war, then war it will be; but if he says it is peace, the White War Eagle can go his way."

[Pg 20]

"I am content, so let the great medicine chief, Sitting Bull, say which it shall be," was the fearless reply of the young soldier.

Chief Crow Dog then turned to one of his braves, and said something in a low tone.

Instantly the warrior rode away at a gallop, and Crow Dog stepped toward Kit Carey, who called out quickly: "Hold! is the Crow Dog a fool that he comes near me when it may be war, not peace between us?"

The chief sprang back to cover with an alacrity that was ludicrous, for he had been anxious to get near the young soldier with some of his braves, so as to spring upon him should Sitting Bull decide that the officer was to be attacked.

[Pg 21]

Seeing his advantage gained, by his bold front shown, Lieutenant Carey said:

"Why does the great chief, Sitting Bull, go on the war-trail away from his camp, if he is the friend of the pale-faces?"

Crow Dog seemed to feel that he had made a mistake in stating that Sitting Bull was along with the party, so replied with the quick cunning and ready lie of the redskins:

"Sitting Bull has been to see a chief who is ill."

"And did Crow Dog with fifty mounted braves, all in war-paint, go with him?"

"The great chief is here," said Crow Dog, anxious to withdraw from the questioning to which he had been subjected.

And over the ridge rode Tatanka Yotanke, the greatest chief of his tribe, a man with intelligence, courage, viciousness, and implacable hatred toward his foes, the whites.

But his face showed no hatred now, for he dismounted, laid his weapons upon his blanket, and came straight toward Kit Carey, his hands raised, while he said in his low, earnest voice:

"The Crow Dog was wrong to fire upon the good friend of Sitting Bull, the brave War Eagle of the pale-faces. Tatanka Yotanke has not forgotten that many, many moons ago the White War Eagle found his redskin foe wounded and in distress, and helped him as one of his own people. Let the White War Eagle mount one of my braves' ponies and go on his way, for though red clouds obscure the sun, there must be no war to kill off my people."

[Pg 22]

"The great chief has spoken well, and may his words come from his heart, for a war between his people and mine will but end in death to his braves, the destruction of their homes, the sorrow of their wives and children. The words of Sitting Bull shall be told to the great white chief of my people, and his friendship made known. The great chief has a good memory, and we are friends. The White War Eagle will take him at his word, and may it never be broken."

As he spoke Kit Carey stepped out boldly from his cover, his hand grasped that of the chief, and the brave who had appropriated his saddle and bridle from his dead horse was ordered to bring them forward and place them upon the back of a clean-limbed pony that Sitting Bull pointed to.

And mounting, just as the shadows of night deepened, Lieutenant Carey rode away, with the muttered words:

"A close call that! but is Sitting Bull in earnest in his professions of friendship? I very much fear me not."

[1] Sitting Bull was a chief of the Dakota Sioux, both by his inheritance and by his deeds, for according to his own statement it was necessary in his tribe for a brave to "achieve greatness." His father was a chief named Jumping Bull. Two of his uncles, Four Horns and Hunting His Lodge, were also chiefs. He was born in 1837, near old Fort George, on Willow Creek, near the mouth of the Cheyenne River. Before he was ten years old, he won fame as a hunter of buffalo calves, which he gave to the poor, his father being a rich man. Until he was fourteen years old, he was known as Sacred Stand, but at that age, having slain an enemy, he became known by his later name, Tatanka Yotanke, or Sitting Bull. This is the man's early history, as outlined by himself when he was a prisoner after his return from Canada, whither he fled after the troubles in the Black Hills.

Sitting Bull imagined that the force of which the Custer command was part, had been sent out to exterminate his people. For eight days he retreated from the advancing white men, and then, being wearied, he set up a mock village, left his fires lighted, and arranged a number of effigy Indians so as to deceive the whites. He then gathered his braves, and, under cover of the hills to the south of the Rosebud, marched to intercept Custer's advance. He did not wish to fight, and so sent out a messenger with a flag of truce, who was shot down. After seeing this man fall from his horse, he called God to witness that he was not responsible for the blood that was to be shed. Custer galloped on toward the empty village and Sitting Bull closed in behind him, and to the right and left. The white men were exterminated.

When the Indians found they could no longer cope with the power of the Government,

Sitting Bull fled to Canada with his band. There he remained until 1879, when, starvation staring him in the face, he and his followers surrendered to General Miles, amnesty having been guaranteed for all past offenses, conditional upon good behavior.

Sitting Bull has been a disturbing element among the Sioux ever since his surrender. He was influential in July and August, 1888, in causing the tribe to refuse to relinquish their lands. Since the campaign of 1876, the Sioux have behaved comparatively well until the "Messiah" craze started.

For some purpose, Sitting Bull had fomented the craze, and it was his activity in the exciting movement among the Indians that led to his arrest with its fatal consequences.

Sitting Bull had two wives living, and one other, who died. He was the father of nine children, including two pairs of twins. The older of his living wives is named Was-Seen-by-the-Nations, and the other is called The-One-That-Had-Four-Robes.

CHAPTER V.

THE INDIAN PATROL.

[Pg 23]

"Halt! who comes there?" rang out sharp and stern the challenge of the sentinel on the outskirts of General Brooke's camp, followed quickly by the startling words, as the rider drew rein suddenly:

"Hold! don't fire, sentinel! I am a woman and bear dispatches to General Brooke from Colonel Crandall."

"A woman, and bearing dispatches? What does this mean!" and the officer of the day advanced quickly, while riding into the glare of a camp-fire Emma Foshay slipped from her saddle and sprang toward an officer, who was advancing.

"Father!"

"Emma! my child! what does this mean?" cried the startled cavalry captain.

In a few terse words the young girl explained all that had occurred, and she was taken at once to her father's quarters, while the dispatches and the tidings she brought were placed before the general.

"Order out two troops at once, adjutant, to go to the rescue of that gallant fellow, Carey—if not too late," said the general, quickly.

"It shall not be too late to avenge him if he has fallen," sternly said Captain Foshay, whose troop was ordered at once to mount and away.

Off dashed the gallant troopers in the darkness, Captain Foshay in command, and they had gone but half a dozen miles from camp when in a voice that brought them to a sudden halt, came the challenge:

[Pg 24]

"Halt!"

Then quickly followed the words:

"I am Lieutenant Kit Carey of the Seventh."

A cheer followed his words, and springing forward to where Kit Carey sat upon his Indian pony, Captain Foshay seized his hands, while he said, earnestly:

"My noble Carey, I have heard all from Emma, and was going to rescue you, or avenge you."

"No need of either now, Captain Foshay, though I thank you for your coming; but Sitting Bull remembered a service I once rendered him when I was a mere boy, and he professed friendship, and released me."

"Sitting Bull away from his camp?" said Captain Foshay, anxiously.

"Yes, sir; but returning to it now."

"The red scamp is away plotting mischief, for we know now that he is at the bottom of this Messiah craze, and is fomenting trouble among all the tribes who acknowledge his leadership. You are just the man, Lieutenant Carey, whom the general wishes, and if I am not mistaken you will start at once upon a mission that will either bring peace or war."

"I wish I could feel that I could use such influence, captain," responded Kit Carey.

"There is no doubt, Carey, but that you have more influence among the Sioux than any officer in the service, and if you accomplish the mission you are to be sent on, untold good will come of it; but let me tell you that your last gallant act of self-sacrifice to save my daughter has shown that the peace we have had on the border has not dulled either your courage or your gallantry. That my loved daughter and myself will ever remember it you may feel assured."

[Pg 25]

"I am glad to know that Miss Foshay arrived in safety."

"Oh, yes, she came to camp all right, though she said it was cowardly to desert you."

"That she could not help, sir, for the horse she rode has an iron jaw, and no man could have checked him."

They were returning to camp now at a trot, and the moment the troopers arrived, Captain Foshay led the gallant young officer to the quarters of the general, who welcomed him most heartily, complimented him upon his escape, and, hearing his story, said:

"Now, Lieutenant Carey, General Miles has ordered that Sitting Bull be arrested in his camp and brought here. He had sent upon the mission Buffalo Bill, a man of unbounded influence with the chief and others of his tribe, but for some reason the President countermanded those orders, and you are the one now named to carry out the instructions of General Miles in regard to the arrest. Are you willing to undertake this most perilous mission, as you must know it to be?"

"I am sir," was the firm reply of Kit Carey.

"That you have seen Sitting Bull secretly away from his camp proves that he is visiting other chiefs to foster trouble, and General Miles has knowledge that the old fellow is at the bottom of all the present trouble. Now, when will Sitting Bull return to his camp, think you?"

"By morning, sir, for I waited to see what trail he took from the ridge."

"And you can start——"

[Pg 26]

"At once, sir."

"You have had a long ride, Carey, so need rest for a few hours. But you can start early in the morning, and more, you are to command the Indian police."

"Yes, sir, they are known to me," was the modest reply.

"And you are well known to them, Carey. But you are to have a support follow you, in case of trouble, which I fear will follow. As Captain Foshay of the —th is compelled to escort his daughter to the railroad, Captain Fechet, with two troops of cavalry, and Colonel Dunn, with three companies of infantry and two machine guns, will follow you up closely, to be within call should you need aid. The Indian police are to be wholly under your command, and all is left to your judgment in the matter; but Sitting Bull is to be arrested and brought here, whether there is resistance offered or not."

"I think I understand, sir," was the response of Kit Carey, and after a short conversation with the general, the young officer departed to arrange for the dangerous mission he had been selected to perform.

As he was going to the quarters of a brother officer he suddenly saw a fair form step out of a tent and bar his way.

It was Emma Foshay, and she was all ready to start under an escort, which her father commanded, to go to the nearest railway station.

"After your strange escape, of which I have just heard, do they intend to send you to your death?" she asked, earnestly.

"It is a soldier's duty to obey, Miss Foshay, and to die for his country; but I hope it will not be so bad as that. Good-by."

[Pg 27]

She grasped his hand, sought to speak, but without a word turned away.

Two hours after Kit Carey was mounted upon a fresh horse, and riding at the head of a score of Indian police, while following came the cavalry support, under the dashing Captain Fechet, and the infantry under the gallant Colonel Dunn, with the two machine guns bringing up the rear.

Having received his orders, Kit Carey was not one to lose time in their execution, and he rode rapidly on in the early dawn.

At last the camp of the great chief was reached near Grand River, and a glance told the experienced young Indian fighter that they were not a moment too soon, for the whole village was getting ready to move, and that meant that Sitting Bull was about to seek the Bad Lands and open hostilities.

To wait there for the soldiers Lieutenant Carey dared not, so he at once gave a few orders in their own language to his redskin cavalymen, and a dash was at once made for the tepee of the great chief.

As they drew up in a circle around his home, Kit Carey leaped from his horse, and the chief and the young officer met face to face in the door.

Quickly fell the words of the officer, spoken in the Sioux language:

"The great chief, Tatanka Yotanke, has broken faith with the Great White Chief Father, for his people even now are starting on the war-path. Sitting Bull is my prisoner. He must go with me dead or alive."

The eyes of the Sioux chief blazed in their fury, and his hands dropped, one upon a revolver, the other on a knife in his belt; while from his lips came a few fierce words.

[Pg 28]

But the revolver of the commander of the Indian cavalry was covering his heart, and he dared not move.

Then came a quick command, and the Sioux chief was seized, disarmed, and fairly thrown upon the back of a pony, for the whole camp was wild with excitement now.

Leaping into his saddle, Kit Carey seized the rein of Sitting Bull's horse, and cried:

"Come!"

As the daring redskin soldiers, under their dashing young commander, closed in around the captive, a yell of fury, wild, startling, terrible, went up from the warriors, who had been almost stunned by the sudden capture of their chief, and then in a voice like a trumpet, burst from the lips of Sitting Bull a ringing command.

He had called to his faithful braves to rescue him, his voice had sounded the tocsin of war to the death, and if the Indians were to be swept off the face of the earth they must die in a noble cause.

And that weird, wild call to rescue was heard, and responded to.

But too well did the daring lieutenant know its meaning, and driving his spurs deep into the flanks of his own horse, he pricked the pony of Sitting Bull with his sword, and grasping more firmly the rein, dashed on in the flight for life.

But the Sioux braves were upon the gallant band like an avalanche of death, an Indian police officer upon the other side of Sitting Bull was shot through the heart, and that one crack of a rifle opened the crash of battle.

[Pg 29]

"We must beat them back! Turn your Winchesters upon them. Fire!"

The order of the gallant soldier of the Seventh was obeyed, as the rush of the braves was made upon the little band fighting against such desperate odds, and then the death-knell of the mighty medicine man rang out, for in the battle to rescue their chief, he received a bullet in his heart.

CHAPTER VI.

SOLDIERS TO THE RESCUE.

[Pg 30]

"Who fired that shot?"

Clear and stern rang out the question from the lips of Lieutenant Carey, as he beheld the great Sioux chief reel in his saddle from a shot fired by one of the Indian police.

To take Sitting Bull alive had been his orders, and only in case of direst necessity to fire a shot.

It was true that Sitting Bull had called his redskins to the rescue, yet the gallant officer and the Indian guard were in full flight, well mounted, and could have, perhaps, escaped with their prisoner.

Not until the last desperate moment would Kit Carey have dealt death upon the Sioux chief.

But an Indian officer had been stung to madness by a wound, there were hundreds of Sioux warriors pressing on in hot haste to the rescue, and many men were mounting to aid in tearing their loved leader from his captors.

Upon all sides redskins, mounted and on foot, were appearing. They had been the ones to open fire upon the capturers of Sitting Bull, and thus had the struggle for life or death been precipitated in an instant of time.

The Indian officer who had fired the shot at the Sioux chief had but avenged himself, for he had received his own death wound and fell from his horse even before the one he had turned his bullet upon did.



"Fire! The order of Kit Carey was obeyed, and as the fighting became general, the death-knell of Sitting Bull rang out."

(See page 29)

Sitting Bull had reeled under the death wound, and then broke from between his teeth his death-cry and another command, his last utterance, calling his braves to the rescue.

[Pg 31]

With firm hand upon the bridle rein Kit Carey led the plunging horse of the chief onward,

determined to carry him to safety, for he knew not that the wound was mortal.

Then suddenly Sitting Bull straightened up in his saddle, his arms were extended, his lips parted, yet no word came from them, and he fell headlong to the ground beneath the feet of the horses in their mad flight.

The Sioux saw their leader fall, and knew that he had gone to the happy hunting grounds of their people.

They could not rescue him alive, but they could avenge him dead.

And then went up one wild wail of woe, ending in a yell of rage and hatred that was appalling.

Kit Carey well knew the meaning of that weird, terrible cry, and the Indian guards knew it but too well also.

Was the little band doomed?

All glanced into the face of their young leader, who, surrounded now by odds too numerous to break through, had stood at bay.

"Stand and die right here, over the body of the Sioux chief!" cried Lieutenant Carey, and his red cavalymen rallied around him.

But though shots rang out thick and fast, though the Indian guards fell dead and wounded, and the Sioux went down under the fire of the little band, they were not doomed to be sacrificed, for with a ringing cheer the gallant Boys in Blue, led by Captain Fechet, came dashing to the rescue, and now the cry became, "Soldiers to the rescue!"

[Pg 32]

Like an avalanche they came on, breaking the Indian line about the little band of captors, hurling back the surprised Sioux, and forcing them upon their village in temporary disorder.

But still the odds were terribly against the soldiers, and, maddened into frenzy by the death of their chief, the Sioux again formed for a rush, when into sight dashed Colonel Dunn and his infantry at a run, the machine guns being brought up in good style, and before this onslaught the followers of the mighty Tatanka Yotanke broke in wild disorder and fled.

Loud roared the guns, as the soldiers pursued, and the Sioux only stopped their flight when they reached the shelter of the ravines, where the small force dare not follow them.

Then suddenly the firing ceased, but the battle was won, and the Sioux chieftain lay dead upon the field where he had fallen.

"Lieutenant Carey, I congratulate you upon your escape, for it was a miraculous one. We knew you had gotten into trouble when we heard the firing, but, though we came to the rescue at a run, we expected to find you dead, you and every man of your force. Again, I congratulate you, sir," and the commanding officer warmly grasped the hand of the young soldier, who said in his modest way:

"It was a close call, sir, and your coming when you did, alone saved us. I am sorry Sitting Bull was killed, but the Sioux began the fight, and the man who killed him had already received his death wound. I shall never forget the look of reproach that the chief turned upon me as he felt the death grip upon him. There was a world of meaning in it."

[Pg 33]

"Well, Carey, it was just your luck to be in at the death of the most noted of Indian chiefs, and to escape complete annihilation afterward. I have heard you spoken of as a man of destiny and a man of luck, and if the two can be reconciled I believe you are both," a young infantry officer said, sauntering up and joining the group.

"Well, lieutenant, you can carry the body of the dead chief into headquarters when you will," the commander remarked.

"Yes, and no one can now say that Sitting Bull is not a good Indian," ventured a cavalry lieutenant, but though his remark was appreciated he was "frowned down" for appearance's sake.

But he was sustained by Kit Carey's decided response, almost vehement in fact:

"Yes, and when there are many more Indians made good in the same way this whole frontier will be the better for it. It is their nature to be savage, to rebel against restraint, and yet when they do unbury the hatchet they are not put down as they should be, with a lesson that will last them for all time, and which will do more to teach them civilization than anything else that can be done. The moment a redskin is killed certain humanitarians raise a howl of horror, not seeming to care how many officers and soldiers are slain, or the wives of settlers sacrificed, and their homes raided by these red wards of the Government; but, pardon me, I did not mean to speak so warmly upon a subject an officer, I suppose, has no right to discuss; but, mark my words, the killing of Sitting Bull will be denounced as cowardly, investigated, and wept over by people in the East, when, had his capture or death been delayed six hours longer, he would have led thousands of warriors into the field and deluged this whole borderland with the blood of settlers, their wives and children, not to speak of the soldiers," and Kit Carey wheeled on his heel and strode away, while the looks that passed between those who had heard his words showed that he had voiced the sentiments of those who understood the situation as it was.

[Pg 34]

CHAPTER VII.

KIT CAREY TAKES THE TRAIL.

[Pg 35]

The body of Sitting Bull was carried to headquarters and decently buried, and many a brave fellow who wore the Blue breathed more freely, knowing well that in the grave lay at rest one whose thunder tones in life would have led his people to their destruction triumphantly.

They knew also that the thirst to avenge their leader would not inflame the hearts of his people, as his words, urging them to strike their pale-face foes, would have done had he lived.

And while the cry went forth that he had been murdered, those dwellers near the scene knew that it was better for all that Tatanka Yotanke was on the long trail to the happy hunting grounds.

Kit Carey had reported in his modest way the scene that had occurred, and was congratulated upon his coolness and courage in the affair.

Then he had asked for orders, and the general had said:

"Sit down, Lieutenant Carey, for I wish a talk with you."

Kit obeyed, and then came the question:

"Is it true that you know this country as well as do the Indians?"

"The Indians learn a country pretty well, general, better than a white man does, for their instinct teaches them much; but years ago I wandered over this part of the country a great deal, and with a guide who knew every part of it, or so it seemed to me, and since I have been in the army I have scouted through it at times under orders from Colonel Crandall."

[Pg 36]

"Ah, yes; but you knew the country, you say, before you were in the army?"

"Yes, sir, for I was a border boy."

"And who was this guide that you were with?"

"In a few words, general, he was an ex-army officer, whose name I am not at liberty to give; but he met with misfortunes and sorrows, and became a recluse, seeking a home in what was then the very heart of the Indian country. He went South when the Civil War began, being a Southerner, and one night when alone on the prairies a horse went into his camp upon the back of which were two children, a boy and a girl. I was the boy, and the young girl is now living with her adopted parents in New York. We had escaped from a wagon-train, where people had been massacred, and roamed into the camp of the one who from that day became a father to me, taking me into the Confederate army with him as a boy soldier."

"Your story interests me greatly, Lieutenant Carey—and the young girl?" said the general.

"Was adopted by settlers, whose home we went to, and, as I said, is now living in New York."

"And you?"

"Returned to the frontier with my adopted father, sir, who was known as the hermit of the Black Hills."

"Ah! I have heard of him. He was killed by a renegade white man who was a chief among the Sioux, I believe?"

[Pg 37]

"Yes, sir, and his death was avenged," was the significant response of the young officer; and the words recalled to the general that he had heard that Kit Carey was the avenger, and how his services to army officers as a boy guide and scout had gotten him his cadetship to West Point.

But to this he did not refer more than to say:

"Well, Lieutenant Carey, you are the very man I need for the work to be done, and I shall wish you to hold yourself in readiness for duty, and perilous duty it will be."

Kit bowed, and asked:

"Am I to go alone, sir, or with a force?"

"You are to pick your men from the Indian police, and I only hope and believe they will not prove treacherous; but therein lies your danger, should they do so, as great as it will be from the avowed hostiles. Take as many as you deem necessary, only do not go over fifty men, and your duty will be to know all that goes on in the hostile camps, report the movements of bands, and all you can learn of what the friendly Indians may do, for just now is the most critical time along the frontier, and I have little faith in professions of friendship from armed redskins. Start as soon as you can get ready, and report by your Indian couriers to the officer nearest your position when you have any news to send through of importance, while above all, Carey, be careful of yourself, for you are not to be sacrificed, you know, only there is no one to send who can do the work as you will, with all your border experience."

"I shall be cautious, general, and my redskin soldiers will also be."

[Pg 38]

After a few minutes longer spent in conversation, Kit Carey bade the general good-night, and in an hour more was off on his special service of great danger, while behind him in single file rode thirty redskin horsemen, Uncle Sam's Indian cavalry.

CHAPTER VIII.

AN INDIAN LOVER.

[Pg 39]

In a fertile valley, through which ran a limpid, swiftly flowing stream, not very far from the Indian reservation, dwelt a settler by the name of Vance Bernard.

He was a man of striking appearance, and one who, always hospitable, was friendly with no one.

He had been a miner in the Black Hills, it was said by those who knew him, and having "struck it rich," had come to that part of the country to establish a home.

Yet, when asked pointedly regarding Vance Bernard, those who professed to know him could tell nothing regarding him, and there were those in that scattered community who set him down as a man who was seeking to hide himself away from his fellows.

Be that as it may, he went to work and "homesteaded" some land, bought for cash many more acres, and erected the most comfortable house on that part of borderland.

He paid good prices for labor, and all he undertook was well done.

Then, to the surprise of the other settlers, a wagon-train arrived one day at Bernard's home, and there came with it a handsome woman of thirty-eight, a youth of eighteen, and a maiden of fourteen, and these were introduced as his wife and children.

For people supposed to have been reared in the East, they adopted themselves strangely well to the new order of things, and within a few days seemed perfectly at home in their surroundings.

[Pg 40]

The mother was a sad-faced woman, almost as taciturn as her husband, and the son, Herbert, was a powerfully built young fellow, with a face that was bold and determined, yet not wholly attractive.

His sister, Jennie Bernard, was a maiden of rare loveliness of form and face, and the only ray of sunshine in the household, for the others really made it gloomy at times.

Herbert Bernard appeared to care nothing for the warnings of the settlers who dropped in at the house, not to go far from the place until he knew the country well, for he would ride away alone in the morning and be gone all day, showing, it seemed, that he was fully able to take care of himself, if he was called a "tenderfoot."

Jennie, too, was wont to go for a ride alone, and be gone for hours, while no anxiety appeared to be felt for her safety by either her parents or brother.

Such was the family of Vance Bernard several years after their coming to dwell in their border home.

They sought no friendships, returning no visits from their neighbors, yet were ever hospitable to those who called.

Of course, a girl of Jennie Bernard's beauty could not but win admirers, and even in that sparsely settled valley she had half a dozen lovers, all of them most anxious to win her especial regard, yet not one of whom was assured that he could do so.

But one lover Jennie had, to whom she was more friendly than to any of the others.

This one was Red Hatchet, a young Sioux chief, and as handsome a specimen of Indian manhood as could be found anywhere. Six feet in his moccasins, possessing a superb physique, quick as a panther in his movements, yet graceful as a deer, while his face was cast in an intelligent and noble mold, that bespoke spirit and an undaunted nature.

[Pg 41]

He was a bold hunter, and was wont to come to the Bernard homestead with pelts for sale, and game, and he always found in the settler a ready buyer of what he brought.

One afternoon he was on his way back to his village, when he heard a shot fired not far from the trail he was following, and then a cry, as if of pain, or alarm, followed by a second shot.

The cry came from a woman's lips, he knew, and not an Indian's.

Quickly he bounded toward the spot from whence the shots had come, and came upon a strange scene.

A horse lay dead in the trail, and standing near was Jennie Bernard, the captive of two warriors.

As he drew nearer Red Hatchet beheld a third brave lying dead upon the ground.

It was the sweet face of Jennie Bernard that had drawn the young chief to her home more than to sell his pelts and game, and recognizing the braves as bad men of his tribe, yet of considerable influence, he rushed toward them determined to free the maiden.

They heard his bounding footsteps, turned, and beholding that he came in anger, warned him off.

But on he came, several shots followed, and Red Hatchet, bleeding from two wounds, stood by the side of the young girl, at whose feet, dead, now lay the trio who had been her captors.

[Pg 42]

"They killed my horse, Red Hatchet, and as they ran upon me I shot that one. I owe you more than life, my good friend," said Jennie, and she grasped the hand of the young chief in both her own.

He made no response, but stood in deep, seemingly painful thought, which, by a sudden intuition, Jennie Bernard seemed to read, for she said quickly:

"Oh! this will cause trouble all along the frontier, for the Sioux will listen to no reason as to the killing of those three evil men."

"The Snow Flower speaks the truth; but her lips must not tell the story, no Indian or pale face must know. The Red Hatchet will hide his bad braves in an unknown grave, their trails shall be covered up, and no one must know, only the Snow Flower and the Red Hatchet."

"It is a fearful secret to keep, chief, yet I feel that you are right; but you are wounded, so come with me to my home."

"No, the wounds of the Red Hatchet must not be known. They are nothing—to an Indian," and he seemed proud at the thought that to a white man they would be considered severe, indeed.

"Let the Snow Flower go to her home. The Red Hatchet has work to do here," and he pointed to the bodies of the dead warriors.

And so Jennie started on her way homeward, for she had several miles to go.

Arriving there she told her father all, and he, too, said that the secret must be kept—the Indians must never know the truth.

When the dawn came the saddle and bridle left on the dead horse were found upon the piazza, showing that the Red Hatchet had brought them there under cover of the darkness, and that day Jennie rode with her father to the scene, and the dead horse alone was a silent witness of the tragedy enacted there.

[Pg 43]

The bodies of the Sioux braves seemed to have been spirited away, as no trace of a trail could be found.

It was a couple of months before Red Hatchet again appeared at the Bernard home, and he looked as though he had been seriously ill.

But he said nothing of the past, though from that day each month brought him to the home of the Bernards, and the young girl could not but know that he was her most devoted lover, and into her heart stole a great dread of coming evil.

CHAPTER IX.

LASSOING A SIOUX.

[Pg 44]

No one knew better than did Lieutenant Carey just what was expected of him by the general, and he was fully aware of all the dangers attending the performance of his duties.

The Indian police were as yet untried in war against their own race, and with the medicine men of the tribes urging them to madness almost in regard to the coming of a redskin messiah to aid them in wiping the pale faces off the earth, and again becoming the masters of their country.

Might not some, if not all, of those under his command prove treacherous?

It was a question that could not be readily answered; but he was launched upon his special work and must abide the consequences.

It was true that the Indian guards had proven heroes, and true as steel in the capture of Sitting Bull, but then the redskins were as fickle as the wind, here to-day and gone to-morrow, friends by day and foes by night.

Still Kit Carey hoped for the best, and at the head of his redskin cavalry boldly plunged into the dangers before him.

The Indians, having broken away from the reservations, and corrals held about them by the wavering line of soldiers, the young officer knew that to hover about the Bad Lands was his duty, and only chance of discovering the information he sought.

[Pg 45]

Knowing the country well he divided his force into squads, sending them to various points, from whence they could watch the trails in and out of the Bad Lands, and the bands that were assembling there.

In this way he hoped to get at the real force of the redskins, and by a round of the posts himself learn just what he wished from his Indian police, as to all movements made under their observation.

"I will learn the exact situation, if I have to go into the Bad Lands myself," he muttered, in his determined way.

When morning came he had placed several observation squads of his men, and by noon had only a dozen left with him.

These went into hiding in a ravine, with a sentinel in a tree to watch a trail running a mile away.

Then Kit Carey started off on a reconnaissance alone, intending to make a wide circuit of the trails leading into the Bad Lands.

It was nearly sunset when he neared the top of a ridge, and wisely dismounted to look cautiously over into the valley beyond before venturing.

He took off his hat, gained the shelter of a bush, and peered over.

What he saw seemed to surprise him.

Not three hundred yards away were two persons on horseback.

One was an Indian chief, in war-paint and eagle feathers.

The other was a woman, and a pale face.

As do many army officers, Kit Carey carried a repeating rifle when on a scout.

[Pg 46]

It hung at his saddle horn, and he quickly sprang to the side of his horse and secured it.

He could believe only that the woman was the captive of the redskin.

His rifle was of large caliber and long range, and he was noted as the best shot in the army of the frontier.

"There must be others near, though I could not discover them; but I can drop him, mount, and dash to her aid, and then run for it with her," he mused to himself, while examining his rifle to see that it was in perfect trim.

Then he crept cautiously toward the bush again, peered through, with rifle ready.

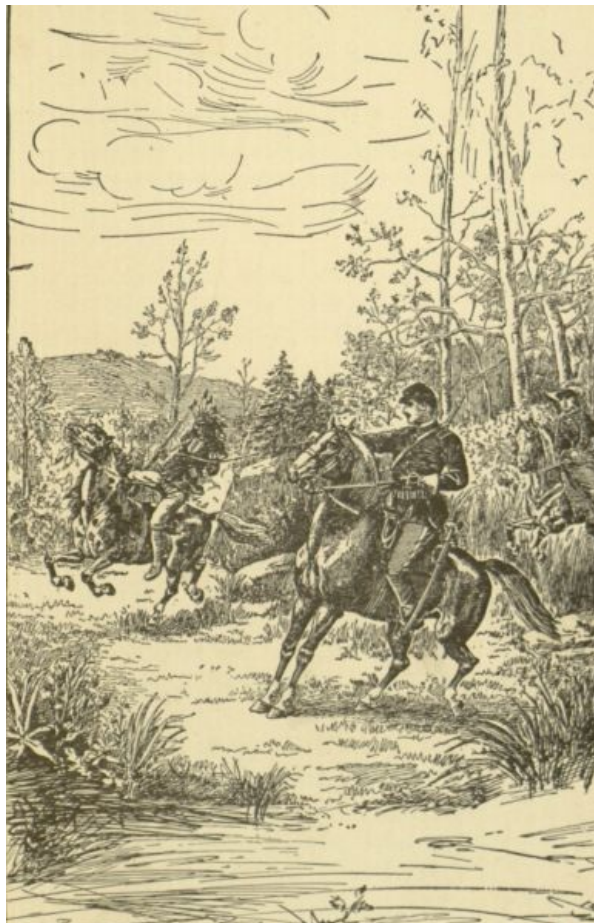
But Kit Carey did not fire as he had intended, for to his surprise, he beheld the Indian chief riding slowly up the trail toward him, while the one whom he had supposed was his captive was cantering off in the other direction.

But the Indian was a chief, and in full war-paint, and that meant trouble, if the two met.

He was in a locality where his life was at stake, within the danger line for miles, and a shot might bring hundreds upon him.

"This will be better than my rifle, though I would have fired to save her," he muttered, and he took his lasso coil from his saddle.

One end he left attached to the saddle horn, and leading his horse close to the steep bank near the bush, stood there behind its shelter with the noose in his hand ready to throw.



"Lieut. Carey's lariat whizzed through the air, and settled over the shoulders of the chief."

(See page 47)

On came the Sioux chief all unconscious of danger, and, peering fixedly at him, the officer said, with some surprise:

[Pg 47]

"Ah! it is that desperate young chief who tried so hard to rescue Sitting Bull some days ago, for twice he fired full at me, yet my star of luck hovered over me. Now I will have a chance to get even," and he grasped the lariat more firmly.

On came the Sioux chief, his black and white spotted pony, all unconscious of danger even. Nearer and nearer approached the Sioux chief, until suddenly Lieutenant Carey arose, and his lariat went whizzing through the air with surest aim, settling over the shoulders of the chief,

pinning his arms to his side, and, as his pony bounded away, dragging him from his saddle to the ground.

Hardly had the Indian fallen ere Kit Carey was standing over him, his revolver muzzle in his face, while he said sternly in the Sioux tongue:

"You are my prisoner, chief! Make no resistance, and I will not harm you."

But the chief had uttered one loud cry as he felt the noose tighten about him, and Kit Carey felt that it was a call for help to braves who were near, and so was anxious to secure his prisoner, determined to use him as a hostage and foil, if caught in a tight place.

In response to his words the Sioux looked into the face of the officer, and replied:

"The Red Hatchet is the friend of the pale faces, not their foe. He is here to keep his warriors back from the war-trail."

"Does the Red Hatchet think that I am blind, for did I not see him lead the redskins to rescue Tatanka Yotanke?" [Pg 48]

And as he spoke Kit Carey turned quickly, for up the steep trail came a horse at full speed, and the rider he bore was Jennie Bernard.

CHAPTER X.

A WOMAN'S WAY.

[Pg 49]

Kit Carey was fairly startled at the vision of loveliness he beheld before him, for Jennie Bernard had drawn rein suddenly, as she came to where the Sioux chief lay upon the ground, still in the toils of the lasso held in the hand of his captor, who stood over him, his revolver covering him.

Attired in a buckskin riding habit that fitted her form perfectly, wearing a slouch dove-colored hat, and sitting her horse like one reared in the saddle, she was a perfect picture of a border girl, handsome and fearless.

Hardly had her horse been reined to a sudden halt, when the chief spoke in good English:

"Let the Snow Flower speak! Is the Red Hatchet the friend, or the foe, of the pale faces?"

Ever courteous Kit Carey had raised his hat, and now at the words of the imprisoned Sioux chief, spoken most impressively, he had looked straight into the face of the young girl with a strange expression.

"The Red Hatchet is my friend, the friend of our people. Oh, sir! I beg you not to do him harm!"

Instantly did Kit Carey stoop, and unloosen the noose and coil, while he extended his hand, and said:

"Rise, chief, and, believe me, I feel sorry at having made you a prisoner, though to find you here near the retreat of the hostiles I could but take you for a foe, while you are also in full war-paint and battle costume. Why is this, chief?" [Pg 50]

"The Red Hatchet wears a double face now. He is the friend of the pale faces, yet not the foe of his people. He will not be a traitor Sioux, and only when in war-paint and feathers can he talk to his braves as one who is not a coward, and urge them not to strike the blow that will destroy them."

The words were delivered with a natural oratory, for which many Indians are noted, and they had their effect even upon such an old frontiersman as was Kit Carey, for he said frankly:

"Again, I say that I am sorry, chief, so let us be friends, though I could swear that I saw you lead the attempted rescue of Sitting Bull, and several times seek my life."

"The Red Hatchet was not there at the death of our great medicine chief," was the quick response of the Sioux.

"Then it was your twin brother?"

"No, no, sir; the Red Hatchet was not there, and I beg you will allow him to go," quickly said Jennie Bernard.

"May I ask, miss, how you heard down here of the death of Sitting Bull, so soon after its happening," and the eyes of the officer were fixed searchingly upon the face of the maiden.

Her face flushed, yet she answered in a quiet way:

"The news was brought by a Sioux Indian, sir."

"Ah!" and with this exclamation various thoughts flashed like lightning through the mind of the officer.

Vouched for by a white maiden, lovely in face and form, and declared not to have been at the attempt at rescue of Sitting Bull, in contradiction to his own eye-sight, even, Kit Carey felt compelled to yield. [Pg 51]

Yet the sad thought came upon him that this lovely young pale face girl loved the Indian chief.

What could he believe otherwise, for now the belief at first that she was a captive, had changed to the almost certain knowledge that he had come upon a lover's tryst, if one was white, the other red.

Pocahontas had saved the life of Captain Smith, and then married a white man, and a number of such marriages had occurred away back in the earlier history of our country.

Here was as handsome an Indian as he had ever seen, one who spoke like an orator, and seemed born to command, and the romantic girl had fallen in love with him, Kit Carey decided.

It was a bad thing for the girl, but good for her people, for such a chief must have power over his braves, and would hold them in check.

So, turning to the maiden, Kit Carey said:

"I am glad, miss, if it is as you say, and I accept your pledge for the Sioux chief, while, to him I would say, to go among his people, and tell them how utterly useless will it be for them to fight the whites, and the sooner he acts the better will it be for all."

"The Red Hatchet has heard, and will do as the White War Eagle says, for he knows him."

"Ah! I thought that we had met before," quickly said the officer.

"The White War Eagle has been the bitter foe of the Sioux, when on the war-path; but the Red Hatchet is his friend now." [Pg 52]

The chief extended his hand, and Kit Carey grasped it, and then said:

"There is the pony of the chief. Let him lose no time in going to his braves and urging them against war."

Thus dismissed, the chief stalked silently to his pony, mounted, and rode away, while Kit Carey turned to Jennie Bernard, who now seemed confused at the position in which she found herself, for she spoke not a word.

"May I introduce myself as Lieutenant Carey, miss, and offer to be your escort to your home, for I know of no settlers' dwelling within miles of here?"

"My father's is the nearest, sir. I am Miss Bernard," was the response, and the manner and tone seemed more embarrassed than before.

"And Miss Bernard will accept me as her escort, for she is in danger of her life here?"

"I will, sir, and thank you," was the earnest reply.

Then, as Kit Carey threw himself into his saddle and wheeled alongside of her, she cried suddenly as she burst into tears:

"Oh, Lieutenant Carey! what harm may I not have done, for I told you a falsehood, for the Red Hatchet is the most desperate leader of the hostiles!"

CHAPTER XI.

A PUZZLED SOLDIER.

[Pg 53]

The daring young cavalryman, who would face any danger with a nerve of iron, fairly started and turned pale under the sudden confession from Jennie Bernard.

"I have told you a falsehood, for Red Hatchet is the most desperate leader of the hostiles."

Kit Carey was almost dazed for a moment, and could only look at the young girl for a more thorough explanation of her strange words and actions.

Suddenly he recovered himself, and wheeling his horse seemed about to ride back in pursuit of the Sioux chief.

Discerning his purpose, the girl cried quickly:

"Hold, sir! you would only dash into a peril your daring could never save you from, while it would be useless to pursue Red Hatchet with the start he has."

"I believe you are right in that," he answered, thoughtfully.

"Come, lieutenant, you were to be my escort home," said the young girl.

"It does not appear that you need an escort, Miss Bernard, from any fear of danger, as the Sioux chief is your friend."

She flushed at his words, for she recognized their significance in an instant, and, almost eagerly, said:

"Do not spring at conclusions, sir; but come with me, for I have something to explain, while I may tell you that which may be of service to you, as an officer of the army. Is your command within call, may I ask, and is it sufficiently large to keep at bay a force of a hundred or more redskins?" [Pg 54]

Kit Carey was about to answer that he had no command, or one that he could call upon, when he thought how strange was the manner of the girl, and her question as to its numbers, while she had shown such eagerness for the escape of the Sioux chief.

Could her love for the Indian have made her a renegade to her own people, he wondered.

"Love will cause one to do strange things," he muttered to himself, and in reply to her question he responded:

"My command will be within call when needed, Miss Bernard, but you were saying——"

"I am glad you have a force near, for now I breathe more freely, Lieutenant Kit Carey."

"Ah! And how did you know me as Kit Carey?" he asked, with considerable surprise, recalling that he had not spoken of himself except as Lieutenant Carey.

"Are there two of your name in the army, sir?"

"Not two bearing the name of Kit Carey."

"You were lately on the staff of Colonel Crandall at Fort F——?"

"Yes."

"You are the one of whom I have heard a great deal, for your deeds have often been discussed around our hearth, Lieutenant Carey. I was sure when you said that your name was Carey that you must be Lieutenant Kit Carey, as you look like just such a man as he is described as being."

Was the girl trying to gain time for some reason, Kit wondered, that she talked thus.

[Pg 55]

The officer was compelled to confess to himself that thus far she was a riddle he could not solve.

They were riding along the trail side by side now, and as he made no response to her last remark, she continued, in her frank way:

"I am glad to meet you, Lieutenant Carey, glad that you are the hero of whom I have heard so much, for now I can be more honest with you."

"I wish you would be, and as an incentive I will say that but for the fact that I did not wish to discharge a weapon in this vicinity, I would have killed the Red Hatchet, not captured him."

"And why, sir?"

"I reconnoitered over the ridge and saw him with you, so could only believe you were his captive."

"His captive?"

"So I supposed, for I did not think that it was possible to be otherwise, and I went to get my rifle from my saddle-horn when I saw, upon my return, that you had parted, and he was coming toward where I stood. Seeing that I could use my lasso, I did so."

"And I heard his cry when taken, saw that a soldier had him, and returned to tell you that he was not a foe."

"And yet you implied a while since that you had told a falsehood?"

"I said that I had, and I did."

"That is strange. But it is a woman's way, I suppose, which no man need try to fathom."

"That is severe, not gallant, Lieutenant Kit Carey; but I see that you misunderstand me wholly, so I will explain, if you will believe me."

[Pg 56]

"Will you tell me the truth this time?"

"Yes."

"No losing the trail?"

"Honest Injun, no!" she said, with a bright smile that lighted up her face wondrously.

But instantly a shadow came upon it, and she said, seriously:

"I told you a story because I wished to save Red Hatchet, and I will tell you why, though thus far it has been a secret to all save four persons."

"And they are——"

"First, Red Hatchet and myself, afterward my father and my brother were let in the secret; but now you shall know it."

"I feel honored."

"Do not be sarcastic with me, Lieutenant Carey, for I do not deserve it."

"Pardon me."

"I will do so, if you will drop sarcasm, and be as sincere as I intend to be with you."

"I promise."

"Then you shall know just why I wished to save Red Hatchet from death, and you shall know—my secret," and the cloud that came upon the lovely face as she uttered the words drove all the sunshine away.

CHAPTER XII.

The lights and shades of the young girl's face, as thoughts flashed through her brain and words fell from her lips, Kit Carey had particularly observed.

He made no reply to the last assertion, that he should know her secret, but waited with the calm patience of an Indian.

"It was two years ago," she at last said, "that I was ambushed on a trail near home, and we will pass the spot to-day. My horse was brought down by a shot, I fell, though unhurt, and as three Indians rushed upon me I managed to fire upon them with my revolver. One fell dead, and——"

"Ah! you were plucky."

"I was acting in self-defence; but the other two seized me, and what my fate would have been, Heaven only knows, had not a Sioux chief come to my rescue. He was wounded, but killed my two foes, and then told me that the three ambushers were bad young men of his tribe. He told me that his people would avenge their deaths upon the whites, and the secret must be kept."

"He was wise."

"Yes, and he buried those bodies, wounded as he was, where no one has ever found them, and his people regard them as renegades from the tribe to-day. He brought my saddle and bridle that night to my home, and then went his way, and for weeks was laid up with his wounds. That chief was Red Hatchet, Lieutenant Carey." [Pg 58]

"He had some strong motive for keeping the secret from his people?"

"Yes, he said that it was his love for me, and that there were men of his tribe who would seek revenge upon me."

"Very true, and upon himself, for killing them to protect you."

"I had not thought of that, yet it is so. But I told my father, and he told my brother; but otherwise the secret has been kept."

"And the Red Hatchet?"

"Has haunted my life ever since, and though I have told him I could hold no love for an Indian other than friendly regard, it has had no effect. To-day he bade me meet him, where you saw us, if I had any regard for my people. I obeyed, not daring to refuse, and then he told me that unless I became his wife he would turn the young warriors of his tribe loose upon the settlements. He it was who told me that you had killed Sitting Bull——"

"I had killed him?"

"Yes, so he said, and that he had attempted his rescue, but failed. I put him off with a promise to give him an answer within one week, and intended to ride to the quarters of General Carr and tell him the situation exactly. I dared not refuse."

"It was wise in you, Miss Bernard, to do so, and yet when I had him in my power you were the cause of his going free."

"Let me see if I can make clear to you my feelings about that. The Indian loves me, and that I could not hold against him. Then he it was who saved me from those bad warriors, at the risk of his own life, and for which he suffered greatly. That debt I could cancel in but one way, and to clear it utterly from my conscience I rode back to tell his captor that he was the friend, not the foe of the whites, for so he had ever appeared to be until his terrible threat to-day. Had I not said that he was not the leader of the redskin rescuers of Sitting Bull, you would still have held him prisoner, and if harm befell him it would have been through me. Thus it was that I told the falsehood, the double falsehood, in fact, about him, for I wished not his life upon my hands. Now that I have done my duty toward him, cancelled the debt of deep gratitude I owed him for his service to me, I tell you the secret, and of his dire threat of vengeance. Have I made myself fully understood, Lieutenant Kit Carey?" [Pg 59]

"Fully, Miss Bernard."

"Then I shift all responsibility I hold to your broad shoulders," she said, with a smile.

"I accept the load, and wish now to beg your pardon for having misunderstood you as I did, for I will candidly confess that I believed that you were in love with your Indian lover."

She started, her eyes flashed fire, but when Kit Carey expected an angry response, she said, calmly:

"I cannot blame you, sir, under the circumstances, for my words implied as much. But here is the spot where I was ambushed two years ago, and those whitened bones you see are those of my poor horse, Dandy, whom I loved more dearly than I ever yet have learned to love a man," and she cast a quick, searching glance into the face of the handsome officer, whose deeds of daring and strange history were the talk around many a border hearth-stone and camp-fire. [Pg 60]

What Jennie Bernard had told Kit was a cause of great uneasiness to him, for he knew that the Red Hatchet wielded immense influence with the young braves of his tribe, and was fermenting trouble, hoping to win fame for himself, for there is a wondrous amount of ambition, conceit, and pride in an Indian's nature, equal to that among some of our own pale-face warriors.

A week he might wait, to keep his faith with the young girl, whose gratitude to him he had mistaken for love; but then if aught occurred to precipitate trouble between the Indians and the

settlers or soldiers, Red Hatchet would at once act without regard to the time given the girl.

"Miss Bernard, your father must at once leave his home, going to the nearest point with his family and belongings where protection is assured," said Kit.

"It should be so, Lieutenant Carey; but my father will never leave his home," she answered, in a decided way.

"He must."

"But he never will, for he says that the Sioux will never harm him or those belonging to him," was the surprising answer of Jennie Bernard.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE REFUSAL.

[Pg 61]

The determined manner in which Jennie Bernard asserted that her father would not remove from his home, and that no Sioux would harm him or his family, surprised Kit Carey immensely.

"May I ask, Miss Bernard, what influence your father holds over the Sioux that he believes he can thus wield them to his will?"

"I only know, sir, that he regards the Indians as his friends, and they look upon him in the same light," was the answer.

"Yet you were not exempt from an attack from them?"

"That is true, yet they were not the representatives of the band."

"Miss Bernard, when an Indian has his war-paint on he is sullen and ferocious, and knows no friendships. Treachery is a virtue in his eyes, gratitude is forgotten, and a scalp of a pale-face, whether it be from an infant, woman, or soldier, is a prize that a redskin will risk his life to obtain. They are as merciless as they are cruel, and if they do not kill their victim he is saved for torture. I know the Indians well, and I tell you plainly you must not trust Red Hatchet, for his intelligence, and having seen considerable of the world away from his people, but renders him the more dangerous. He will destroy your home, kill your parents, and bear you into captivity. Your father must not linger here a day."

[Pg 62]

Kit Carey spoke with deep earnestness, and Jennie Bernard stretched out her hand, and said, in her frank way:

"I thank you; but I fear he will refuse to go. Here is our home." And she pointed to the log cabin that just then came into view.

It was a succession of cabins rather than one, surrounded by large outbuildings, all neatly whitewashed and fenced in.

A brook ran near, there was a grove of trees, pines predominating, and the spot was a cheery one, the home most inviting.

It was just sunset, and Settler Vance Bernard was pacing up and down the piazza smoking a handsomely carved pipe.

He started as he beheld his daughter's approach, accompanied by an officer, and uttered, in a sullen tone:

"Why has he come here? Ha! it is Kit Carey!"

The man's manner was that of one who was to receive an unwelcome guest.

But as Kit Carey aided Jennie to alight, and the two came upon the piazza, the settler said, pleasantly:

"I was anxious about you, my child, for I knew not that you had a gallant escort."

"A gallant escort, indeed, father. Allow me to present Lieutenant Kit Carey, of whom we have heard so much?"

"Lieutenant Carey, indeed! Can it be possible that I have the honor of welcoming to my home the hero of Fort—?" Vance Bernard extended his hand most cordially, yet with no show of having ever before met the young officer.

[Pg 63]

Kit Carey was pleased with his cordial reception, and asked:

"Have we not met before, Mr. Bernard?"

"It may be that we have, sir, though I cannot recall the circumstance."

"It is a fancied resemblance then, sir, to some one I have met, though to whom I do not now recall. You have a lovely home here, Mr. Bernard, for the border."

"Yes, I have endeavored to make it a most comfortable home; but let me show you to your room, Lieutenant Carey, for supper will soon be ready."

Having taken the officer to the very pleasant guest-chamber in the Bernard home, the host went off in search of his daughter, his face again becoming moody, almost to sullenness.

Jennie was just leaving her room, having changed her riding habit for a pretty, though simple dress, and her father asked quickly, and in a stern tone:

"Jennie, where did you pick that man up?"

"Why, father, are you angry because I brought Lieutenant Carey home with me?"

His manner changed, and he said:

"Angry? No! but if officers of the army come this near the Indian line trouble will follow surely."

"That is just what Lieutenant Carey says, that the Sioux are preparing to strike a terrible blow against the whites, and that you must at once leave home with all of us."

"I shall do no such thing, for I will not be harmed by them; but come, let us join the lieutenant and go into supper." [Pg 64]

Kit Carey found in Mrs. Bernard a woman of refined appearance and cultivated manners, but the moment he laid eyes upon Herbert Bernard he did not like him, and the feeling seemed mutual, for the young settler accused the army of being the cause of all the Indian troubles, and was, at times, almost insulting in his words and manner toward the officer, who, however, appeared not to notice it.

No reference was made before the mother and son of the meeting of Kit Carey and Jennie in the presence of Red Hatchet, for the young girl had merely referred to having met the lieutenant on the trail, and had him return home with her.

But that night before retiring, when Mrs. Bernard had gone to her room, and Herbert had departed to look after his horses, Kit Carey told the settler of his capture and release of Red Hatchet, while Jennie made known to her father the threat he had made.

"The Sioux is a fool to think you would be his wife, Jennie; but he will not carry out his threat, depend upon it, and even if there is a war I will not be disturbed here in my home."

"May I ask what your reason is for believing that you and yours will be spared, Mr. Bernard, when others will suffer?" asked Kit Carey.

"Simply, sir, that my kindness to the Sioux in the past has made them my friends for all time."

"An Indian's friendship, sir, is as brittle as glass, and I beg that you will reconsider your determination to remain here when so much is at stake, and depart on the morrow with your family and belongings." [Pg 65]

"I shall remain, sir."

"You are taking desperate chances, I assure you, in refusing to go."

"Still I do refuse," was the firm reply.

Kit Carey said no more upon the subject, for he saw that it fretted his host to urge him against his decision to remain.

CHAPTER XIV.

KIT CAREY ON HIS ROUNDS.

[Pg 66]

After a very early breakfast Kit Carey mounted his horse, and rode away from the cabin of Vance Bernard.

He had thanked his host and hostess for their kind hospitality, and urged upon Mrs. Bernard to appeal to her husband to at once leave their home for a place of safety.

"Many have done so who could not afford it by any means, for they left their all to destruction, and Mr. Bernard should not risk the lives of those he loves to stay here," said the officer.

And from Mrs. Bernard came the calm rejoinder that they did not care to desert their home, for then all would be destroyed, while they held not the slightest dread of the Sioux.

"Blind fools!" came from between the teeth of the soldier, and in saying farewell to Jennie he again urged the necessity of getting her parents to depart.

"Father is determined to remain, and his word is my mother's law," was the reply.

"Has your brother no influence with your father?"

"He, too, urges that we remain, for he has perfect confidence in the Indians," was the reply, and Kit Carey could not but observe the look of sadness that came over the lovely face of this young girl, hidden away upon the frontier, almost within the very camps of the Indians.

It was with a feeling of deep regret and a foreboding of evil that he bade her good-by, and rode away from the cabin home. [Pg 67]

"Well, that is the strangest household I ever saw," he mused, as he rode along. "That man Bernard is a mystery, for he has seen better days, and he's educated and well informed. He has money, and yet is willing to remain here, hiding his wife, child, and son in a wilderness. His wife is a lady, yet blindly follows his will. His son is of a morose nature, and better suited to this wild life than any of them. But the girl? There's the rub, for she has it in her to reign as a belle in a

New York salon. She has been well educated by her parents I cannot but admit. Yet, she is as wild as a deer, too, for she goes about the country like an Indian, ropes cattle as only a cowboy can, runs like a Comanche, and is not only armed, but can use her weapons. I am so glad to find I was all wrong about my belief that she loved that Red Hatchet; but her protection of him deceived me. But must this beautiful girl be left to the mercy of these red fiends, for between the Bernard home and the Bad Lands, where lie thousands of Indians, there is no barrier. No, I will do all I can to protect them, as the stubbornness of Bernard will not allow him to save himself and family."

The night's rest and good food had refreshed both himself and horse, and he soon went at a more rapid pace, until he reached a position about on a line with his encircling Indian scouts.

Then he branched off to the left, and kept up the same pace for miles.

At last he came to a secure hiding-place, and here he found one of his squads of Indian cavalry.^[2] [Pg 68]

They were seven in number, had kept themselves thoroughly in hiding, except that by night two of their number had been off on a scout to the Bad Lands.

They had discovered that the hostiles were entrenched upon a high plateau, to which only a few passes led, and which they had fortified.

The force of the hostiles they could not get an estimate of.

Kit Carey sat down, and wrote a note to the nearest commanding officer of the military forces marching forward to hem the Sioux in, and stated what he had done with his Indian police, about where the different squads were stationed, and that he would report any move of the hostiles.

He also made known the fact that a settler, Vance Bernard, had refused to leave his home, and had within easy reach of the Indians, should they make a raid upon him, all that could tempt them to pillage and destroy, a well furnished house, filled store-rooms, grain, horses and cattle, while his wife, daughter, and son, comprised the household.

"It might be well," the letter continued, "to send an officer and force to remove Settler Bernard and his family from their home, thus preventing a tragedy which will be sure to follow their remaining there, or, at least, to send a troop to camp upon the place."

Having written this Kit Carey felt that he had done all he could to force Vance Bernard from the danger his stubbornness kept him in.

Kit determined to place his own men in a position, just between the settler's home and the hostiles' retreat, and to draw from the different squads several men, so as to enlarge the party that could, at least, serve as a small barrier to the Sioux making a raid in that direction. [Pg 69]

Sending his courier off with his report, Kit ordered the others to a suitable point, which he had observed on his ride there, and then started for his next post.

This was reached in a couple of hours, and two men were sent to reinforce the squad that was encamped between the Bad Lands and the Bernard home.

The third squad was next visited, and from this, too, men were drawn for the party nearest the Bernard ranch, and the news gleaned by his scouts here caused another courier to be dispatched to Colonel Forsythe's command.

This Indian courier bore the information that the Sioux chief, Big Foot, with his band, were encamped on Wounded Knee Creek, and expecting to remain there as an advance post of the hostiles, unless driven on into the main retreat in the Bad Lands.

The report ended with the words:

"I shall take two Indian scouts with me to-night, and send a more definite report of Big Foot's intention, if I can discover it, and the possibility of surrounding him before he can join the others, or do any mischief."

The courier departed for the command of Colonel Forsythe, the three men selected went off to join the squad near the Bernard ranch, and Kit Carey and a couple of his Indian scouts went off toward Wounded Knee Creek, leaving but three of the redskin guards on duty at that point to watch the hostiles.

[2] Called irregular cavalry in the army.

CHAPTER XV.

THE OFFICER-SPY.

[Pg 70]

Kit Carey knew Big Foot, the Sioux chief, as a brave, cunning, and dangerous man, and one whose influence was great among the different tribes.

Colonel Forsythe, he knew, was watching him, but would the soldiers be able to surround the Sioux leader and force his surrender before aid came from the hostiles in the Bad Lands, was a question hard to answer.

Still he was well aware that there was no better officer in the service than Colonel Forsythe, and if not hampered by orders from Washington,^[3] he would accomplish all that the commanding

general in the field expected of him.

On his way to scout around the band of Chief Big Foot, Kit Carey visited a fourth squad of his Indian scouts, and the largest one in point of numbers.

He sent four redskins from there to the band near the Bernard ranch, and dispatched two couriers, one to General Carr's command, another to General Brooke, with a full report of the situation as he had thus far discovered it.

[Pg 71]

In his report he stated:

"From what I can learn from my Indian scouts, old Chief Red Cloud is forced to remain among the hostiles, and there is some trouble between the Ogallalas and Brules. The following chiefs are known to be among the hostiles: Kicking Bear, Short Bull, High Hawk, Turning Hawk, and Little Wound, the last most dangerous of all. My Indian cavalry nearly surround the hostiles' camp, for I have seven squads of men in hiding, with a couple of men from each scouting by day and night. Each squad has orders to send couriers at once with any information of reinforcements of the hostiles, or movements of raiding bands. I go now toward the advanced camp of Chief Big Foot, whom Colonel Forsythe is moving against. If Big Foot's band is not plotting mischief I shall be surprised."

Written in duplicate on copying-paper, these reports were dispatched with all haste, and, scouting his way as he went, Kit Carey moved toward Wounded Knee Creek, where Big Foot's band were camped.

It was perilous and tedious work for the daring officer and the two Indian scouts who accompanied him; but he at last reached the vicinity of the Indian camp, and, unfolding his blanket, proceeded to carefully "make up."

In other words, the daring soldier intended to "play Injun," and get at the bottom facts of the situation.

His Indian scouts shook their heads dubiously as he progressed with his toilet, but aided him all in their power.

His handsome mustache was first sacrificed, and his face clean shaven.

[Pg 72]

Next came the coloring of the skin, face, neck, hands, and arms to the elbows.

The war-paint followed, with a wig of long, black hair, the head-dress and war-bonnet, buckskin suit of hunting-shirt, leggings, and moccasins.

The "ghost shirt"^[4] was next put on, and last the never-failing blanket.

If any one could then detect the dashing, handsome Lieutenant Kit Carey of the Seventh, beneath the paint, feathers, and make-up of an Indian chief, a keen eye he would have, indeed.

Thus accoutred for the work Kit Carey left the two Indians in camp with his horse, and started forth upon his mission of danger, for he had determined to know just how matters stood with Big Foot and his band.

The camp of the Sioux was on a level strip of ground, along the banks of a ravine some fifteen feet deep, and from fifty to a hundred feet in width.

The tepees of the Indians extended along the banks of the ravine for several hundred yards, and were formed in the shape of a crescent.

To reach the camp from the rear, by way of the ravine, Kit Carey found it no easy task; but it was accomplished, and at last he glided into the midst of the hostile band.

Dressed as he was, and it being night, he did not fear detection, for he spoke the Sioux tongue perfectly.

Then, too, his walk, movements, and appearance was that of a Sioux chief.

His greatest danger lay in not being recognized, but this he intended to overcome by claiming to be a Sioux chief, long absent from the tribe, and giving the name of a chief whom he knew to have been killed near Fort F— some months before, and whose fate was not known.

[Pg 73]

There were a few camp-fires, with groups of bucks, squaws, and children, about them, and one apart, where only warriors were seen.

Indians were moving to and fro, and it was very evident to the officer that some move of importance was about to be undertaken.

Folding his blanket closely about him he lay down in the shadow of a tepee, and watched and listened, for he was within hearing of the voices of the warriors about the fire, where no squaws or children were allowed.

Several had spoken to him, but with a grunt he had passed on, and thrown himself down near the tepee.

The light of the fire shone upon the faces of the Indians on the other side from where he lay, and one face he recognized at a glance.

It was the Chief Red Hatchet, and he was talking to the others in an earnest, vindictive tone.

A few words that he said reached the ears of the officer-spy, and he at once arose, glided away among the tepees, dropped down into the ravine unseen, and made his way rapidly back to his camp.

His Indian scouts were on the alert, and the three were soon flanking the camp at Wounded Knee and riding rapidly in the direction in which Colonel Forsythe's command was expected to approach.

It was just before dawn that the sound of many hoofs fell upon his ears, and he drew rein to await the approach of the command, for he knew that the splendid Seventh Cavalry were on the march. [Pg 74]

"Now, Chief Big Foot, you will never carry out the plan Chief Red Hatchet has decided upon, for the avengers of the brave Custer are hot on your trail."

Soon after the soldiers came in sight, and then Kit Carey hailed:

"Ho, the Seventh Cavalry!"

Instantly a halt was ordered, carbines clicked, and a stern order came:

"Advance and report yourself, sir!"

To the surprise of the advance guard three horsemen rode forward in the darkness, who appeared to be Indians.

"I am Lieutenant Carey of the Seventh, in disguise, and desire to see Colonel Forsythe," was the startling response of the supposed Indian chief, as he rode forward toward his regiment.

The men could hardly be kept from cheering when the gallant Carey appeared in the disguise of an Indian chief, for it told them that he had just come from some daring venture, for which he was famous.

"Ah! Carey, it is you in the guise of a Sioux chief?" cried Captain Wallace of K troop, riding forward and grasping his hand. "It is dangerous work for you, Lieutenant Carey, to ride upon the Seventh Cavalry rigged out as a Sioux chief in full war-paint."

"I joined the Sioux, Captain Wallace, to learn what Big Foot and his band were up to, and I have news for Colonel Forsythe," was Kit Carey's response.

"Then I will keep my advance guard at a halt and ride back with you, Carey, to the colonel," responded Captain Wallace, who little dreamed how close to him the Angel of Death was hovering, though had he known his fate, so soon to follow, the brave soldier would not have hesitated an instant in his duty.^[5] [Pg 75]

So back along the column of troopers they went in the early dawn, the soldiers supposing that the captain was taking in a Sioux chief prisoner, whom the two Indian police had captured.

Colonel Forsythe was soon found, and Captain Wallace said in his pleasant way:

"I do not bring you a Sioux prisoner, colonel, but Lieutenant Kit Carey."

"Lieutenant Carey! who would have ever suspected you of being other than a Sioux chief?" cried Colonel Forsythe, as Captain Wallace rode up to the commander of the troops.

[3] It is a well known fact that interference from Washington, writes an officer in the field, has proven more dangerous to a commander than the enemy in his front. The foe at his face he can fight, but the foe two thousand miles in his rear unnerves ever so gallant and able an officer.

[4] A white shirt put on over the other clothing and painted with Indian signs.

[5] Captain George D. Wallace was killed on the 27th of Dec., 1890, at Wounded Knee in the treacherous attack of the Sioux under Chief Big Foot, upon the Seventh Regiment of Cavalry. Captain Wallace was known as one of the most daring and able officers of his regiment.

CHAPTER XVI.

SURROUNDED.

[Pg 76]

Colonel Forsythe, a man of indomitable pluck, and a skilled officer, himself ready to do and dare anything for his country, gazed at the painted face of Kit Carey with a look of considerable interest, for well he knew that the young officer had not thus disguised, and I may say disfigured himself, without some good reason.

To be thus in the costume and war-paint of a Sioux chief meant a great deal for one of Kit Carey's record, and that record was pretty well known in the army by his brother officers and men alike.

His career as a border boy, then his cadetship at West Point, followed by his brilliant Indian campaigning in the Black Hills country, and again fighting the Apaches, to be sent back to his old commander and friend, Colonel Crandall, had made the name of Kit Carey, first lieutenant of cavalry, a popular one in the army, and it was respected by all who knew his record.

Now he had come to the front on special duty, and Colonel Forsythe had no doubt but that he had already done good service.

"I will make my report, Colonel Forsythe, and then slip out of this rig, and try and appear as a pale-face," said Kit Carey, amused at the manner in which the colonel regarded him.

"You have been called a very handsome man, Carey, but, my word for it, your best girl would deny the impeachment if she saw you now," Captain Wallace said, with a laugh. [Pg 77]

"If we could keep him in that make-up there would be more chance for us homely fellows with the girls," muttered a handsome young lieutenant.

"I'll hear your report, Lieutenant Carey," Colonel Forsythe said, and thus commanded the officer-spy responded:

"I disguised myself, sir, to enter the camp of Big Foot, feeling sure that he was playing a double game. My orders, sir, were to take a squad of Indian cavalry and scout thoroughly about the Bad Lands, and to report to the different commanders the actions of the hostiles."

"Yes, I received your communication yesterday morning, and I feel that we shall capture Big Foot's band before nightfall."

"You will, sir; he is preparing to join the hostiles, and you will have to surround him to capture his braves, as they will make a break, sir, if they discover you are in pursuit of them."

"Major Whiteside, with the first battalion, is already flanking them, and will cut them off before noon."

"Then their capture is assured, sir. They are out of provisions, and the warriors are desperate, while the squaws and children are in an ugly mood. Red Hatchet, who is also a medicine chief, and has a band of able young bucks in the Bad Lands, reached Big Foot's camp last night, and he is using his whole powers of oratory to make them fight. Finding what they intended doing, I slipped out of the camp and came to report to you, sir."

"You did well, Lieutenant Carey; but you took terrible chances in going into Big Foot's camp, good as is your disguise." [Pg 78]

"I speak Sioux fairly well, sir, and have practiced playing Indian before," was the modest response, followed by the words:

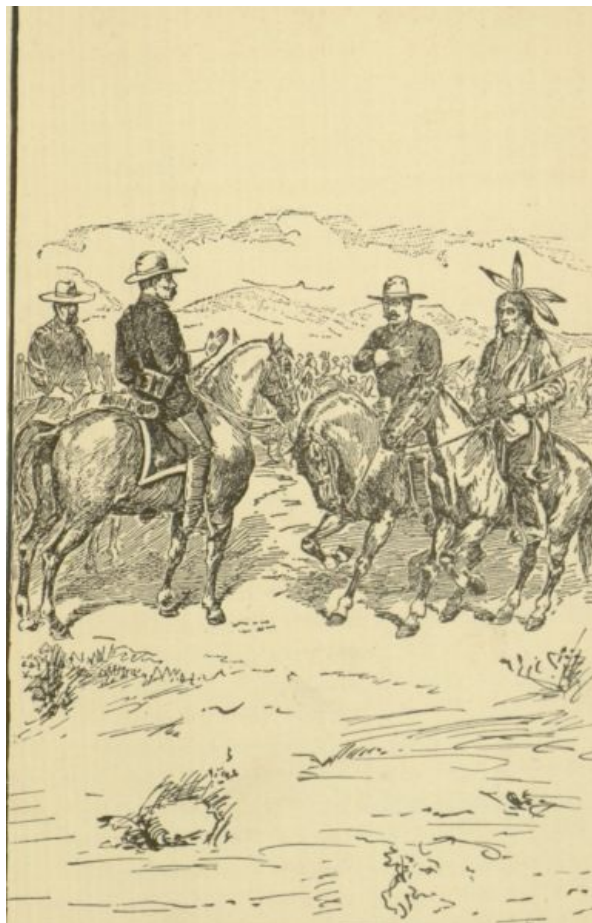
"I would like to remain with you, sir, until I knew Big Foot and his band were in your hands, for then I can dismiss his force from my mind when I return to my post."

"I shall be glad of your assistance, Carey, I assure you," courteously replied Colonel Forsythe, and after having located the exact position of Big Foot, from a few words with Kit Carey, he turned to the commander of K troop, and said:

"Captain Wallace, you will move on again with the advance, and we must keep near enough to be within call of Major Whiteside, for you remember how Big Foot escaped from Colonel Sumner, and this time there must be no mistake."

"No, sir, there shall not be," said Captain Wallace, as he saluted and rode again to the front, where his troops pressed on toward Porcupine Creek, where it was hoped Major Whiteside would corral the cunning Indian chief.

Having taken off his Indian togs, and bundled them up "for future reference," as he said, and gotten rid of his war-paint, Kit Carey reported for duty, looking very youthful without his long mustache, which had been the envy of so many of his brother officers.



"I do not bring you a Sioux prisoner, Colonel, but Lieut. Kit Carey."

(See page 75)

After a halt for breakfast the command moved on once more, and Lieutenant Carey was sent on after Major Whiteside, to give him the advantage of his knowledge of the country.

[Pg 79]

As Colonel Forsythe had expected, the first battalion headed Big Foot's band off during the day, and the Sioux finding themselves corraled wisely submitted.

The soldiers encamped to the north of the Indian tepees, while a line of pickets was thrown out around the Sioux, and as Colonel Forsythe was within easy reach no one anticipated trouble to follow.

When he found that Big Foot had hesitated too long to carry out his plot, the daring young chief, Red Hatchet, began to plan deeper mischief still.

He went to the tepee of the medicine chief, and the two talked long and earnestly together through the night.

First one brave of prominence would be sent for to come to the medicine tepee, and he would hear what the two had to say.

Then he would glide away in silence, and in the darkness seek another warrior, mutter a few words, and he, too, would seek the medicine tepee.

Thus warrior after warrior went through the night to the tepee in which Red Hatchet was planning a red deed of treachery to be carried out upon the morrow.

"I don't half like that going one by one of warriors to the medicine tepee. If Red Hatchet is in there he is plotting mischief, that is certain," said Kit Carey to Captain Wallace, who met the lieutenant coming from a closer inspection of the Indian camp than could be obtained from the position occupied by the soldiers.

CHAPTER XVII.

BROKEN PLEDGES.

[Pg 80]

There was an air of triumph among the soldiers that night in the camp.

A feeling of satisfaction that the famous Chief Big Foot, with his band had been surrounded, and the morning would find them submissive captives.

Still there were those wearing the shoulder-straps of an officer who were not so wholly satisfied that all would go well on the morrow.

Old Indian fighters had their doubts about the pledges, and an officer, whose hair was turning gray, and who was a bachelor by reason of a fair one's broken pledge to him in the long ago, said in a cynical tone:

"I would no sooner trust an Indian's pledge than I would a woman's. They may mean what they say at the time, but let the opportunity offer and the promise is cast to the winds."

Among those who held the same views as the old bachelor officer, as to the Indians, but not to women, was Kit Carey.

He seemed to dread trouble, and he kept a watch upon every movement of the savages.

He wished to discover who was in the tent with the medicine man of Big Foot's band, for he felt sure that it was Red Hatchet.

But this fact he could not discover, and he went to the tent, where he was quartered during his stay with the command, determined to be up bright and early in the morning, and see if Red Hatchet could be found in the camps.

[Pg 81]

The day dawned and found the soldiers in camp, and position as well.

Colonel Forsythe had arrived, and noting the able placing of the troops by Major Whiteside, made little changes in the plans of that officer.

There was a silence resting upon the Indian camp that seemed ominous.

None of the soldiers knew just what their colonel intended to do, but all felt certain that the Indians were to be disarmed.

Major Whiteside had distributed rations among them the day before, and received full assurance from the chiefs that no further resistance was intended, that they were, in truth, glad to be captured.

But, then, to take an Indian's weapons is like making a demand upon his heart's blood.

Would they yield up their weapons peacefully was the question all asked, and no one answered satisfactorily.

Yes, there was one who felt that they would not, that there would be trouble; but this trouble the troops were able to subdue, for the redskins were surrounded, and, it seemed, almost at the mercy of the Boys in Blue.

When the sun rose a cordon of cavalry began to form in three parts of a square before the Indian camp, while the Hotchkiss guns, Light Battery, under Captain Allyn Capson, were ordered to an advantageous position by Colonel Forsythe.

In the open space before the tepees of the redskins and the camps of the soldiers, and near their line, the Indians were moving about in a sullen and uneasy manner, watching their foes with angry glances. [Pg 82]

Nearest to them stood an officer calmly surveying the situation, and he was accompanied by two of the Indian police, mounted, one of whom held the horse of the lieutenant, who was Kit Carey.

He was watching the face of each Indian as he appeared, for he was on the watch for Red Hatchet, whom he still feared meant mischief of some kind.

Soon Colonel Forsythe left his quarters and moved down toward the open space, where he was joined by Major Whiteside, and with both officers were their adjutants.

Then the Indians were called upon to approach the soldiers' tent, in which was Big Foot, their chief, lying ill.

As they came up they were counted by Lieutenant Nicholason, and then came the demand that sunk deep into their hearts:

"Chiefs, you and your warriors must give up your weapons!"

It was Colonel Forsythe who made the demand, and the warriors started, gazed at each other and huddled more closely together, their faces becoming black with fury and hatred.

Then a chief spoke for all, and said:

"We have no weapons. The Great Father has broken faith with us, for we are poor, sick, and hungry, with no arms to kill game for our squaws and children."

"It is not so, chief, for you are all thoroughly armed, and you have surrendered to us, and you must give up your weapons at once," was the stern response of Colonel Forsythe. [Pg 83]

"We have no arms to give up. Let the pale-face warriors take us as we are."

"No! you are thoroughly armed, as I well know. If you refuse to surrender your weapons then search shall be made for them. I shall say no more, chief."

And then out of the medicine lodge came a crouching form.

It was a medicine chief, covered with robes, with body bent and lance in hand.

As he came he chanted a wild war-song of his people.

Instantly Kit Carey's eyes fell upon him, heard his words, and he walked rapidly toward him.

But the medicine chief, apparently an old man, did not appear to notice him, even when sternly came the words in the Sioux tongue:

"Let the medicine chief beware! I understand his words to his braves!"

But the medicine chief sang on, and, walking rapidly toward the colonel, Kit Carey told him what the medicine chief was saying, and that he was urging the warriors to refuse to yield their weapons, if they died with them in their hands.

Quickly Colonel Forsythe gave an order to Captain Wallace to dismount his men and form about the braves.

The soldiers were quickly dismounted, and formed in open file between the warriors and their tepees.

Then details of soldiers were ordered to search the tepees, and as they moved forward to obey, under command of Captain Wallace and Lieutenant Carey, the bent form of the medicine chief straightened up partially, and he began to make incantations to the sun, and chant aloud a war-song to the Indian messiah. [Pg 84]

The effect upon the Indians was electrical, for they stood like wild beasts at bay; their squaws and children caught up the weird chant of the medicine man, who suddenly stooped, grasped up two handfuls of dirt, and threw them upon the soldiers.

Then he threw off his robes, and, appearing in his full costume as a chief, revealed that he was the ghost spirit, marked with red Indian characters.

At the same instant he drew from beneath his blanket a rifle, and fired full at Kit Carey, while from his lips came the war-cry that ushered in the terrible tragedy that followed.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE BLOW FALLS.

As the medicine chief threw off his robes, and straightening up, rifle in hand, sought to find his victim, Kit Carey recognized who he was. [Pg 85]

It was Red Hatchet, as he had half-suspected, when the wild chant of the medicine chief urged

the bands to strike at the soldiers, whose bullets in return would take no effect upon them if they struck into brave hearts.

But his long stooping posture had unsteadied the nerves of Red Hatchet, and his bullet, though well aimed, simply cut a button from over the heart of Kit Carey.

That first shot was the signal that brought a volley, for concealed beneath their blankets the warriors had their rifles and revolvers, and full upon the surprised soldiers poured a terrible, death-dealing volley.

Brave men fell dead and dying ere they could draw a weapon, while with one terrific war-cry the Indians made a rush for their tepees.

Then began a battle the like of which was never seen before.

It was a battle of desperation upon the one side, of indignation and revenge upon the other.

The soldiers rallied quickly for the fight, and began to move down upon the tepees, for there were the gallant Wallace, Lieutenant Carey, and the detail of soldiers sent to search the camp.

Their presence there meant death to them unless rescue came quickly.

[Pg 86]

The squaws, maddened by the firing, drew weapons they had hidden about them, and fought like demons.

Half-grown boys and girls, enveloped in blankets, and looking like braves, dashed about upon their ponies, dealing death wherever they could strike a blow.

It was a wild, weird scene, an Inferno while it lasted.

Brought to bay among the tepees, Captain Wallace felt that he was to die, but he intended to fall with his face to the foe, as a brave soldier should.

An Indian warrior rushed upon him, firing as he came.

Wounded, though he was, the brave Wallace avenged himself then and there.

Two other braves bounded toward him, and a sharp hand-to-hand fight followed.

They, too, fell dead, though the gallant soldier staggered from the wounds he had received, and seemed about to fall.

But no! once more he turned to meet his foes, and two more confronted him, one a chief with uplifted tomahawk.

The last two shots of the captain's revolver dropped one Indian dead and wounded the other.

But that other came on, unheeding his four comrades who lay dead at the brave captain's feet, and now it was sword against tomahawk.

To the hilt in the heart of the Indian chief sank the sword of Captain Wallace, just as the tomahawk, though held in a dying hand, fell with fatal force upon the soldier's head.

As Captain Wallace sank among his foes, fitting monument to show how he died, Kit Carey dashed up, sword in one hand, revolver in the other.

[Pg 87]

"Great God! it is the noble Wallace! I am too late to save, but not to avenge. A noble death for a soldier to die, my gallant comrade," and the speaker glanced at the foes lying around the dead captain.

As he finished speaking he placed a whistle to his lips, and gave two sharp calls.

"Now to find Red Hatchet, for this is his work. Hark! how those Hotchkiss guns roar. Captain Capson is doing his duty well."

The fight was now surging along the ravine, the Hotchkiss gun pouring its deadly fire upon the flying redskins, while the scene of the battle was sickening to behold.

In answer to the two calls, up dashed two Indians who had come with Kit Carey, one leading his horse.

"Ah! there is the colonel, so I shall report my intention of following Red Hatchet," and, throwing himself into his saddle, Kit Carey rode up to Colonel Forsythe, who was doing all in his power to check the firing, now the Indians were in full flight.

A few words of explanation, and Kit Carey dashed away like the wind, followed by his two Indian guards.

"We must catch Chief Red Hatchet," he explained, and so on they swept, leaving the ravine and riding so as to head off the chief whom the two police had seen take to flight alone, after he had started the deadly combat.

Taking the direction they had seen him disappear in, Kit Carey soon found his trail, and followed it with the horses on a run, and leaving Wounded Knee Creek and its red tragedy rapidly behind him.

[Pg 88]

But Red Hatchet was splendidly mounted, his horse was fresh, and the cunning chief well knew that his own safety lay in reaching the Bad Lands, and giving to the Sioux there his story of the treachery of the soldiers.

He had planned well not to be looked upon as a deserter from the field, by the few warriors, who, like himself, would escape from the fatal field.

He had hoped, by a perfect surprise, to massacre so many soldiers in the first few volleys that the others would be driven to flight.

Once they stampeded, their camps and weapons would fall into the hands of the Indians, and many of their horses, too, and a quick retreat could be made to the Bad Lands, where the story of the battle would inspire at once courage in the heart of the faintest-hearted brave to resist their foes, the pale-faces.

With this in view to start the attack, and reap its fruits of success, Red Hatchet during the night had instructed the young warriors in the duty each was to perform.

A few were to seize the horses of the cavalry men, others were to kill the officers in their first volley, and more were to make a rush for the soldiers' tents, while the reserve of women and children were to rush up from among the tepees and thus complete the panic that had been started.

But Red Hatchet had smarted under the hesitation of the braves; they did not act promptly, and he saw victory slipping from his grasp, when K troop cut the warriors off from their tepees, and were sent to search the Indian camp for arms.

This must not be, the Sioux must be forced to strike the blow, even if it came late, and so the daring chief grasped his hands full of dirt, threw it upon the soldiers, a sign he knew that the braves must understand, and, understanding, act, and then raising his rifle he selected his victim and fired.

[Pg 89]

The result is known, and Red Hatchet was rejoiced to see the first volley tell upon the soldiers.

But then came the rebound, a boomerang that recoiled upon himself, for the gallant soldiers of the Seventh were not to be driven like frightened buffalo before the hunter, were not to be slaughtered like sheep in a fold, for they rallied at once, and far above the din came the ringing words from the lips of Kit Carey:

"Men of the Seventh! remember the gallant Custer! Men of the Seventh, avenge Custer!"

Ringing cheers answered this appeal to the memory of the battle of the Big Horn, and the soldiers of the Seventh swept down over the field, while, with a cry of fury and hatred, Red Hatchet sprang upon an officer's horse and fled from the fatal field.

CHAPTER XIX.

A WARNING LETTER.

[Pg 90]

The trail of Red Hatchet was followed at a pace which Lieutenant Kit Carey hoped would bring him up with the Sioux chief, and then and there Captain Wallace and the other gallant soldiers of the Seventh would have been avenged, or another one would have fallen a victim to the cunning and desperate fugitive.

But Red Hatchet had been bent upon escaping, for the blow he had struck must be followed up quickly and cruelly. So he rode at a pace that defied pursuit with the start he had of several miles.

Finding as he came to a ridge that gave him a view a long distance ahead, that no dust was in sight to mark the presence of the Sioux chief, Kit Carey determined not to punish his own and his two red comrades' horses by pressing them so hard, so he drew rein.

He had, in his short interview with Colonel Forsythe, been told to notify the other commanders of the fight at Wounded Knee, the treacherous act of the Indians.

So he rode at once for the nearest of his red sentinels' camps, and, arriving by night, at once dispatched couriers with hastily penciled reports of the affair, dispatching them to the various commanders who were tightening the line around the retreat of the hostiles.

There was another red courier sent also on a mission, but not to a military commander.

His destination was the Bernard ranch, and he bore the following note, hastily written:

[Pg 91]

"IN CAMP OF RED SKIN SCOUTS,

"Near Bad Lands, Dec. 29, 1890.

MY DEAR MR. BERNARD:

"I write but a few lines to say that after the surrender of Big Foot's Band, on Wounded Knee Creek, yesterday, to Colonel Forsythe, the Indians broke faith, fired on the troops of the Seventh Cavalry, and a fierce fight followed, resulting in the killing and wounding of many soldiers and redskins. I regret to say, women and children being among the latter.

"The instigator of the treacherous act was a Sioux chief, who professes friendship for you and your family, and he escaped to the Bad Lands, in spite of my hot pursuit of him.

"That he will strike another blow quickly, I do not doubt, and I therefore beg of you, by the love you bear your family, to remove them without a moment's delay,

to a place of safety.

"I go from here to visit my line of scouts, and shall then come to my main force near your ranch, where I hope to find you and yours far away.

"In haste, and with remembrances to your wife and daughter, believe me.

"Very sincerely yours,

"KIT CAREY,

"Lieutenant of Cavalry, U.S. Army."

Having ordered the Indian soldier who bore this letter to deliver it with all dispatch, and then go to the main camp of the redskin scouts and await his coming, Kit Carey, accompanied by two of his men, set off on his rounds of visiting the other posts.

Tired though he was, and greatly needing rest, he did not spare himself, but held on his way, determined to visit each post and reach his main position, near the Bernard ranch, as soon as possible.

He felt that his last appeal to Vance Bernard would move him to a realization of the danger in remaining longer at his home, and he hoped to find the place deserted when he next went there. [Pg 92]

"That Sioux chief will not delay in striking his blow by capturing the settler's pretty daughter, I feel certain, and it will be criminal in Bernard if he should allow her to be taken through his stubbornness," mused Kit Carey, as he rode along on his night trail to his posts.

"If I could go into the Bad Lands I could discover just what is going on there, and I am half tempted to do it. I have my Indian make-up with me, costume and all, and the temptation to again play the spy is great. I believe it would get me a captaincy if I did it successfully and with good results; but it would the more surely get me an obituary notice in the papers if I was suspected. I'll see what my two red soldiers think of it."

He called the two Indians alongside of him then, and said:

"Flying Wolf, what do you and Foe Killer think of my going into the camp of the hostiles?"

The two Indians were delighted with a man who had the pluck to contemplate such a daring act, but they at once urged against it, as certain death would be the result of discovery.

This the officer felt confident of, and yet he was so anxious to discover just what the force in the Bad Lands was, and the intentions of the hostiles, that against all risks he determined to go, so he said to the Indians:

"We will seek a hiding-place yonder among the rocks, and I will put on my costume as a Sioux chief."

They rode toward the place indicated, when suddenly there came a warning from Flying Wolf, and the three barely had time to seek shelter when there came in sight a long file of Indian horsemen, and they were moving toward the settlements.

CHAPTER XX.

A CLOSE CALL.

[Pg 93]

The discovery of the file of Indian horsemen by Kit Carey and his two Cheyenne scouts, at once put an end to the intention of the officer of boldly entering the camps of the hostiles.

To dismount and grasp the noses of their horses, to prevent their neighing, and stand as motionless as the rocks about them, was the work of a second, and the lieutenant and his two Cheyenne soldiers in the gloom of the night, though in full sight of the passing horsemen appeared like the rocks about them.

There was no retreat behind them, for the way was impassable, and to go to the right or left, up or down the ridge, meant discovery.

They had been fairly caught, and in the worst position for them that could be found anywhere.

If the Indian horsemen took them in at a glance, as rocks, in the darkness, and so passed on, all was well; but if discovered then it must be a fight to the death.

Holding a position for defense at least, and their number not known to the officer and his redskin soldiers, might, by a hot fire, put the Sioux to flight, thus giving them an opportunity to get away themselves.

But if not, then they must remain and fight it out right there.

These thoughts passed rapidly through the mind of Kit Carey as he stood there, grasping the nose of his horse with his left hand, and holding his repeating rifle, a splendid Evans repeating gun, shooting thirty-five times. [Pg 94]

The Cheyennes were armed with Winchesters, and stood ready, as did their commander.

Then, too, all three had their revolvers, and the Sioux would think a whole troop was there should they discover them, and cause them to open fire.

In spite of the peril of his situation, Lieutenant Carey calmly counted his foes.

He saw by the feather bonnet, indistinctly seen, that a chief rode in advance.

Then came the braves in single file until thirty had passed.

Kit Carey gave a sigh of relief as they went by without discovering them, and said to the Cheyennes:

"A chief and thirty braves. They cannot be very dangerous, or intending an attack. Some scouting party only, I think."

The Cheyennes thought the same, and then came a consultation as to which way the Sioux were going, and was it best to follow them, or go on into the Bad Lands, as the lieutenant had intended.

Kit Carey wished to get the ideas of the scouts, for he knew that they were well worthy of consideration, and the result was that he decided to send one of the Indian soldiers upon the trail of the party of Sioux, and the other ahead by a flank movement, to the command of the general toward whom they were making their way.

As for himself, he would go on his rounds to his sentinel camps, for that only a band of thirty Sioux were leaving the Bad Lands did not disturb him. [Pg 95]

Had there been several hundred warriors moving toward the commands, or the settlements, the officer would have at once suspected an ambush, an attack, or a raid.

So the Cheyennes went on the trail, one to follow the Sioux, the other to head them off, and as soon as their situation was learned to ride with full speed for the nearest military force, and report to the commander the discovery, as one of Kit Carey's couriers.

The lieutenant had by no means given up his intention of entering the Bad Lands himself.

But it must be done by night, and in his disguise as a Sioux chief.

He would not dare be seen by day in the Bad Lands, no matter how thorough his disguise might be, for well he knew that some keen eyes would recognize him among the Indians.

So he would go to the camps of his Cheyennes, let all know of the battle of Wounded Knee Creek, and dispatch his couriers to put each command on the alert, against other Indians making for the Bad Lands, or a force of warriors riding out to make a sudden dash.

So, through the night, he held on his way, circling around the hostiles' retreat, and visiting one after the other of his posts.

The sun was well up when he reached the last position, the camp nearest to the Bernard ranch.

He had there now fourteen men, and the very pick of his Cheyenne scouts.

They were encamped in a ravine, which a whole tribe on the march might pass near and never suspect the existence of. [Pg 96]

It was a basin among the rocks, with a ravine for an exit and entrance.

Water and grass were there, and from the rocks above a commanding view could be obtained of the country in the direction of the hostiles' camp, and here were kept two sentinels, hidden from view themselves, yet able to see any one approaching from the Bad Lands.

The Indian sentinels saw the approach of their commander, and signaled it to their comrades in the basin.

At last he arrived, utterly worn out, and determined that as soon as he had had some breakfast he would throw himself upon his blankets to get what rest he could.

His scouts had seen nothing of the hostiles, and no party of Sioux making for the Bad Lands had passed within sight.

His courier had returned from the Bernard ranch, and brought him a note, which read as follows:

"LIEUTENANT CAREY:

"DEAR SIR.—Thanking you for your second warning by letter, I beg to say that I shall not leave my ranch, as I can see no reason for so doing, as I regard the Sioux as my friends, in spite of the war of the army upon them.

"Respectfully,

"VANCE BERNARD."

"Stubborn fool!" ejaculated the officer, while the courier drew from some secret receptacle about his clothing another note and handed it to his commander.

CHAPTER XXI.

A STARTLING DISCOVERY.

[Pg 97]

The Cheyenne Indians under the command of Lieutenant Carey had come to almost idolize their captain.

They knew his record as a border boy, when he had roamed the country fearlessly in company with the old hermit of the Black Hills, his adopted father, and afterward alone, as a young guide and hunter.

They knew him as a soldier later on, and now that he had them under his command they felt that his word was law, and they could follow him unflinchingly wherever he would lead them.

His manner toward them was gentle, yet firm.

He treated them as human beings, not as machines, and gave them the best of food and clothing.

He allowed no man to be forced to ride an inferior horse, or carry a weapon that was not the best, and with each half-dozen redskin soldiers went a pack animal, carrying supplies, blankets, and all to make them comfortable.

Not a thing would he ask of them that he would not do himself, and he was ready to face any danger that they did, and more.

His bearing commanded their respect, his indomitable pluck won their admiration, and his skill as a trailer and fighter made him their idol.

Such were the redskin soldiers under Kit Carey, and he knew that he could depend upon them to a man, and to the death. [Pg 98]

Had they had a different captain the result would have been so far different that most of them might have been there in the hostile camp.

It is the perfect officer that makes the perfect soldier, and this is the rule without exception.

A soldier likes thorough discipline and a strict commander, if his comfort is looked to and his heart and spirit appealed to.

The courier who had been sent to the Bernard ranch had handed over the letter of the settler, as though that one was all that he was the bearer of.

Then, when he had seen his captain read it through, he had quietly dragged out another letter.

That of Vance Bernard was written in a bold, masculine hand, showing the writer to be a man of education.

The second letter was addressed in a refined feminine hand, and it was sealed with wax.

"Where did you get this, Owl Eyes?" asked the officer, in some surprise, referring to the second letter.

"Snow Flower see Owl Eyes, and tell him wait at creek. Snow Flower come to creek, and give that to Owl Eyes."

"Ah! I see," and Kit Carey proceeded to read the missive from Snow Flower, as Jennie Bernard was known far and wide among the redskins, Cheyennes, Sioux, and all who passed her father's house, where an Indian was always a welcome guest, far more so it seemed, than a pale-face.

The letter was dated at "Bernard ranch," and was as follows:

"MY DEAR LIEUTENANT CAREY.—Taking advantage of your courier coming to the ranch, with another warning for us to depart, I write to tell you that strange things have happened here since your departure, and I am in the greatest distress, as well as a quandary, as to what to do. I can say no more now. But I am going to seek your advice as one I know I can trust, and rely upon as a friend. Will you come to the spot where you saw me with Red Hatchet, day after to-morrow, at noon, and I will meet you there. If you cannot be there yourself please have one of your Indian couriers there to conduct me to your camp, for I must see you, and delays are dangerous.

[Pg 99]

"Sincerely yours,

"JENNIE."

"Well, what does this mean?" exclaimed the officer, when he had read the letter.

"'My dear Lieutenant Carey,' it begins, and signed simply 'Jennie.' Well, she's a dangerous-eyed little beauty, and were I not already mortgaged to Violet, I fear her bright eyes would pierce my breast farther than any Indian bullet has done thus far. Bah! I must not be so conceited and let my vanity run away with me, simply because a pretty girl has written me a note urging to see me, doubtless to get me to make another effort to influence that mule of a father of hers to go away from danger. Well, I shall be there at the rendezvous, and it is a coincidence that I am here now in this camp, with all the men I could spare, to stand between her and danger. What if those redskins we saw on the march last night should circle around and strike the Bernard ranch. Yet hardly, for they would have come direct, along the trail we are now camped on. I cannot account for Bernard's strange conduct in not leaving his home. It was infatuation with him, the idea that the Sioux will not harm him or his. But I must seek rest now, as I am nearly dead for sleep," and in five minutes more the young officer was sleeping the sleep of a man with a conscience wholly at ease.

[Pg 100]

The two Cheyenne sentinels perched up among the pines upon the rocks were watching the country lying between them and the Bad Lands.

That there was a foe to come from their rear they had no thought, for in that direction lay the homes of settlers, the land of civilization.

Then, too, they could not see but a few hundred yards over the broken country in the rear of their camp, while for miles the eye stretched away in the direction of the retreat of the hostiles.

And suddenly from the rear came the rapid clatter of hoofs, and before the sentinels could hardly have time to signal down to their comrades in the ravine, a party of Sioux horsemen swept by like the wind, heading for the retreat of the hostiles.

It was the same band that Lieutenant Carey had seen the night before, and the chief was now discovered to be Red Hatchet, while riding by his side, a captive, was Jennie Bernard.

CHAPTER XXII.

JENNIE LEARNS A SECRET.

[Pg 101]

Jennie Bernard had had good reason for sending the letter to Lieutenant Carey, which she had given to Owl Eyes to hand to him.

Just before the arrival of the Indian courier at the ranch, Mr. Bernard had called to her to accompany him to a favorite retreat of the young girl's upon the bank of the creek, where Herbert had erected a rustic arbor.

The face of the settler was pale and stern, more so than Jennie had ever seen it before, and she wondered why it was so.

"Sit there, Jennie, and hear what I have to say to you," he said, sternly.

She obeyed in silence, dropping upon the rustic seat in the arbor, while he stood in the door, leaning with folded arms against a post.

"Why, father, why do you appear so stern to me? Have I done aught to offend you?" she asked.

"No, but it is the fear that you may do so, that causes me to speak to you now."

"I am ready to listen, father."

"Child, have I not always been a kind father to you?" he said, with sudden emphasis.

"Yes, father, though I could have wished that you would let me show my affection more, and not rebuff me as you have often done."

"Do not speak of that, child; but tell me if your mother has not been all that a mother could be to you?" [Pg 102]

"Everything, father, only I wish mother would have let me help her to bear the sorrow I know she carries in her heart. Ah! yes, mother has been ever so loving and kind."

"And your brother Herbert, Jennie, what of him?"

Jennie sighed and answered after a moment of hesitation.

"I fear, father, that Herbert loves himself more than all else in the world. He is a strange being, and one I confess I cannot understand."

"Yet you love him devotedly?" eagerly asked Vance Bernard.

"I would not be a true woman, father, could I not love my own brother, for he has been good to me, and means well; but why all these questions, father?"

"Because I have a secret to tell you."

"A secret to tell me?"

"Yes, and one that may grieve you deeply, must do so, in fact; but still it is best for you to know it now, especially since that young coxcomb of a lieutenant has been here."

"You surely do not refer to Lieutenant Carey as a coxcomb, father?"

"I surely do, for what is he but a handsome fool in uniform?" was the angry reply.

"His record does not show him to be a fool, father, though handsome, exceedingly so, I admit that he is."

"That is just it! I knew he had turned your head with his fine manners, handsome face, and fine form, all of which I grant he possesses."

"I admire him, yes, father; but I have met Lieutenant Carey but once, and I have too good sense to make a fool of myself about any man," was the indignant reply. [Pg 103]

"Well, his coming caused me to tell you the secret I now must do, for I see that otherwise it would end in your crazy regard for him, and matters would not go as I wish, and am determined to have them."

"I think, father, that I have ever proven myself an obedient girl to you and to mother."

"Oh, yes, I have no complaint to make, Jennie. But now to the secret I have to tell you."

"Yes, father."

The man seemed deeply confused, and moved as well.

His face flushed and paled alternately, and he hesitated in what he had to say in a painful manner, until Jennie became alarmed lest the secret she was to learn was to be something terrible, indeed.

"Come, father, you seem deeply moved, so tell me what it is, be it what it may, and, perhaps, I can help you to bear some great sorrow which now I know nothing of," and Jennie arose and stepped toward the man; but he started back, and cried excitedly:

"No, no, do not touch me, do not speak kindly to me, child, for I have deceived you."

"Deceived me, father?"

"I have."

"But how?"

"That is what I wish to tell you, only I do not know how to begin."

"I forgive you beforehand, father, if you have done me a wrong."

"No, you must not do that, girl, you must hate me," and he spoke almost savagely.

[Pg 104]

But, seeing the alarmed look upon her face, he controlled himself by a great effort, and said:

"I will delay no longer, for you must know, and at once, as the happiness of us all depends upon it. Jennie, did you never note how wholly unlike myself, your mother and brother you are?"

"I have, father, both in looks and feelings. I have wondered how it could be that Herbert was so like you and mother, for he resembles you both, and I so wholly unlike you."

"The reason is plain, for not a drop of my blood, or your mother's, flows in your veins."

"Father!" and the girl was upon her feet again in an instant, her face white, her form quivering, while her eyes gazed unflinchingly upon the man before her, for he would not meet her gaze.

Again he mastered himself, and said:

"It is true, Jennie, you are our child only by adoption. When a little girl I adopted you, and we decided to bring you up in ignorance of your true parentage, and so kept the secret from you."

"Was there dishonor in my parentage, sir, that you so decided? Was it to shield me from dishonor that you gave me your name?" and the voice of the young girl was cold and stern now.

"No, oh, no! your father was a nobleman. We were friends from boyhood, and we sought our fortunes together in the mines. Your mother died of grief at hearing of his death, for he was killed in the mines, my child. Then it was that I decided to adopt you, and my wife was more than willing to do so."

[Pg 105]

"Then, why have you now told me, sir, if you intended to keep the secret from me?" asked Jennie, in a tone that caused the man to glance anxiously into her face, for the child, as he called her, seemed to have suddenly become a woman.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A GIRL AT BAY.

[Pg 106]

At first Vance Bernard made no reply to this direct question put by Jennie.

He had told her the secret, that she was not his child, that she was only his daughter and his wife's by adoption.

He seemed to feel better that this weight was off his mind for some reason, yet she had taken it so calmly, so coldly, where he had expected tears and regret, that he hardly knew what else to say.

It was not until she again put the question to him, as to why he had then told her the secret, that he answered:

"Well, your mother——"

"Not my mother, sir, except by adoption, though she has ever been good and kind to me. What is my real name, sir?"

"Come, Jennie, don't be so formal, but call me father again, for I have tried to be all to you that your own father could have been."

"I know no other, sir, so I will call you father, if you wish; but you did not tell me what my father's name was?"

"His name was Woodbridge."

"His first name, please, father?"

"Brookes Woodbridge."

"Thank you, and my mother's name?"

"She was a Miss Virginia Margrave."

"Where was their home, sir?"

[Pg 107]

"In New York City."

"And are they buried there?"

The man seemed to grow nervous under this questioning, and replied:

"Your mother is buried in New York, your father in the Black Hills, where he died."

"He was killed, you say?"

"Yes."

"By whom?"

"It was never known, my child; but it was supposed that a brother miner did the deed, for he was found dead in his cabin, and had been robbed."

"My poor, poor father. Would that I knew his murderer, for never would I rest until I had seen him ascend the gallows," said Jennie, in a tone that showed she was in deadly earnest.

"You will never know, Jennie, for I tried in vain to find out. As I told you, your father and I were friends, the dearest of friends, and his interests and mine were the same. I had gone East, on account of the illness of my wife, and returned after an absence of several months to find that he had been killed and robbed of his savings, which were considerable. What money he had was in his wife's hands at home, but she died, and, of course, you are the heir, and it amounts to some twenty thousand dollars, that I now hold in trust for you. Not a large fortune, but a nice little sum, my child. I gave up the mine after your poor father's death, and went elsewhere and one day struck it rich. It was when I took my first large savings home that I went to see you, and so took you into my keeping, for it had been your father's wish, as his papers showed. Then I returned to the mines, worked at my mine until I got the cream out of it, and sold out for a fair price, when I looked about for a home and established myself here. When settled I sent for your mother and brother to come here with you. Now, Jennie, you know my story, and the secret we have long kept from you."

[Pg 108]

"Yes, and I thank you, father, for telling me, for I would rather have it so. You have, indeed, been most kind to me, and I will do all in my power to repay you—you and my adopted mother. But, father, may I ask if Herbert knows me as I am, as not being his sister?"

"He does."

"Ah!"

"You see he was a good-sized boy when you, a little one of five, came to our home to live as our own child. So we told him the truth, and urged upon him that he should never betray the secret to you."

"And now again I ask, sir, why have you told me to-day, now, at this time?"

Again the question appeared to embarrass the man.

But as the eyes of the young girl were fixed firmly upon him, and he knew that an answer must be given, he said:

"It is because Herbert knew the secret, Jennie."

"Because Herbert knew?"

"Yes."

"He has always known that I was his sister by adoption?"

"Yes."

"Well, why now, sir, raise that as an argument?"

"It is because, knowing that you were not his sister, he has learned to love you other than as he could love a sister."

[Pg 109]

"Oh, father!"

"Yes, such is the case, and he has forced me to tell you the truth, that you may know just how he feels toward you, that you may understand that he is to make you his wife?"

"What! he expects me, one believing herself his sister, to wed him? Never! I have regarded him ever as a brother, and as a brother only. I have never felt the love for him as a brother that I could have wished to feel, for there was that about Herbert that would not win my sisterly regard more. Perhaps it has been his knowledge of the truth, that we had no kindred blood in our veins, that has made him act toward me as he has, but I regard him now as though he were in reality my brother, and no power on earth can make me love him otherwise, or hear one word of love from him. Tell him so, sir, tell him that if he does not wish me to hate him, to despise him, he must never hint of love to me other than what he could feel for an own sister."

She had risen now and spoke with a suppressed passion that showed how deeply she felt her position, and, gazing upon her, and her determined expression, Vance Bernard said, anxiously:

"Herbert was right, after all; you do love that accursed cavalry officer, Kit Carey!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

"I love Lieutenant Carey, sir, did you say?" indignantly asked Jennie.

"Yes, it would seem so, for Herbert offers you his love, and you refuse it, and this man Carey has certainly come between you."

"Father! Mr. Bernard! you speak like one who never knew what it was to have a heart and refinement of feeling. Are you aware that you are accusing me of loving a man whom I have met but once, and almost in the same breath expect me to love Herbert, when only a few minutes ago I learned that he was not my own brother. But let me tell you at once, that Herbert Bernard is nearer to me, or has been, than ever he will be again."

"Bah! you do not know your own mind, girl. Herbert is a noble fellow, and has made you a good brother, and that is proof that he will make a good husband. Both his mother and myself love you dearly, and he does also, so just make up your mind that you are to remain our daughter by our boy."

"Never! I would die first," was the indignant rejoinder.

"Well, we will see."

"But there comes Herbert now, and I will leave you for him to talk to."

"No! no! do not leave me here with him," pleaded the girl.

[Pg 111]

"What! do you fear my son?" angrily asked the settler.

Instantly the appealing manner of the maiden changed, and drawing herself up, she said quickly, and in a decided way:

"No, I hold fear of no man. Leave me with your son, for he might as well know now, at once, how I regard him and thus end this painful matter."

Herbert Bernard was approaching the arbor, walking in the long swinging gait natural to him.

He was a powerful fellow, with a face to distrust rather than admire, and as taciturn in his manner as an Indian.

His father walked away as he drew near, and, passing him, said in a low tone:

"She knows all and rebels against you, so be firm and win."

"Trust me for that, father," was the response in the same low tone.

Then Herbert Bernard walked on toward the arbor.

Jennie had resumed her seat, and was perfectly calm, though her face was white, her eyes burning.

She had made a strange discovery, learned of her father's murder, her mother's death and been told that she was expected to marry one whom she regarded as her brother, and all within a half hour of time.

She glanced squarely into the face of Herbert Bernard, as he came into the arbor, with a look that disconcerted him.

He tried to look indifferent, and as she did not speak, he was forced to break the silence.

"Well, Jennie, I have come to have a talk with you," he said.

[Pg 112]

"I hope you do not intend to be so unmanly as to urge upon me that which I regard as an insult, Herbert, for I have been told by your father that I was not your sister, and in the same breath asked to marry you?"

"That is just what I do intend to urge, Jennie."

"Herbert Bernard, you have been receiving my regard under false pretences. You knew full well the secret of which I was in total ignorance. You looked upon me as one whom you intended some day to make your wife, while I have treated you in all things as a sister might a brother, though I have regretted that you were not a brother I could love more dearly than I did. Now let us understand each other once for all."

"It is what I wish, Jennie."

"Then let matters remain as they were between us, do not break the tie as it has been by uttering one word a sister should not hear. Herbert, let us be friends, and I will bless you forever."

"No, I love you, and I have determined that you shall be my wife."

"Silence, sir! I will not listen to words I consider sacrilege."

"Father and mother wish it, and I urge it, for I love you most dearly, Jennie, and I will do all in my power to make you happy."

He stopped as he caught sight of her face.

It was such a look as a stag at bay might wear, and instantly came the words:

"Herbert Bernard, your words, against my appeal, have divided your life and mine forever, for never can I remain beneath the roof that has sheltered me, that has been my home, with you and your parents. Your father has said that I have some fortune in my own right, so I will go and depend upon it; but had I not a dollar in the world, had I to walk from this ranch to the nearest

[Pg 113]

city, walk I would, for this is no home for me now."

"See here, Jennie Bernard, this——"

"My name is not Bernard, sir—I am Miss Virginia Woodbridge," was the cutting response.

"Well, call yourself what you may, but this is all the work of Kit Carey."

"And how his work, sir?"

"He came here with his city ways and flattery, and made a fool of you."

"He is one rather to make a woman regard herself with more respect, rather than make a fool of her."

"It is just as I thought, he has turned your head, and you have no eyes for me now."

"I never loved you, believing you to be my brother, Herbert Bernard, as I could have wished to love a brother, and certainly now that I know you as you are, I cannot even respect you. Stand aside, please, for I desire to make my arrangements to at once leave your father's house, for I do not believe, even your mother will give me her aid now."

"I will stand aside, Jennie, but I vow to you, that unless you promise to be my wife you shall become the bride of Red Hatchet, the Sioux chief."

And with this fearful threat the inhuman lover turned on his heel and strode toward the house.

CHAPTER XXV.

A LAST APPEAL.

[Pg 114]

Jennie waited in the arbor until she saw Herbert Bernard enter the house, and then she hastily made her way to her own room.

She was almost stunned with grief, and only her indignation kept her up.

As she was about to give way to a fit of weeping she beheld an Indian coming at a gallop up the trail to the house.

"It is a Cheyenne, one of the Indian police," she said, quickly, and she watched the redskin horseman approach and heard him call out to some one on the piazza:

"Me Owl Eyes, Cheyenne soldier. Come from white Captain Carey, good man, with letter for pale-face cattle man."

"From Captain Carey he says he comes. I will at once write a letter, and give it to him to carry back," cried Jennie, and seating herself at her table, she hastily penned the epistle which the reader knows Lieutenant Carey had received.

Slipping out of the cabin, she met the Indian courier at the creek, and handed him the letter.

"You will give this to Captain Carey, Owl Eyes?" she said.

"Oh, yes, me glad to give him talking paper from pretty squaw," was the gallant response of the Cheyenne soldier, and he set off on his return, Mrs. Bernard having given him a haversack full of provisions.

[Pg 115]

Then Jennie returned to the house, determined to have an interview with Mrs. Bernard.

She found the woman, whom she had dearly loved as a mother, busy in her household duties.

Mr. Bernard had gone off on the ranch somewhere, and Herbert had mounted his horse, and ridden away.

Mrs. Bernard wore a distressed look, and appeared very much as though she would have been glad to avoid an interview with the girl who deemed herself so deeply wronged by the conduct of father and son.

"Mrs. Bernard, mother, may I talk with you, for I am so unhappy," she said.

"Yes, my poor child, I will come to your room, if it must be; but you are not more unhappy than I am," was the kindly response.

The two went together to Jennie's room, so pretty and inviting under her refined taste, and throwing herself upon her knees she buried her face in the lap of Mrs. Bernard, who was herself deeply affected.

"Come, my child, you must not yield to your grief, or you will make yourself ill."

"But have you heard all, mother?"

"Yes, my husband said that he had told you the secret of your parentage."

"But that is not all."

"No, your father was murdered, and the shock of his death killed your mother."

"But all that I could hear with composure, mother, for bad as it is, it is not the worst."

"What is worse, then, my child?"

"That Herbert has dared to love me, dared to ask me to be his wife."

This touched the mother's heart, not for the sorrowing girl, but for her son, and she said quickly:

"And is it so terrible to become my son's wife, Jennie?"

"Oh! are you too blind not to see that my regard for him is so different, that I could never become his wife, never love him, that I hate him?"

"You hate my son?" cried the mother.

"Yes, and his father, and you surely do not wish me to hate you, too, by urging that you wish me to marry Herbert Bernard," and Jennie was upon her feet now, her face flushed with indignation.

"Jennie, I never had a daughter, and you have held the place of one in my heart. I have loved you from the moment you came into my home, and knowing that Herbert knew you were not his sister, knowing the truth myself, I have not regarded it as wrong that he should love you. Now that you know that he is not your brother, and, unless you are in love with this wild Lieutenant Carey, that your affections are not centered elsewhere, I must do as my husband and son demand, and tell you that it is the wish of us all that you shall become Herbert's wife."

As though she were a snake in her room Jennie sprang away from her, while she cried:

"I have seen you weak and yielding to your husband and son, and often wished that you had some of my spirit; but I did not deem you so criminally weak as to turn against me when I appeal to you as a daughter to a mother."

"Jennie! Jennie!" cried the unhappy woman, who was fighting her heart to serve her husband's will, to obey her son's command. [Pg 117]

"I will say no more, for I can do nothing, say nothing now, as I have appealed in vain."

"But what can you, will you do, my poor child?"

"God only knows," was the pitiful reply, and as she threw herself down upon the bed Mrs. Bernard arose and glided from the room.

But poor Jennie was in no mood to remain quiet, and soon she sprang to her feet and hastily descended to the piazza.

There were the large saddle bags belonging to Mr. Bernard, and seizing these, she went back to her room.

Quickly she packed into the leather pouches such clothing as she could conveniently carry, and then put on her buckskin riding-habit and slouch hat.

She had some money of her own, and this she put in her pocket, rolled up a couple of blankets, and with her rifle in hand sallied forth, carrying the heavy saddle bags.

Going to the stable she saddled and bridled her own horse, mounted, and rode away, no one observing her departure.

She took the trail toward the hostiles' retreat, and had gone but a mile, when she rode unexpectedly into the midst of a group of Indian horsemen.

It was Red Hatchet and his band.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A COMPACT.

When Herbert Bernard left the arbor, after his interview with Jennie, his face was black with passion.

His nature, in his disappointment and wounded pride, showed itself at once in his face, and he felt all the revenge of an Indian against the young girl.

"She shall marry me, and then I can make her suffer for her refusal, and saying that she hated and despised me," he said.

He met his father, and the two held a short interview together.

"She shall become my wife, father," said Herbert.

"Of course, we cannot think of anything else for an instant; but let me warn you that the girl intends to run off."

"Run off?"

"Yes."

"Where will she go?"

"Anywhere, so she leaves here, so you must watch her day and night and prevent it."

"I will prevent it, never fear; but did you not expect Red Hatchet here to-day?"

"Yes, if that fellow Carey does not head him off from coming."

"By which trail was he coming?"

"The lower one."

"I wish to see him, so will ride out and meet him."

[Pg 119]

"Be careful in all you say and do, my son."

"Trust me for that, father," and soon after Herbert Bernard mounted and rode away upon the lower trail, leading in the direction of the Bad Lands, while by the upper one came the courier from Kit Carey, and whom the young man failed to see.

For some miles Herbert Bernard rode along, his eyes, like the good frontiersman he was, ever on the alert for a foe, and watching every sign that was visible, for he well knew that there were times when every man might be against him, and in spite of a friendly feeling for the Indians, a prowling brave might open fire upon him from an ambush.

Ascending a steep hill, where the pines grew thick, he hitched his horse and began to take an observation of the surrounding country.

Here and there were drift patches of snow, but elsewhere the trails were very denty, and far off he saw a cloud arising.

It was a dust cloud, and was moving toward his position.

That it was made by a party of horsemen he saw at a glance, and he watched it closely as it floated along over the trail, completely hiding the horses that made it.

On it came, winding along the trail, around a ravine here, avoiding rugged land there, and so on to the hills.

At last the dust cloud floated away, and it left revealed a party of horsemen who suddenly rode out upon harder soil, where there was no light powdered earth to make clouds about them.

"They are Indians," he said, with a tone of evident relief, as he recognized their costumes, dark faces, and ponies. [Pg 120]

"Yes, and that is Red Hatchet in the lead. I am glad of that; but why has he brought so many warriors with him, for he has one, two, three," and he went on counting until he ended with: "Thirty! Now, if he met Carey and his band of Cheyennes, whom I am confident are prowling about here, there would be trouble. Ah! he is going to take the other trail, so I must signal him."

As he spoke he threw up a pile of fine straw and stuck a match under it.

Instantly a dense smoke began to curl upward in a column, and he kept it from blazing by piling on more straw.

Then he suddenly threw over it his India rubber blanket, and the smoke was cut off.

Taking off the blanket he let the smoke ascend again, then shut it off, and repeating this three times, he quickly put out the fire.

The redskins had noted the very first curl of the smoke upward, and came to a halt.

They saw the column cut off and rise again, and this was done for the third time, when the smoke disappeared altogether.

Not a word had been spoken among them until the smoke floated away, and did not reappear.

Then the chief said something in a low tone, wheeled his horse straight toward the hill, and his warriors followed in silence.

As they neared the base of the hill they stretched out into a line and so approached the pines, peering closely into every covert.

But suddenly a horseman rode out into view upon the hill-top, and though it was a pale-face, and naturally to be expected, a foe, they did not seem to so regard him, for the chief went toward him at a canter, his braves following, while not the slightest preparation was made for battle. [Pg 121]

As he approached the steeper part of the hill the chief dismounted, and went on foot, his warriors following his example.

Then amid the pines he found Herbert Bernard, and the latter said:

"I am glad the Red Hatchet has come, for I was seeking for him."

"The Red Hatchet is glad to see his brother. He was going on the trail to see if the pale-face foes of the Sioux were still pressing upon his people."

"He will find that the soldiers are still marching forward to surround the Bad Lands; but the Sioux are safe there, for no soldiers can drive them away. But I would ask a favor of my red brother?"

"The Red Hatchet is ready to obey."

"If the Red Hatchet will go near to my house I will see that he finds the Snow Flower. Let him carry her to his people in the Bad Lands, and there keep her until I come for her. If the Red Hatchet will do this for me he shall find me the true friend of himself and his people, and the soldiers shall not harm them. But the Red Hatchet must remember that the Snow Flower shall not be harmed by his people, for she is the daughter of his friend the white chief, and the sister of his friend Herbert. Does he understand that it is only to keep the Snow Flower from running away with a soldier chief that he is to hide her away among his people, where she cannot escape." [Pg 122]

"The Red Hatchet understands and will obey. The Snow Flower shall know no harm, for she is the friend of the Sioux. And the Red Hatchet's friend will let the Sioux know when the soldiers come closer upon them?"

"Yes."

The chief stretched forth his hand in token that it was a compact, and grasping it Herbert Bernard said a few more words in explanation of his plan, and mounting his horse rode back toward the ranch.

And Red Hatchet and his band slowly followed upon his trail.

CHAPTER XXVII.

KIT CAREY TO THE RESCUE!

[Pg 123]

When upon his return to the ranch, the keen, ever-watchful eyes of Herbert Bernard had seen Jennie coming along the trail.

"Ha! not a moment too soon was I," he said.

"She is already off," and quickly he wheeled out of sight and rode back toward the Indians whom he knew were following him.

As he came in sight of them he raised his hands, made certain signs^[6] which caused the band to at once scatter to shelter on either side of the trail, hiding amid the rocks and brush.

Herbert Bernard saw that his signs were read as thoroughly as though he had spoken, and at once he wheeled off the trail and disappeared in the timber.

And on rode his intended victim, poor Jennie.

She had made up her mind to take a trail that would carry her toward the nearest settler's house, and from there she would go on her way, she hardly knew how, or where.

But if she could find friends she would then be able to place her case in the hands of an attorney, and make Vance Bernard account for her property which he held.

With these half formed ideas in her mind she had left the home she had deemed her own.

[Pg 124]

She dared not wait to keep her appointment with Kit Carey, for she was afraid to ride toward the Indian lines, fearing to meet Red Hatchet.

And now she rode right into the midst of the band of the very chief whom she had feared and wished to avoid.

She wheeled her horse quickly to fly, but around her circled the warriors, and she was completely cut off from all escape.

"Does the Snow Flower fly from the Red Hatchet?" asked the cunning chief, coming forward with a look of satisfied triumph which even his war paint did not conceal.

Jennie was quick to take advantage, and to show fear of the cunning chief and disappointment she knew would make matters worse for her.

She did not know that she had ridden into a trap, and so said, pleasantly:

"I did not know that it was the Red Hatchet, my friend. I was going to the house of a neighbor."

"The Snow Flower is in danger, for redskin warriors and pale-face braves are on the war-path. The Snow Flower must go with the Red Hatchet."

"Where?"

"To his people."

"Do you mean I am to go to the hostiles' camp in the Bad Lands?" asked Jennie, in alarm.

"Yes, for the Sioux are to take the war-trail and kill, and the Snow Flower will be safe among the people of Red Hatchet. Blood has flowed over on Wounded Knee, and there are Sioux warriors, women and children to be avenged. The white soldiers of the Great Father shall be swept off the earth, and the homes of the pale-faces will be destroyed, their women and children killed, as their men killed ours. With my people the Snow Flower will be safe. She must go."

[Pg 125]

Jennie listened in dire alarm, and yet her nerve did not leave her.

She knew that she was powerless to resist, and if she went willingly, or rather apparently so, she would have a chance of escape, while if she went as a captive, she would not have.

So she forced a smile to her face, and said:

"The Red Hatchet is the friend of Snow Flower, and she will go with him, for with his people she knows she will be safe; but he must protect her people, and do them no harm."

"The White Gold chief is safe with the Sioux, he and his squaw and the young warrior. The Snow Flower will be safe with the people of the Red Hatchet. She will come."

As she could do nothing else, Jennie rode alongside of the Sioux chief, and the band at once

started upon the retreat for the Bad Lands, going by the upper trail, while the wicked young settler, from his hiding-place, saw them ride off with their captive, and muttered to himself with malicious glee:

"Now she is safe for awhile, and when I go for her she will gladly come to my terms."

As he felt his dangerous position, now within a country where he might dash upon a party of cavalry, Red Hatchet moved rapidly along the trail he had decided to return by to reach the Bad Lands with all dispatch.

His only desire was to get Jennie safe within the hostiles' retreat, for he believed that their camp was impregnable, and no soldier dare come there. [Pg 126]

Of the camp of the Cheyennes under their soldier captain, Kit Carey, he did not know, and not until he suddenly heard wild cries and beheld a party of horsemen dash out of a ravine in pursuit, did he realize that he had a deadly foe near.

"It is the White War Eagle! He is like a wolf on a trail," the Chief Red Hatchet said to his fair captive and braves, as he beheld at the head of the Cheyenne soldiers their gallant captain, Kit Carey, coming on in hot pursuit.

[6] The Indian sign language is almost as expressive as words, and most tribes can understand it, though not knowing each other's tongue.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE PURSUIT.

[Pg 127]

A short while before the band of Red Hatchet dashed into view, with their captive, a Cheyenne scout had arrived in the little camp of the Indian soldiers bearing dispatches from headquarters.

There was a letter from the general thanking Lieutenant Carey for his valuable services rendered thus far, and giving certain instructions for his future guidance, while he was ordered to do all in his power to ascertain the force of the hostiles in the Bad Lands, now intrenched, and the chiefs who were urging them to resistance.

A letter also came from Major John M. Burke, at the Pine Ridge Agency, which was as follows:

"MY DEAR CAPTAIN CAREY.—You see I anticipate your title, for I know it will come in return for the services you are rendering in this war.

"The Sioux here known as Friendlies, and the hostiles in the Bad Lands, are very uneasy at your being on the trail with your Cheyenne soldiers, and a greater security is felt by the army all along the line, knowing that you will head off any move the Sioux may make of importance.

"If it was not that General Miles is held in check by the President, he would quickly strike a blow that would forever put down these Indian wars; but as it is, he has to go with caution, as orders are constantly coming from as far back in his rear as Washington City, and so he is trammelled.

"Surgeon Frank Powell, your old and trusted friend, is here, hatching affairs like a hawk, and Buffalo Bill is on the alert for a move when orders come to him giving him the word to go.

"I am just back from the Wounded Knee battle-field, and it must have been a terrible affair. [Pg 128]

"I have heard of your courage there, and that you left on the trail of Red Hatchet.

"If you find him I am sure the 'Hatchet' will be forever buried.

"With good will, believe me,

"Yours, JOHN M. BURKE."

He was also notified that another company of Indian scouts was ordered to report at a certain point, awaiting orders from Lieutenant Carey, and two troops of cavalry, and a Hotchkiss gun were stationed within easy call, should he need them, while the commanding general had appointed him acting captain until further orders.

"If this war lasts long enough, and I do not get killed, it shall be captain in reality," muttered Kit Carey.

Then he broke the seal of another letter.

It was from Surgeon Frank Powell, and only a few lines, as follows;

"MY DEAR CAREY.—It has just come to my knowledge that the officer who captures Red Hatchet, the red fiend who started the Wounded Knee fight, is to go up a step in promotion.

"Go for the two bars on the shoulder straps, for you are the man to win them.

"Yours, FRANK POWELL."

And just as he read these lines, that the captor of Red Hatchet was to be promoted, by one of

those strange coincidences that those we speak of, or are in our minds, appear before us, into sight dashed the Sioux band, and at their head their terrible young chief.

"Speak of the devil and his imp appears," cried Kit Carey, and hastily thrusting his papers away he called for his men to saddle and follow him.

For once he, too, had been caught, if not napping, at a disadvantage.

[Pg 129]

He had not looked for a foe from the rear.

Had he come from the front he would have come in sight in ample time to give them a chance to be prepared for him.

But along the very trail he was guarding, and from the Bernard ranch direction, came Red Hatchet and his band.

"And that lovely girl is his captive. I feared it," cried Kit Carey, as he recognized in the captive of the chief the settler's daughter.

Hastily he took in the numbers of the Indians, and then glanced over his own party.

"I can leave two scouts here, and take fourteen men with me. Just half his force, and little less than half; but I will make the attempt to rescue the girl and get my captaincy, too."

His Cheyenne scouts were soon about him, mounted and armed for the chase, and with a few orders to the two left behind to still guard the trail and await any courier that might arrive, the officer sprang into his saddle and darted away in hot pursuit.

The Sioux had now all of a mile the start, but Kit Carey knew that their ponies must be well worn after the ride they had had, and his animals were comparatively fresh.

At a sweeping gallop they went along, the Sioux in full sight, and the pursuers steadily gaining upon them.

But Red Hatchet was as cunning as he was brave, and he would not force his ponies to full speed, knowing they could not last long at that pace.

He took in, too, that they could not be readily flanked from the nature of the ground, and counting the men on his track he saw that where he had thirty braves Kit Carey had fourteen.

[Pg 130]

Under ordinary circumstances he would have halted and taken some Cheyenne scalps, confident of his ability to do so, for he hated these Indian allies of the whites most bitterly.

But with that tall form in the lead, with his darkly-bronzed, fearless, handsome face, his deadly aim and desperate courage even Red Hatchet dared not halt to fight back a force only half his own in strength.

He knew those men as the captors and slayers of Sitting Bull, the mighty chief, and he was well aware that the White War Eagle did not count numbers when there was work to be done.

So he would hold on in his flight until a chance came to ambush his pursuers, and while his captive was sent on under two trusted warriors, he would remain to fight the White War Eagle with the advantage of position added to numbers.

"Let the White War Eagle follow, and he will run into an ambush, and his scalp hang at the belt of the Red Hatchet," said the chief to Jennie, whose heart sank within her at the danger that the daring officer must encounter in his effort to rescue her.

CHAPTER XXIX.

KIT CAREY'S RESOLVE.

[Pg 131]

At first a thrill of joy ran through the heart of Jennie Woodbridge, as she is now known to be, when she saw that Lieutenant Carey was in pursuit.

But when a bend in the trail placed the Sioux in a position to see their pursuers well, she discovered how small was the force the officer had with him, and at once she felt the greatest dread of evil befalling him.

If she could have warned him back she would have done so, and she rode along by the side of the Sioux chief plotting in her mind to suddenly dash away, and by making her escape thus prevent Lieutenant Carey from running into an ambush.

Whether the chief suspected her intention or not, he suddenly leaned forward and took her bridle rein in his firm grasp.

Pretending to misunderstand it, she said, as calmly as she could:

"No, my horse will not fall, Red Hatchet, you need not hold the rein."

"Horse very fast, and if he ran away Indian pony could not catch him," was the significant response.

At last the Sioux chief saw where he could gain his advantage.

There was a ridge ahead, the trail leading through a ravine, and beyond the country was rolling, seamed with canons and ridges, with rocks and a stunted growth of trees visible upon every side.

[Pg 132]

By letting two of his braves dash on with his captive, after entering the ravine, he could, with the rest of his force, dismount from their ponies and go into an ambush, where he could check the pursuit very suddenly, and if he could only kill the white captain of the redskin soldiers he would feel no dread of his men.

And so the chief planned, while Jennie turned white with dread, and yet could but obey the command of Red Hatchet to ride on.

He had called two of his warriors up, and ordering one to place himself upon either side of her, bade them push on until they reached the shelter of the Bad Lands, when they were to await his coming.

He had no idea of allowing the captive to enter the retreat of the hostiles, unless he was with her to claim his prize.

"I will bring the Snow Flower the scalp of the pale-face captain that caught the Red Hatchet with his death rope," he said, referring to his capture with the lariat by Kit Carey, and speaking in the boastful tone so often used by the Indians.

"The white captain did not kill the Red Hatchet, but let him go. Would the chief kill one who was his friend?" asked Jennie, earnestly.

"Yes," was the reply. "The white captain is the foe of my people. The Red Hatchet saw him capture the mighty Chief Sitting Bull, and kill him, and again he saw him kill the braves of Chief Big Foot in the fight at Wounded Knee. The Red Hatchet has a heart, and his heart bleeds for the dead Sioux, whom the white captain has killed. When his scalp is here, then will the Sioux be happy!" and he patted his belt, where, in anticipation, he already beheld the scalp of Lieutenant Carey. "Now, let the Snow Flower go on with my horses," said the chief a moment after, as they dashed into the ravine.

[Pg 133]

Jennie could but obey, and as she sped on the Sioux and his braves threw themselves from their ponies, which went on under the lead of four warriors.

The balance of the band quickly sought cover and lay in ambush.

But the minutes went by, and the clatter of prancing hoofs did not break upon the ears of the ambushed savages.

The "white captain" was too old an Indian fighter to be caught in a trap, and so had come to a halt.

Where he had halted, too, was amid a pile of rocks at the crossing of a small creek, susceptible of being well defended, and with water for his men and their horses.

He had not blindly run into the trap set for him by Red Hatchet, for he had seen through it.

Realizing that he could not overtake the chief in the country they had then reached, when half a dozen men in ambush could keep five times their number at bay, he had halted among the rocks, and given his men and horses a rest.

Night was not very far away, and he intended to play a game of cunning, too.

So he halted, and in a position that would give the Sioux the idea that he intended remaining there.

The Cheyennes felt perfect confidence in their leader, and set to work to fortify, or appear to do so, as though they expected an attack from the Sioux as soon as night came on.

[Pg 134]

Red Hatchet saw that his enemy was too cunning to be caught in his trap, and he gnashed his teeth with rage.

So anxious was he to fulfill his word, and carry in the scalp of the white captain, that he made up his mind to carry the camp soon after nightfall, or, at least, during the night.

If they crept near in different squads, and then made a rush all together, the small force of Kit Carey could never check them, Red Hatchet argued to himself.

He saw the position taken by the officer, marked well its approach, and then reconnoitred its advantage and disadvantage for an attack.

He saw that the Cheyennes were working hard under their white captain to make the place strong against attack that night, and he began to make his preparations to rush in upon them under cover of the darkness.

But Red Hatchet was pitted against a man who had on many an occasion "out-Injuned Injun," as they have it out on the plains, and who had been reared to meet cunning with cunning, knife with knife, and nerve with nerve.

While it was yet light Kit Carey sat down among the rocks, and with the aid of a small glass and two of his Cheyennes as valets, began to make his toilet as an Indian medicine chief.

He had made the firm resolve to go into the Bad Lands, enter the retreat of the hostiles, and solve the mystery of their force and all about them, while as a pretended Sioux he could also better aid the escape of the captive of Red Hatchet.

His toilet was made with a care that proved he knew well how much depended upon it, and when he was ready the robe of a medicine man was thrown over his shoulders to complete his toilet.

[Pg 135]

Then, when the first shadows of night fell he led his red soldiers away from the little fort they had

made, they were given certain orders, and with but two followers he made a flank movement of the position held by Red Hatchet, and moved toward the Bad Lands.

CHAPTER XXX.

IN DOUBT.

[Pg 136]

Like wildfire the news of the fight at Wounded Knee swept along the lines, and the brave Boys in Blue nerved themselves to do and dare, and to avenge their gallant comrades of the Seventh.

The noble Wallace had fallen, and died, sword in hand, with his foes about him, Lieutenant Garlington, a popular officer and utterly fearless, had been severely wounded, and Lieutenant Harthorn was another brave man wearing the shoulder-straps to suffer.

The Seventh had been well-nigh wiped out upon the fatal field where the lamented Custer fell years before, and now, when taunting the prisoners they had taken another attempt had been made to annihilate utterly the regiment that had so won the hatred of the Sioux, and but for the pluck of its soldiers it would have been successful.

Following the news of the treacherous attack of the braves of Chief Big Foot, led by the Red Hatchet, came the startling tidings that the fearless and able chieftain, who had met the unexpected attack so bravely and well, had been removed from his command in the very face of the foe he had thus far vanquished.

It was a bitter blow to the men in the field, to know that "Colonel Forsythe, of the Seventh, had been relieved from duty."

Of course, officers and men knew that they must suffer attacks, because a few people in the far off East would urge that the Indian must be subdued with tracts and argument, and would be excused for killing the soldiers, when the soldiers would be tried for striking back.

[Pg 137]

But that is a part of the soldiers' hard lot to bear, or, as it has been briefly put, to "die fighting for one's country," and have their names spelled wrong in the report of the battle.

Officers talked in low tones over the affair at Wounded Knee Creek, and the stories afloat regarding it, and wondered if they were to be allowed to fight a foe ever cunning, treacherous, cruel, yet brave.

The effect of the battle, too, upon the Sioux was to send other bands to the Bad Lands, to make those more determined to fight, and to render the younger warriors wild with the hope of butchery, scalps, and plunder.

And among the camps, around the bivouac fires, and round the mess tables, the name of Kit Carey was upon every lip.

The services that he had rendered, with the aid of his Indian scouts, were well known and appreciated, and those who had seen him in the action at Wounded Knee Creek had told stories of his reckless daring, and deadly work at close quarters.

"One minute sooner and he would have saved poor Wallace," said Captain Taylor, sadly.

"You saw Wallace fall, did you not, Taylor?" asked Captain Carrol.

"Yes, though I was at a distance from him, as you know. I had my glass to my eye, and saw Wallace come out of a tepee dragging a chief by the shoulder. Then he was set upon by four others, and at once stood at bay. He had his revolver and sword only, and fired slowly and with deadly aim, while the Sioux rushed upon him. The chief, whom he could have killed, but instead had taken prisoner, also attacked him, and he it was who sprang upon him with his tomahawk. The brave Wallace ran him through with his sword, but he could not avoid the deadly blow of the tomahawk, and it was the last wound and fatal, for he had several others. A moment more and Carey came bounding toward him, and it was woe unto the Sioux that barred his way. I watched him, too, in action, and a more splendid fighter I never saw. He was perfectly cool, fired to kill, and when he came to where Wallace lay, dropped on his knees by his side. But only for an instant, for soon after two of his Indians rode up to him with his horse, and mounting he spurred away, and I saw him no more."

[Pg 138]

"It is said that he asked Colonel Forsythe to let him pursue Red Hatchet, who was the one who began the massacre," Lieutenant Ray said.

"Yes, and he'll catch him yet, for he now commands the scouting line nearest the hostiles, and an Indian does not know himself any better than does Kit Carey know him."

"I believe you are right," said another officer.

"He is as gentle as a woman in peace, and as courteous as a Chesterfield to all; but rouse him to action and he is a man for an enemy to steer clear of."

And among the camps of the men the stories also went around about Kit Carey's raid after Sitting Bull, his conduct in the fight at Wounded Knee Creek, and his then holding the perilous position of scouting close to the Bad Lands, and with Cheyenne soldiers, too, whom many feared would be won over to join the hostiles, in which case their white captain would have, indeed, to face the deadliest of perils, which even his courage and skill could hardly rescue him from.

[Pg 139]

But still the white captain and his red men held their position close to the Bad Lands, and reports regularly came in of every movement of the hostiles.

Then there came into the various army camps, of the different commands, the startling news that Red Hatchet, having escaped from Wounded Knee battleground, had gone on a raid with a number of his braves, and had captured and carried back to the Bad Lands the beautiful Daughter of Settler Vance Bernard.

This news came too straight to be doubted, for it was brought by one of Kit Carey's own Indian couriers, and, more, it was said that the scouting officer had pursued Red Hatchet with his captive, been beaten back from an ambush, and while his Cheyenne soldiers had returned to their posts their white captain had not put in an appearance.

"Does this mean that Kit Carey has fallen?" was the question all asked, yet not one could answer.

CHAPTER XXXI.

OVER THE WIRES.

[Pg 140]

Has my reader forgotten Emma Foshay, the daughter of a brother officer of Kit Carey, and for whom the dashing soldier made such a sacrifice, as to stand at bay while the fair girl fled on to the camp?

I trust that she is not forgotten, for Emma Foshay is not to be wholly dropped from this story, as she, too, has a mission to fill.

Escorted to the nearest station by her father, she took the train eastward to her home in New York, anxious to reach the side of her invalid mother before the stories of the Indian campaign should get to her ears with many an exaggeration and untruth.

Day and night she sped along, her thoughts busy with her anxiety for her mother, and for the fate of the gallant soldier who had shown himself so willing to sacrifice himself to save her.

At the fort, where it was said that she was heartless, that she was a coquette, the story she would never contradict, for well she knew that the handsome young aide, whose story she had heard and regarded as one of mystery and romance, had won her heart almost at their first meeting.

Then came their ride together, their danger, and the thought that she had left him behind to die while she lived.

Had she been in doubt before of her feelings she could not be longer after that ride with Kit Carey, and it was no wonder that, as she was whirled eastward on the train, that she felt a dread of evil, that death would take away the one man among men in all the world to her.

[Pg 141]

Mrs. Foshay had, of course, been told by the kind neighbors the most harassing stories of the Indian war, the death of Sitting Bull, and the terrors that were expected to follow, but they were good enough who retailed the news to state that thus far they had seen no account of Captain Foshay's having been slain or captured by the hostiles.

It was a great relief, therefore, to the lady when her daughter arrived, fresh from the fields of danger, and she learned the truth of affairs.

Emma was most careful that no paper should reach her mother's hands, for she read all the news to her, keeping back all that might excite or alarm her.

One afternoon Emma Foshay went out to call upon a friend, and she met there a young lady who was visiting for a week.

She was at once struck with the beauty of the young girl, and her lovely, fascinating manners, and seemed strangely drawn toward her.

She had been introduced as Miss Earl, and the conversation at once turned upon Emma Foshay's visit to her father upon the frontier, and her narrow escape from capture by the Indians.

"But there are so many stories in the papers, Emma, for each correspondent seems to think that he is sent out there to write a romance, so do tell us just how it was, for Violet, I know, is as curious to know as I am," said Ella Dewhurst, the fair young hostess.

[Pg 142]

"Yes, I shall be delighted to hear of your adventure, Miss Foshay, for I am very deeply interested in the army," Violet Earl responded.

Thus urged Emma Foshay said:

"I would have been glad to have remained there during all the troubles, to be near papa; but he was ordered at once from the post to the front, and I became anxious about mamma, who is an invalid, so decided to hurry home at once. It was easier, however, to decide upon than to accomplish; but I was determined to come, and so accepted the escort of Lieutenant Kit Carey, one of the army heroes, and justly so. He had orders to report at once for duty at the Pine Ridge Agency, as he was an old Indian fighter, reared on the frontier, and so I was glad to have such a man for my escort, and Colonel Crandall was good enough to say I should have gone with no one else alone, as his aide was about the only one he knew who could carry me through in safety."

And so Emma went on with her story, telling in a thrilling way the perils they had encountered,

and, at last, when Kit Carey's horse was wounded, how he determined to stand at bay while she rode on to the camp for aid.

"It seemed cowardly in me to desert that brave man," she continued, "yet I could no more check that horse than I could have beaten the Indians back.

"Then I saw him in the trail as I sped on, fearless, defiant, and ready to die if so it must be, without flinching. I shall never forget him as I saw him there, never! never! And I shall never forget how utterly crushed I felt at heart in leaving him there to what I deemed a certain fate." [Pg 143]

"Yet he escaped," said Violet Earl, quietly.

"Yes, papa wired me on the train as I came along, that Lieutenant Carey had not only escaped death, but was afterward selected as the one to capture Sitting Bull, and I know we shall hear more of his gallant acts, for he is just the man for a hero."

"I heard to-day, Miss Foshay, of the battle of Wounded Knee Creek, and that Lieutenant Carey had greatly distinguished himself. This was telegraphed me by Surgeon Frank Powell, who knows that Lieutenant Carey is a particular friend of mine," said Violet Earl.

"You knew him then, Miss Earl? Then you know what a splendid fellow he is," said Emma Foshay, with enthusiasm.

Violet's face flushed, while she said, in a low tone:

"As it is not intended to be a secret, Miss Foshay, I will tell you that I am engaged to Lieutenant Carey."

"Engaged to——" and Emma Foshay could say no more, while the entrance of a servant with a telegram prevented both Violet and Ella Dewhurst from seeing how livid the face of the young girl became.

"For me?" said Violet, with a calmness she did not feel, as she took the telegram from the servant.

Breaking open the envelope, she read aloud:

"Do not be alarmed at rumors that Carey is dead.

"He ventured into the hostiles' lines, but you know his phenomenal luck in getting out of close places, and it will not desert him now.

"I will wire you the moment we get news of him, so keep up your courage.

"Yours, FRANK POWELL."

"Ah! she has fainted," and Violet Earl sprang to the side of Emma Foshay, as, with a moan, she sank from her chair to the floor. [Pg 144]

"And she has betrayed her secret, poor child," said Ella Dewhurst, with deepest sympathy.

"Yes, she loves the man that I love, the man that I am to marry," was Violet Earl's low response, and her words and voice were deeply sympathetic.

"How brave you are, Violet, for with such news as you have just heard I would break utterly down," Ella Dewhurst remarked, as she bathed Emma's face with cologne water.

"Ella, you heard what Dr. Frank Powell said about Lieutenant Carey's luck? Well, I believe in it most thoroughly," was the firm response of the brave girl, so well suited to be a soldier's wife.

CHAPTER XXXII.

HERBERT BERNARD'S MISTAKE.

[Pg 145]

The military band around the hostiles was drawing closer and closer.

General Miles, with his headquarters at Pine Ridge Agency, was directing operations in an able manner, and was master of the situation, though he fretted at having orders from Washington regarding his conduct of the campaign against the redskins.

The other officers commanding columns were holding their men well in hand, and were ready to strike a blow when the time came to do so.

In their retreat in the Bad Lands, the hostiles watched the situation through their scouts and emissaries visiting the "Friendlies," as the Indians who had not openly declared war were called, endeavoring to lead them to follow in their footsteps, and strike at the pale-faces a blow to be long remembered.

The chiefs, feeling their influence on the wane, were urging on the Ghost Dance, and doing all in their power to ferment further trouble.

One of the commands of soldiers had moved up near to the Bernard ranch, and the officers were surprised to know that Settler Bernard still remained at his home against all urging to depart for safer scenes, and also to discover that his daughter had been captured by the hostiles, and carried to their camp.

The fact of Jennie's capture the Bernards would have kept secret had it been in their power, but [Pg 146]

it had become known, as well as was the fact that Lieutenant Kit Carey had gone to attempt her rescue, and had not since been seen.

His scouts were still in position, and reported regularly everything of importance, but their white captain had not been seen since the night of his going in disguise into the retreat of the hostiles.

The fact that he had gone, disguised as a Sioux medicine man, the Cheyenne scouts had kept from every one excepting the commanding general, well knowing that if a whisper of it got out, and was carried to the retreat, if not already a prisoner or slain, the Sioux chiefs would soon find out the intruder.

When Herbert Bernard had seen the Sioux capture Jennie he had watched their departure with vindictive joy, for he felt keenly that the young girl had said that she despised him.

That there was some motive deeper than his love for her, that would cause him to wish to make her an unloving wife, there seemed no doubt; but whatever that motive he kept it to himself.

Returning home after feeling assured that Jennie was safe beyond all escape from him, for he seemed to feel the most perfect confidence in her Indian guards, he was met by his mother, who asked, anxiously:

"Herbert, my son, have you seen Jennie?"

"She went for a ride, mother."

"It was a long one, then, for she carried a roll of blankets with her, and also took the large leather saddle bags filled with her things."

"Is this so, mother?"

[Pg 147]

"It is."

"Then she intended to escape from us?"

"Without a doubt, and I regret that she was forced to feel that she should have to go from us. But then, my son, you and your father seemed to wish to have her know that she was not my child, and must become your wife, and, as usual, I was weak enough to yield. Now the poor child has run away, and we will never see her more," and Mrs. Bernard began to cry.

Herbert hated a scene and tears, so quickly took his departure, and went in search of his father.

"Father, mother says that Jennie has run away."

"I knew it! I felt it! But, quick! go in chase of her," cried Vance Bernard, strangely excited.

"No need of it, for she has been captured."

"Good! that is splendid! But where is she?"

"Well, she went away prepared to desert us forever, for she carried what things she could with her and rode her best horse."

"And where is she?"

"But she ran upon the band of Sioux under Red Hatchet, and was captured by them."

"What! did Red Hatchet dare to lay hands upon the child?"

"Easy, father, and hear what I have to say. You see the Red Hatchet was obeying my orders."

"Your orders?"

"Yes, for I knew that I could not watch her, and I got Red Hatchet to capture her and carry her off."

"Herbert, you are a fool."

"Not such a fool as you think, father."

"Why have you done what you have?"

[Pg 148]

"Well, she does not know me in the affair, and so I shall arrange to rescue her, see?"

"No, I don't see, nor will you."

"Yes, I shall rescue her, and then will win her consent to become my wife, for it shall be so planned that she will have to marry me or the Sioux chief."

"She will take him in preference."

"You are complimentary to your son."

"Well, I feel that you have done wrong, Herbert, for the Red Hatchet loves the girl far more than you do."

"Red Hatchet loves her?"

"Yes, and I'll tell you now what I never did before, that he once saved her from some Indians who had captured her. He has always loved her since, and has begged me to give her to him, but I would not tell you, as I feared trouble between you and the chief. Only a few days ago he threatened if she did not marry him he would destroy the settlements in revenge, and now you have placed her in his hands. Do you not see that you are a fool, Herbert Bernard?" and the settler spoke almost savagely.

"I certainly do; but I shall rescue her from him, see if I do not," was the determined rejoinder.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

TO MAKE THE VENTURE.

[Pg 149]

The more that Herbert Bernard thought over the matter the more he felt that his father was right, that he had, indeed, made a fool of himself.

That Red Hatchet was always a welcome visitor at the ranch he had known, as well as that he seemed to be always most friendly toward Jennie; but that the Sioux chief had ever hoped to win her for his wife had never crossed the mind of the young settler.

He had never been let into the secret of Jennie's rescue by the young chief, and more, that he was in love with her.

That he had now intrusted her to the care of the Sioux nearly broke his heart.

"Oh, if you would only kick me for a fool, father," he groaned.

"No need of it, for you learn a bitter lesson in feeling what you have done. I should have thought that you would have known better than to trust her in such hands," said the elder Bernard, who showed the deepest chagrin over the affair.

"The Sioux have always been so friendly, father."

"Oh, yes, and will be, I hope."

"And you have held such power over them."

"In time of peace, yes, but they are at war now, and the Indian is a study which no man has ever learned."

"You know, then."

[Pg 150]

"Yes, to-day; but what will they be to-morrow?"

"Well, I thought I was preventing her escape."

"You have most effectually done so; but did you have the talk with her I suggested?"

"I did."

"Well?"

"She despised me, she said, and you, too."

"And your mother talked with her, she told me."

"Yes, and with the same result."

"She would not listen to becoming your wife?"

"She would not."

"Herbert?"

"Yes, father."

"Do you know that this plan must not fall through?"

"How do you mean?"

"She must become your wife."

"I am willing."

"I have plotted and planned for years, and I say it shall be as I wish."

"I said I was willing, unless she has become the wife of that Chief Red Hatchet."

"If she has, it has been to escape you."

"Well?"

"Well, she shall not escape you."

"Do you mean——"

"I mean that there is but one way out of all this, and that is that Jennie Woodbridge shall be your wife, under all circumstances. You have entrusted her to the care of Red Hatchet, and now you must go and get her."

"Suppose he refuses to give her up?"

"Then return for me."

"For you, father?"

[Pg 151]

"Yes."

"You will get the aid of the army to rescue her?"

"I will do nothing of the kind, for I wish no dealings with the army; I hate military men, and would be glad if I never saw a soldier again," and the man spoke with a vehemence that was vicious.

"Well, how would you rescue her, may I ask?"

"That is my affair; but you go and make the effort."

"I will."

"Mind you, do nothing rash, and cause no bloodshed. Simply go and claim your own; but do it in such a way that the girl will think you have risked your life to save her. It will have a good effect with her, and, after all, you may win. If you can win her in that way, and by kindness, so much the better, for you may need to ask a favor of her some day."

"Then I am to go to the hostile camp?"

"Yes."

"I am to go as I am?"

"No, for you must not be seen to go there."

"By whom?"

"That argus-eyed officer, Carey, for he is watching the trails like a hawk."

"I know that."

"If he sees you go there, as a white man, it may cause trouble, innocent as your motive may be."

"Yes, I can understand that, father; but how am I to go?"

"I will rig you up for the work, and you will have no difficulty in getting into the line of the hostiles."

"And then?"

"You are to see the Red Hatchet and claim your sister, as he supposes her to be." [Pg 152]

"Yes."

"But you are to arrange with him, if he is willing to give her up, so that it appears as though you rescued her from him."

"I understand."

"If he refuses to give her up——"

"Yes, father."

"Then return, and I will go."

"And you expect to accomplish what I fail to do?"

"If you fail, then I will get the girl, never fear."

"You speak confidently."

"I speak from a full knowledge of what my power is, boy. Now, come to me to-night, and I will prepare you for your journey, and before dawn you must enter the lines of the hostiles."

"I understand fully," was the response of the young settler.

That night what appeared to be an Indian chief rode away from the ranch of Settler Bernard, and he took the trail to the Bad Lands.

He went along at a canter, as though anxious to reach his destination in the shortest possible time, and once well away from the ranch, deserted the trails, and rode across country.

Before dawn the plateaus of the Bad Lands arose before him, and he seemed to know well his way, for he did not hesitate, but held straight on into the country of the hostiles, where it was certain death for a pale-face to go; the horseman was not an Indian, but Herbert Bernard, who had boldly made his venture to rescue Jennie from the Sioux chief, in whose keeping he had made the sad mistake of intrusting her.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE SIOUX CAPTIVE.

[Pg 153]

When Jennie Woodbridge, who was flying along by the side of Red Hatchet, her Sioux captor, saw the arrangements made to ambush Kit Carey and his small band in pursuit of the hostiles, her heart sank within her with dread.

She felt more for the officer just then than she did for herself, and so asked the Sioux chief if his gratitude toward the white captain, for releasing him as he had done, would not cause him to spare the man who had treated him well.

But Red Hatchet had no mercy in his composition, and, in spite of "fairy tales" to the contrary of the Indian, from the "Last of the Mohicans" to the Apaches, had very little gratitude in his make-up.

So on sped the fair captive with her two guards, while Red Hatchet remained in the ravine to wipe out his pursuers in one well-directed volley.

That Kit Carey foiled him in this has been seen, and as the chief supposed that the officer and his

men had gone into camp among the rocks to make a stand there, he determined upon capturing him at night.

He called his braves about him, twenty-eight in number, and told them that they were two to one against those among the rocks, and by slipping up, under cover of the darkness, and making a dash upon the little band, they would have it all their own way.

A few would fall, but the survivors would avenge them, and the harvest of scalps would more than compensate for the loss of half a dozen or so. [Pg 154]

As no brave knew that he would be upon the death list, and all were hungry for scalps, they chimed in with their chief's humor, and prepared to take the position by stealth, and then hold it by force of arms, as soon as darkness permitted them to do so.

From his position, commanding that of Kit Carey's camp, Red Hatchet selected the points of attack, and told off his warriors for the various advances, so that all understood the exact situation.

Then they waited until nightfall, and made no move until an hour after darkness fell.

Then the order was given to leave their ponies in the ravine, and advance on foot in squads of four and five.

The chief led four men, and his was the most direct advance, the others going out on either side and flanking, one party coming up from the rear of the camp in the rocks.

As noiseless as serpents they crept on, for they felt that they had men to deal with fully alive to all their cunning devices.

At last the chief and his party were within a few feet of the camp, and yet no alarm had come, no arrow or shot.

Red Hatchet felt now that he had his foes in his power, and feeling that the other squads of braves must have reached position, he suddenly arose and bounded toward the rocks.

As he did so there came wild yells and shouts, and then a terrific howl of rage, disappointment, and alarm commingled. [Pg 155]

The enemy was not there, and the chief's squad had sprung upon a party of his own braves, and ere the mistake was known, for each had noiselessly gained the position, two warriors had been slain and a couple more wounded.

All the venom in his nature was aroused in Red Hatchet by this fatal mistake, through the silent retreat of his foes, and, of course, the white captain was set down as the cause of the death and wounding of the Sioux.

Of course, there was but one thing to be done under the circumstances, and that was to continue on to the camp of the hostiles with their dead and wounded, and await an opportunity to get even with their enemy.

Having started his braves on the retreat, Red Hatchet made his way to the rendezvous which he had appointed with the two guards of Jennie Woodbridge.

They and their captive had heard the few shots and yells, and wondered at the quick cessation of what they supposed was the attack.

Jennie had been glad to feel that Kit Carey had been too wary to run into the ambush, for had he done so they would have heard the firing.

Then there was a wait until after nightfall, when came the shots and yells, to end as quickly as they had begun.

The young girl had picked up considerable of the Sioux language during her life on the frontier and the talk of her two guards she understood pretty well, was sure that they were in some alarm as to what had occurred.

Then there came two horsemen through the gloom, a word in a low tone, and the two Sioux met their chief. [Pg 156]

He was in a humor that was fiendish, and Jennie heard him explain the situation in a few words, and glad was her heart, though she showed no sign of understanding what had been said, as she asked in an innocent way:

"Where is the scalp of the white captain, which the Red Hatchet was to show me?"

"It hangs at the belt of the Red Hatchet. The Snow Flower will never see the white captain again," was the response.

Jennie made no reply, and placing himself by her side the Red Hatchet took her bridle rein and led on toward the retreat in the Bad Lands.

Jennie noted all as she went along, and saw how well chosen the position of the hostiles was to resist attack.

But the chief went on at a rapid pace, ascended to the plateau, where the camps of the hostiles came in view, and going to a large tepee apart from the others called out to an aged Indian squaw as he rode up:

"The mother of the Red Hatchet will care for the Snow Flower, who is the friend of our people."

And thus poor Jennie found herself a captive in the hostiles' retreat.

CHAPTER XXXV.

MOON EYES, THE BRULE MEDICINE MAN.

[Pg 157]

The Indians are wedded to their superstitions, and their medicine men hold an influence over them far more powerful than the priests of a church in civilization would over their congregations.

A medicine man of tact, cunning, and courage can move a tribe to his liking, even the war chiefs fearing to go against his commands.

And these same medicine men are respected and feared, their slightest vagaries tolerated, and their every wish gratified, be it what it may.

Of late the influence of the war chiefs has been upon the wane, and it was, perhaps, that they realized this fact, and many of them sought, by an Indian war against the whites, to recover their waning prestige.

The power of the medicine men, however, has held firmly, and yet only those who could show their claims to be just by deeds, were acknowledged men of influence.

The contract of the Indians with the whites has caused evolution to work among the tepees of the red men as well as in the haunts of civilization.

I refer to this fact to show how it was possible for a medicine man to wield great power over the superstitious minds of the redskins, and it will be remembered that Sitting Bull, the greatest Roman of them all, was a medicine chief, that his call to be rescued was promptly answered, and that a medicine man, Red Hatchet, brought on the fight at Wounded Knee Creek.

[Pg 158]

Upon the night following the entrance of Red Hatchet and his captive into the hostiles' camp an Indian with bent form, carrying a red staff, and with his black, bushy hair overhanging his face, as though to shield it, was making his way into the Bad Lands.

He wore the costume of a Brule medicine chief, a robe of white beaver skins being thrown over his form, and his war-paint, where visible, was of the most gorgeous hues and disfiguring.

He had necklaces of grizzly bears' claws, others of the beaks of eagles and vultures, and beneath his white beaver robe was the ghost shirt, painted with red hieroglyphics and symbols intelligible only to the medicine chiefs.

His hands were painted blood red, and hanging to a string of braided scalps was a hatchet painted a carmine hue.

As he went along he chanted a weird song, yet his keen eyes seemed to take in the country thoroughly as he approached the Bad Lands.

And such a country, if so it could be called, for it was wild and barren to the extreme of desolation.

The surroundings were seamed and scarred with ravines, rocks, and desert patches.

A table land, or what the Indians called a mesa, arose abruptly from the plain surrounding, and could only be reached by two or three passes, one coming in from the Cheyenne River, which was wild, precipitous, and dangerous to ascend.

Ascending this steep, winding pass, the medicine chief halted, and gazed about him by the fast receding light, for the sun was upon the horizon.

[Pg 159]

The *mesa* was many miles long, and several in width in some places, and almost as desolate as the plains surrounding it.

Over in one corner, securely sheltered, the camp of the hostiles was discernible, for the camp fires began to brighten in the gathering twilight.

Indian guards were stationed at the passes, and scouts in small bands were encircling the plateau, to warn the camps of the approach of a foe.

The approach of the medicine man had been signaled by the scouts, and the guards at the pass crowded about him, and yet with seeming awe and respect, for not a word did they utter.

The stranger half-straightened up, shaded his eyes and glanced toward the eastern skies, yet rosy with the sunset, and bent low again.

Then he turned toward the other direction, unshaded his eyes, and seemed to regard the darkened skies as though he could read there omens of good or evil.

In silence he passed on toward the distant camps of the hostiles.

In the same bent posture he entered the village of tepees, making his way along toward the medicine lodge of the Brules.^[7]

The medicine chief of the Brules was a cunning old fox, very infirm, however, from his years, and yet one who could mold his people to his will.

Suddenly the strange medicine chief, wearing the white beaver robe^[8] of honor, entered the sacred precincts of the medicine tepee, and said in a low voice:

[Pg 160]

"The Moon Eyes has come to see by night what the Sun Gazer cannot behold in the darkness. The Moon Eyes has come from the foes of our people, and he wears the ghost shirt to kill, and the red tomahawk."

The Sun Gazer, for such was the name of the Brule medicine chief, at once welcomed the stranger to the tepee, and the two talked long and earnestly together.

At last the Moon Eyes arose and glided from the tepee, making his way about the Indian village, and gradually edging toward the pass nearest the Cheyenne River.

He passed the guards in silence, held on down the winding trail, and thus on for a mile or more, constantly turning and glancing back in the moonlight to see that he was not tracked.

At last he halted at a narrow, deep ravine, and gave a low call.

A response came from the darkness below, and then from beneath his robe the medicine chief took a pencil and paper, and when it was finished placed it upon the end of his long, red staff, and handed it down into the ravine.

When he withdrew the staff the paper was gone, and he said, in the same guarded tone:

"Let the Flying Fox go like the wind, straight as the bird flies, to the camp of General Miles, and to-morrow night I will come here again."

A response came from below in the ravine, and the medicine chief then slowly retraced his way toward the hostiles' camp, making signs at the moon as he neared the guards at the pass.

- [7] There were among the hostiles, Brules, who were the most dangerous and desperate of all. Ogallalas, Uncopapas, and scattering bucks from other tribes.
- [8] The white beaver is a sacred animal among the Indians, and only the most honored can wear a robe of white beaver skins.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

WINNING THE "TWO BARS."

[Pg 161]

General Miles^[9] slept, as did the great Napoleon, with one eye open, so to speak, for he was always awake to any call, the arrival of a scout, or courier at the agency, where his headquarters were located, and ready to take the saddle at a moment's notice.

So it was when an orderly told him that one of "Captain Carey's scouts had arrived," he was at once ready to have him enter, though it was just before dawn of day.

"Me Flying Fox, white captain's good Indian. Come with talking paper to big white chief," said the redskin courier.

"Where did you leave your captain, Flying Fox?" asked the general.

"Over in Bad Lands."

[Pg 162]

"Ah! has he gone there?"

"White captain no know afraid; he brave chief; go as medicine man into camp; come back, and give Flying Fox talking paper for big chief."

"When did you leave him?"

"Six hours ago, big chief."

The general at once turned to the paper he held in his hand, and glanced rapidly over it.

Then he sent the orderly to request the presence of his adjutant-general, and that officer promptly put in an appearance.

"Major, I have here a note from Carey, brought by Flying Fox here, who left him six hours ago in the Bad Lands. He states that Red Hatchet was really the cause of the trouble at Wounded Knee, and escaped. That he went on a raid with thirty braves immediately afterward and captured the daughter of Settler Vance Bernard, who has been so stubborn, against all urging and orders, to remain at his ranch. Red Hatchet escaped to the Bad Lands with his captive, though pursued by Carey, and the latter unable to come up with him, and knowing that an ambush awaited him, scattered his scouts, and disguising himself as a Brule medicine chief, entered the camps of the hostiles."

"Carey is too reckless, and he'll never escape, I feel sure, sir, without detection," the adjutant said.

"Well, he came out of the retreat to write me this letter, and send it by his redskin scout here, who tells me that he has a comrade in hiding at the place where Carey joined him and sent him from. Then Carey returned to the retreat of the hostiles, but you see here is a full list of their forces, chiefs, warriors, and women and children, and a description of their camp and its approaches. This is most valuable information, and wins for Carey a brevet captaincy, given on the field, until he can get his promotion. The captive girl, he says, is there, and Red Hatchet also, while he hints at a discovery which will be a surprise, and says that I may send his man back again, and he will dispatch his other courier to-morrow night, or as soon after as possible, if he

[Pg 163]

gleans other news, or will come himself if he can escape with the settler's daughter."

"Carey does, indeed, deserve his captaincy, general, and I only hope he will live to get it," said the adjutant.

After some further conversation upon the subject the general ordered the Indian soldier to be ready to start upon his return to his white captain in time to get near the Bad Lands by nightfall, so as to gain the hiding-place unseen where his comrade was, and where Kit Carey was to meet him.

Well rested and fed, and mounted upon a fresh horse, Flying Fox started upon his return at the appointed hour, and in a letter that he carried to the cavalry officer occurred these words:

"Your indomitable pluck shown in the execution of your perilous duties during this campaign thus far, allow me the pleasure of appointing you in the field as special scouting officer, with the rank of captain."

Then followed some instructions as to the positions of the various forces, as a guide to Captain Carey, should he need quick aid from any one of the commanders who were narrowing the circle about the hostiles' retreat.

The positions described were as follows, and to each commander word was sent to be ready to obey a call from Captain Carey, who was allowed discretionary powers in requesting an advance from any one column:

[Pg 164]

General Carr, with nine troops of the Sixth Cavalry, one company of the Seventeenth Infantry, and two Hotchkiss guns at the junction of Wounded Knee Creek and White River; Colonel Offley, with two troops of the Eighth Cavalry and six companies of the Seventeenth Infantry, will be on White River, about four miles south-west of Big Grass Creek; Colonel Sanford, with four troops of the Eighth Cavalry, four companies of the Second Infantry and one Hotchkiss gun, will be at the junction of White Clay Creek and White River; Colonel Wheaton, with four troops of the Ninth Cavalry, four companies of the Second Infantry and two Hotchkiss guns, will be on White River, three miles north of Lower Lime-Kiln Creek, and about eight miles from the hostile camp; Major Whitney, with three troops of the Ninth Cavalry and one company of the Eighth Infantry, will be on Wounded Knee Creek, a short distance from the late battle-field; Captain Illsley, with four companies of the Seventh Cavalry, will be on Lower Lime-Kiln Creek.

So back to the daring young officer, who had dared take his life in his hands and enter the camp of the hostiles, disguised as a medicine chief, though none knew better than he the terrible tortures that would be inflicted upon him if he was discovered by the redskins.

- [9] General Miles is the youngest Major-General in the army—the only Major-General who did not receive a military education. He entered the Union army as a captain of volunteers, but fought his way up to be a commissioned Major-General at the close of the war. He was in every battle of the Army of the Potomac, where he received three wounds, one in the throat—a close call. Custer was the youngest West Point Major-General in the army, yet Custer did not graduate from the military academy. He entered the army somewhat under a cloud, as he went out in search of Indian adventures, when he met the northern bands on the banks of the Little Big Horn. General Miles has the best record as an Indian fighter of any officer in the army and a splendid record in the late war. He is well versed in men and affairs. He is a man of good judgment and great energy.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

A SPY IN THE REDSKINS' CAMP.

[Pg 165]

Now that the reader is aware that the pretended Brule medicine Chief Moon Eyes, was none other than Kit Carey, it will be well to watch his career in the camp of the redskins.

Speaking the language as he did, acquainted with all their superstitions and customs, and utterly devoid of fear, he had decided upon the bold move he had entered upon not only to endeavor to rescue Jennie Woodbridge from her merciless captor, but to discover all that he could regarding the exact fighting force of the hostiles, their means of subsistence, chances of holding out, and just how they were armed.

He was also anxious to know if there was any move intended in force in a dash upon the settlements, the agency, or by ambushing one of the commands that were encircling them.

As a Brule medicine man he could glean information without appearing to seek it, and he knew that his safety lay in not standing inspection in the broad glare of day.

He had assumed the name of Moon Eyes, pretending that only by night should he be seen and attend to his duties, and this gave him a chance to lie hidden by day, or rather keep within the shadow of his medicine tepee.

The Sun Gazer was equally anxious to be about only by day, and the vindictive old wretch lost no time in trying to ferment trouble.

[Pg 166]

Just who Moon Eyes was he did not know, but the stranger flattered the vanity of the old medicine chief to such an extent that he was willing to swear by him to the end.

Having returned from dispatching his courier to the general, Moon Eyes at once began to circulate all around the camps, still keeping up his incantations to the moon, until that orb went down behind the horizon.

In doing this there was method in the seeming madness of the fake medicine man, for he had discovered the position of the camps most completely, and all that he cared to know about the strength of the hostiles.

He found out just where the young captive was quartered, and he overheard enough, among a council of chiefs, to know that they were anxious to kill and scalp himself.

With the scalp of Kit Carey in their possession the chiefs thought that it would bring them luck and teach their white foes the lesson that they were in earnest.

In spite of his rank the Indians regarded Kit Carey as holding a most important position in the army, for it was by his deeds that they knew him, and the fact that he commanded the Indian soldiers clustered about their lines.

So it was decided to send out a young Brule warrior, bearing the very appropriate name of Not-Afraid-of-Death to kill the white captain, or any other army officer that he might be able to lead into a trap.

Having made the discovery that Not-Afraid-of-Death was to take the trail before dawn, Kit Carey returned to the medicine lodge, and told the old chief that he was to "go into the shadows of sleep," and not to be disturbed until he awoke after nightfall, for he was to see what fortune the moon held for the Indians.

[Pg 167]

Then he slipped again out of camp, and went to a position some distance from the retreat, where Not-Afraid-of-Death was to start upon his trail for an officer's scalp, his fondest desire being to raise the hair of Kit Carey.

Having secured a point of look-out, the white captain lay in wait for future developments.

Along in the morning Not-Afraid-of-Death was visible scouting along a ridge, as though he saw an enemy, for his every movement indicated as much.

He was a Brule, and with him was an Ogallala warrior, and the two ran in a crouching position to a certain point.

Who they were watching Kit Carey could not see, for the ridge shut their intended victim from his sight.

But soon after there rode into view an officer accompanied by an Indian scout.

Quickly Kit Carey drew his glass from beneath his robe and turned it upon the officer, who sat upon his horse reconnoitering the country before him. He gazed for a while through the glass, and then muttered:

"It is that splendid fellow, Casey, of the Twenty-second Infantry, and who has a command of irregular cavalry. He is too daring to venture thus far into the lines," added the white captain, seeming to forget what he was then engaged in.

Lieutenant Casey still sat upon his horse some distance from where Kit Carey was in hiding, and his glass swept the country thoroughly, taking in the dust as it arose under the hoofs of some Indian rider, and noting the plateau and buttes beyond, where was the camp of the hostiles.

[Pg 168]

Behind him was his sole companion, the Indian soldier, who sat like a statue on his horse, awaiting the will of the young officer.

"I wish I could get to speak to Casey and warn him off, for he is in great danger of a shot from some hostile scout lying in hiding; but I dare not make the attempt, for I would be seen, and that would end my career very quickly. But if I could only see him for half an hour's talk, I would be able to explain much, which I cannot write—ah! he is going—no, he is riding nearer to the hostiles' lines. Heaven grant he be not sacrificed to his recklessness. Great God! it is as I feared! poor Casey has got his death wound, but his slayer shall never have his scalp!" and Kit Carey threw his rifle to his shoulder as he spoke, and pulled trigger as soon as his aim fell upon the Indian bounding forward to scalp the daring Casey, who had dropped dead from his horse at the fire from an Indian, who had suddenly risen from behind the ridge near him.

At the shot from behind him Lieutenant Casey had thrown up his arms, and then fell from his saddle as his horse wheeled and ran off, while the Indian soldier in alarm had also fled at full speed.

The Indian bounding to secure the scalp of the young officer was Not-Afraid-of-Death, the Brule warrior, and he held his scalping-knife in hand, while from his lips burst a triumphant war-cry.

But from afar off had come a white puff of smoke, a faint report of a rifle followed, and then the sting of the bullet as it struck the Brule brave and bringing him down as he ran, his rapid impetus causing him to roll over and over again.

[Pg 169]

All day long the avenger watched the body of the young officer and his slayer, not daring to venture near, or leave his hiding-place, and then, to his joy, he saw the Indian soldier come in sight, followed by a party of cavalry, and, dashing up to the spot, carry off the body of the officer, while the Cheyenne scout quickly removed the scalp of the dead Brule, though he could give no account of his killing.

And then, as the evening shadows began to lengthen, the disguised officer made his way back

toward the retreat of the hostiles, to once more play the daring role of spy in the hostile camp.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

HOPE AND DESPAIR.

[Pg 170]

There was a grand pow-wow of chiefs in the camp of the hostiles, though old Red Cloud, his loyalty doubted by many, and held against his will, was not allowed to be there.

The two "garmols," Kicking Bear and Short Bull, had called the council, to make a report which Sun Gazer, the medicine chief, had urged during the day of what should be known, as it was for the good of all.

There were present in the council lodge, the well-known Chiefs Little Wound, Two Strike, Big Road, Big Turkey, He Dog, High Pipe, Lone Wolf, No Water, and at last in stalked Red Hatchet, who was fast coming to the front as a leader, and had the ambition to become head chief.

Two Strike was the one to open the council, and what he said fell with startling force upon all present, especially upon Red Hatchet, whose eyes blazed furiously as he heard that the pow-wow was called to make a charge against him.

The fact was Kit Carey, in his character of Moon Eyes, had poured poison into the ear of old Sun Gazer against Red Hatchet.

He had found it impossible to get a word with Jennie Woodbridge without exciting suspicion, for every redskin was suspicious of another in that mixed assemblage, and so he had tried to get possession of the young girl by a very clever trick.

[Pg 171]

So old Sun Gazer had been secretly informed that the moon revealed the fact to Moon Eyes that there was a white maiden a captive in the camp, and held as a secret by a chief high in authority.

After consulting his oracle Moon Eyes made known that Red Hatchet was the chief, and that he had captured the daughter of a pale-face, who was the firm friend of the Indians.

All this was cunningly put, and old Sun Gazer at once was urged to report to Red Cloud.

But as that chief was under a cloud he made his report to Little Wound and Two Strike, and the chiefs were promptly summoned to the council.

All, excepting Red Hatchet, were really startled by the tidings that there was a captive in camp, and one who was the daughter of a man who had ever been the friend of the redskins.

When the information had been given that a chief had brought her, then Two Strike demanded that the guilty one declare himself at once.

Then Red Hatchet arose in his majesty, and said that he it was who had brought the captive there, and placed her in the keeping of his mother.

He said that she had been sent there by her people, to prevent her from running away with their worst foe, the white captain, the War Eagle, who was like a hound on the track of the Sioux.

He asserted that the settler had shown his trust in his red friends, his love for his redskin brother, himself, by giving his daughter to his keeping, and that he preferred she should become the wife of a Sioux chief, rather than that of the pale-face soldier, their untiring enemy.

[Pg 172]

The words of Red Hatchet made a decided impression, and he was not slow in discovering it, so went on to say that as the captive was there, if the chiefs thought best, she would be given into the keeping of Sun Gazer, the medicine chief, to hold until they should utterly crush their pale-face foes, when she was, as his, Red Hatchet's wife, to become an adopted daughter of their tribe.

This the chief agreed to, and so it was that Kit Carey's plot met with success thus far, as Jennie Woodbridge was taken to the tepee of the medicine chief, where no warrior dare enter under penalty of death.

But it so happened that Kit Carey had his eyes open to what was going on, and he saw the captive taken there by Two Strike and Little Wound, and as old Sun Gazer was asleep, he, Moon Eyes, was bidden to guard her securely, which he most faithfully promised to do.

Poor Jennie did not understand this change, from the care of the Chief Red Hatchet's mother, to that of the medicine man, and was dreading some terrible fate, when the flap of the tepee was raised, and she heard a voice say in a whisper:

"Do not distress yourself, Miss Bernard, for you have one near to serve you."

"Who are you?" cried Jennie, hardly believing what she heard could be true.

"I am known in the army register as Captain Carey, Miss Bernard; but in the hostiles' camp I am supposed to be Moon Eyes, a Brule medicine chief."

"Oh, what peril you are in!" came in almost a moan from the lips of the young girl.

"I think not as much as you suspect; but cheer up, and be ready to take advantage of anything that may occur to aid your escape. I need not urge you to retain your presence of mind, for you have a wonderful nerve—good-night!" and the pretended medicine man was gone, leaving Jennie

[Pg 173]

CHAPTER XXXIX.

RED HATCHET'S REFUSAL.

[Pg 174]

The poor girl had hope with such a friend near as was Kit Carey, and then came the knowledge of all the danger he was in, what would follow discovery of who he was, and her dread for him was even greater than for herself, and it seemed that in spite of her nerve and his dauntless courage despair would creep into her breast.

There had been a fight with the soldiers up near the Pine Ridge Agency, and some dead and wounded warriors had been brought into the retreat, throwing the camps into a tumult of excitement.

Then came an attack of the Sioux upon a wagon-train passing near their lines, and, though they had felt sure of victory, a party of cavalry had come to the rescue, saved the Government stores and the lives of the defenders of the wagons, and beaten off the Sioux.

That Not-Afraid-of-Death had killed his man the chief knew, and the similarity in the name caused them to rejoice that Lieutenant Carey, the white captain, had been killed, though they regretted that his scalp had not been secured by the redskins, who, from a distance, had seen the killing, yet dared not venture out to secure the trophy.

Who in turn had killed Not-Afraid-of-Death was a mystery which no one could solve, though the scouts reported that it was one of the officer's Indian soldiers lying in ambush.

[Pg 175]

That the cavalry had made a dash in and recovered the body of the lieutenant, was also deeply regretted by the hostiles.

In the midst of all the tumult, following into camp had come a horseman, who was known to be a pale-face in disguise.

He made no secret of the fact, gave a name which the Indians recognized as that of a friend, and asked to see Red Hatchet.

That chief was called out of the council to speak with the stranger, and regarded him with evident suspicion as he approached him.

"Red Hatchet, I am here to take back with me my sister, for I am White Hawk."

The Red Hatchet knew him now by the name the Indians had given him, for it was Herbert Bernard.

"The Snow Flower is safe with her Indian friends, and will remain. She is in the keeping of the medicine chief," was the response of the Red Hatchet.

"No, she must return with me to her home, for my father, Eagle-that-Kills, has sent me for the Snow Flower."

"The Snow Flower is in the medicine tepee, and when she leaves there it will be as the adopted daughter of the Sioux. She cannot go with the White Hawk," was the rejoinder of the Red Hatchet.

Herbert Bernard crushed an oath between his teeth, and had he not counted the result would have sprang upon the Indian chief then and there.

But instead he said:

"Is the Red Hatchet no longer the friend of the Eagle-that-Kills, and of the White Hawk, that he acts like a foe and steals from them the Snow Flower whom they love so dearly?"

[Pg 176]

"The Red Hatchet did not steal the Snow Flower, for the White Hawk told him to bring her here, and she came without force, for she loves the Sioux, and her heart is given to Red Hatchet!"

The right hand of Herbert Bernard dropped upon a revolver, but he wisely did not draw it.

He was wholly in the power of the Red Hatchet, and he felt anxious at his position even among those who were his friends, for toward the Bernards the Sioux had certainly shown no enmity.

"Will the Red Hatchet let the White Hawk see the Snow Flower?" he asked.

"No, for the Snow Flower is in the medicine tepee, and no one can see her."

"The Red Hatchet is a traitor to his friend," was the reply of the young settler, as he turned on his heel and walked away, the chief uttering no word, or remonstrance.

As he had come, so he left the camp of the hostiles, mounted his waiting horse, and returned by night to his home without seeing an Indian scout or soldier, and if seen by any one, he was not disturbed.

It was just dawn when he reached his home, and having washed off his paint and resumed his civilized garb, he sought his father.

The latter seemed to feel that he had been unsuccessful, for he asserted, rather than asked:

"You came back alone?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

[Pg 177]

"The Red Hatchet would not give her up."

"You saw him?"

"I did, and he refused."

"You saw Jennie?"

"No, for she was in the medicine lodge."

"Ah! that looks bad; but it shows that the Red Hatchet intends she shall not be given up, but made a daughter of the tribe."

"So he said."

"Well, did you find out that the red fools intend to fight?"

"I was so disappointed that I asked nothing, returning at once."

"Well, that affair at Wounded Knee has infuriated the soldiers. Sitting Bull, their head, has gone, they have had a fight at the agency, attacked a train and were beaten off, and they killed that fellow Carey——"

"Ha! is Kit Carey dead?" cried Herbert Bernard, eagerly.

"Yes, he ventured too near their lines, a courier told me, and was killed."

"I am glad of that."

"Yes, it puts him out of your way as a rival; but possession is nine points of the law, and Red Hatchet has Jennie in his power, and the fool believes that the redskins will whip the soldiers."

"All of them do, and their medicine men tell them that the ghost shirts will render them bullet-proof."

"Fools! poor deluded fools! But I must get the girl, and, perhaps, I can persuade the chief to bury the hatchet—yes, it would be better so, for Miles knows what he is about and has got them hemmed in completely, and if the soldiers attack they will remember Custer and his men, and show no mercy—yes, and avenge Kit Carey, too, for he was the most popular officer in the army," said Vance Bernard, believing that it was Kit Carey who had been killed, as did the Sioux themselves, and also many in the army.

[Pg 178]

"Well, can you rescue Jennie?" impatiently asked the young man.

"Yes, and I will go to-night and do so," was the confident response of the settler.

CHAPTER XL.

THE WHITE RENEGADE.

[Pg 179]

In his assumed character of Moon Eyes, the medicine man, Captain Kit Carey had managed to have several interviews with Jennie Woodbridge, and it had been arranged that she was to have a disguise as an Indian boy, and hold herself in readiness to go with the officer whenever he deemed it safe to lead her from the retreat of the hostiles.

He had made another night visit to the ravine, where his two Indian soldiers were in hiding, for the courier sent to General Miles had returned in safety, and it was with a glad heart the young soldier read the words of praise, and learned that he had been given the two bars of a captain upon his epaulettes.

He had dispatched the other Indian soldier as courier, with all other information that he had gleaned, and the statement that he could lead the soldiers by a secret pass to the retreat of the hostiles, while the other passes could be so guarded as to prevent the escape of a single warrior when the fight was over.

He also made known that he believed he was able to rescue Red Hatchet's captive without any outside aid.

The second night after the coming of Herbert Bernard to the retreat of the hostiles, another stranger appeared in the camps.

He came not in disguise, nor with painted face, but as a white man only.

It was Vance Bernard, and his coming was soon known, and the chiefs assembled at the council lodge to greet one who was their friend.

[Pg 180]

If there was any one there that was not looked upon as a friend of the Indians, his presence was not noted.

And yet there was such a person present in the presence of Moon Eyes, the medicine man.

He had slunk away in as secluded a position as he could find seeking to attract no observation to himself.

His eyes were bent down, his long, black hair over his face, and his form crouching, and as still

as a statue of bronze.

But his ears were open to every word said.

He saw the welcome given by the chiefs to the settler, Vance Bernard, and heard their words to him.

He also heard the words of the settler in return, and when the name was spoken aloud, the name that was given the white man by the Indians, he gave a slight start as of surprise or delight.

"The Eagle-that-Kills is welcome in the council lodge of the red men. He has been their friend ever since the days when he was their pale-face chief. The Sioux have followed him many moons ago upon the trail of the pale-faces, and they listen to his voice in silence, they know that he speaks wisdom."

Such was the welcome of the leading Indian chief to the Eagle-that-Kills, and as the words reached the ears of the disguised officer his thoughts went back into the past, when he had known of a white renegade who became chief of the Sioux, and was a cruel foe to his own race.

Then he had heard how this same white renegade, known as Eagle-that-Kills, had taken a few braves and haunted the stage-trails, where he was said to have gotten a great deal of booty. [Pg 181]

Then he had heard of this same renegade going to the mines of the Black Hills, where it was said that he had been killed in a revolver duel with a brother miner, while others alleged that he had mysteriously disappeared, and had departed this life at the end of a rope.

After the welcome of the chiefs the Eagle-that-Kills arose to speak.

He spoke the Sioux tongue perfectly, and in a deep, melodious voice that was very impressive.

He told the chiefs that he had come to their camps for his child, his daughter, who had been taken from him by a chief, and if, when the hatchet was again buried between them and the pale-faces, the young girl wished to return to the tribe as the wife of the Red Hatchet, she should do so with his full consent; but that she was a mere child then and must go back with him to his home.

Then he told the chiefs that the pale-faces were too strong for them, that winter was upon them, with no grass for their ponies, and only the food of the cattle they had driven to the Bad Lands to subsist upon.

"Wait until the spring comes, and brings green grass for your ponies, when the mountains and valleys are not filled with ice and snow, and the forests are full of game, and then strike at your white foes, if you wish; but not now."

Many heard his words with a feeling that he advised them wisely, but others, the younger warriors, would hear of no argument that would prevent a test of their strength with the soldiers. [Pg 182]

"The Eagle-that-Kills has spoken, and he still loves his red children. If they perish under the big guns of the pale-faces they will remember that he warned them. He has no more to say."

With this the renegade white man, as he is now known to be, withdrew with bowed head and in silence from the council tepee.

The head chief followed him, and went with him to the medicine lodge.

There Sun Gazer was aroused from his slumbers, and bade to bring forth the girl captive from the sacred lodge.

He obeyed, and Jennie Woodbridge found herself face to face with the man who had so cruelly deceived her.

"You here?" she exclaimed, with a look of dread.

"Yes, Herbert came for you two nights ago, but they would not give you up. I have more influence here, for you go with me."

"I can offer no resistance," was the sad reply.

And then the renegade left the camp of the hostiles with the captive of Red Hatchet, wending his way along the trails as though he knew every foot of the land well.

He had horses awaiting down in the valley, his own and one for poor Jennie, and mounting they moved on, neither noticing that a dark form was dogging their trail.

And had the one who was dogging the settler's trail looked back closely he might have seen in the moonlight a dark form following upon his track.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE AVENGER OF WOUNDED KNEE.

[Pg 183]

The renegade, as Vance Bernard is now known to be, rode slowly along over the rough country, holding on to the rein of the horse ridden by Jennie Woodbridge.

As they wound around a rugged spur, the sharp report of a rifle was heard.

"My God! I have received my death wound!" cried the renegade, and he reeled in his saddle,

drew rein, and slowly slipped from his saddle to the ground.

Instantly Jennie checked her horse and sat motionless in her saddle, gazing about her in a dazed sort of way, when suddenly there bounded into the trail before her the tall form of a Sioux chief. Seizing the bridle-rein of Jennie's horse, he said in a voice full of triumph:

"The Snow Flower cannot run away from the Red Hatchet."

They were his last words, for a form came bounding toward him, and the chief turned quickly and raised his rifle.

But he was not as quick as the one running upon him, for a revolver shot rang out, and Red Hatchet fell dead, a bullet in the center of his forehead.

"Do not be alarmed, Miss Woodbridge, for I am Kit Carey now, not Moon Eyes, the medicine man," and the soldier stepped forward, while he added:

"The sooner we get away from here the better for us."

"But he is not dead, sir," cried Jennie, now finding her voice and pointing to Vance Bernard.

[Pg 184]

"Ah! I supposed Red Hatchet had made no mistake. Yes, he is alive, and——"

"Yes, I am dying, Captain Carey, for your words tell me who you are, and in your disguise as Moon Eyes you heard enough to hang me. It is better that I die by the redskin's bullet than upon the gallows."

"You deserve the gallows, Bernard, most certainly, for I now know you as renegade, road agent, and a Black Hill's bandit, by your own confession in the Sioux council lodge. But I am not one to strike a man when he is down, and if you will allow me I will aid you to your horse."

"No, no, let me die here; for I cannot live half an hour at longest. Then, too, I have something to tell this child, and it will ease my conscience, and you are to hear, too, Captain Carey."

"If you mean that she is not your child, she told me that in the hostiles' camp."

"There is more to tell, for it was I who attacked the stage-coach in which she and her mother were coming west to join Brookes Woodbridge, her father. The mother was killed by a random shot, and I took the girl and sent her to my wife, for I knew Woodbridge had struck it very rich in the mines, and she would be his heiress. Well, when he was about to go east, never having known of his wife's death, I killed him——"

"You murdered my father?" gasped Jennie, in a tone of horror.

"Yes, I confess all now."

"And my mother, too—now I know why I never could love you, as my father, though so I believed you to be."

[Pg 185]

"Yes, I am guilty of the crimes of murder and robbery, and more. I was a renegade chief over the Sioux against my own people. This my wife and son never knew, for they deemed me only one who had led a desperate life in the mines. But my wife can give you, Jennie, the papers that will prove who you are, and enable you to claim your name and the fortune that is yours. Now go your way, for the shots will bring Indian scouts here, and you may both be killed. See, I am getting generous, and losing my feeling of revenge with death's grip upon me."

"But I can take you along, and——"

"No, place your hand here over my heart and you will see that my wound is fatal, for I am slowly bleeding to death. Now leave me, Captain Carey, you and this girl, for her presence haunts me."

"I dislike to leave a dying man——"

"Hark! don't you hear the Sioux coming? They will care for me, and I will tell them that the Red Hatchet attacked me, I killed him, and the girl escaped—go! or it will be too late!"

This Captain Carey fully realized, and, springing upon the horse of the dying renegade, he seized the rein of Jennie's horse and dashed away just as a score of dark forms were visible in the moonlight coming along at a run.

CHAPTER XLII.

CONCLUSION.

[Pg 186]

Kind reader, my story is ended, for well you know through the papers that the Indian war, beginning with the death of Sitting Bull, only a short while ago, has ended.

The hostiles, influenced by the speech of the renegade white chief, it may be, decided to come in and sue for peace, especially as the cordon of steel which General Miles and his commanding officers had so skillfully thrown around their retreat, brought them to terms, and forced them to bury the hatchet.

The body of the dead renegade, so a chief said to Captain Carey, was buried at a spot where it could never be found, for so the treacherous man willed it should be, and Red Hatchet found a resting-place in the camp in the Bad Lands.

To the home of the renegade Captain Carey escorted Jennie Woodbridge, and Mrs. Bernard and her son were told of the husband and father's death and his confession of guilt, and warned that the young girl should receive the protection she was entitled to from them, until she could arrange to go to her relatives in the east.

And thus parted Jennie Woodbridge and her rescuer, the gallant Carey, who at once returned to his post of duty, where he had reported to his commanding general all that had occurred.

With the Indian war at an end, Captain Carey is to be granted a long furlough, which he has applied for, as he is to wed at an early day the young girl he has so long and fondly loved, Violet Earl, who feels sorrow only for those whose affection for her handsome soldier lover must go unrequited.

[Pg 187]

And thus falls the curtain upon a drama of real life on the border.

[THE END.]

THE CREAM OF JUVENILE FICTION

[Pg i]

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