

SHOT IN THE SADDLE.

There were rocks ahead—there was no doubt of that. For weeks we had heard whispers of an Indian rising, and now the Redskins had us hemmed in on every side. The white settlers had long ago left the Territory, and we were holding the fort in utter desperation. Dear old fort, what happy days we had spent in it! How brave and bright the hearts that beat there! It was picturesque rough. The winding river could be seen a mile away, gliding and quivering through the trees like a huge serpent. The air was laden with the scent of the pine bloom, and the prairie round was soft as velvet. The high stockade that ran round the barracks made the position all but impregnable, and we kept the old flag floating over it to the last. But the day came when we had to leave it, flying for our lives. We were only a handful of men from the beginning. The Captain had been murdered by the red devils three weeks before when parleying with one of the chiefs, and Bruce, his orderly, galloped back with a narrow escape and died two days after. Scottie and Ford succumbed to typhoid fever and were buried behind the stables, and only six of the boys were left besides myself to see the end of it.

I was in charge after the captain's death, and when I saw them drag his mutilated body past the fort I felt sorely tempted to trust to luck and make one good old-fashioned charge at the dusky scoundrels. But I had great responsibility upon my shoulders then, and as I was only a non-commissioned officer I did not care to be too rash or to fool away my comrades' lives unnecessarily. A prairie trooper is not just the most refined character going; he does not move much in polished society, nor does he see many new faces; but he loves his comrades all the more for that, and I know there was not a man amongst us that would not die for the other if it came to a pinch.

So we kept on our weary watch, waiting for the help that was never to come.

Dear old chums, how brave and patient they were! If I had been a general they could not have obeyed me better. I wonder if an odder squad of men were ever shaken together? Here was old Peter, the veteran, always talking of the "precarious times," but as game as a pebble in spite of his frosty head; and Frenchy, so-called from the long goatee he insisted upon sporting as often as he could find an officer good-natured enough to tolerate it; there was the parson, nicknamed on account of his never ceasing profanity, but who was as tender hearted as a woman; Ananias, always telling the most impossible yarns, and invariably ending with the solemn asseveration, "This is a true story; Fatty, ever on the lookout for a meal, and last of all there was dear old handsome Curly—every one who knew him loved him. His voice was the loudest and his laugh the merriest everywhere. His heart was as big as a house, and he always had a smile and a kindly word for any poor wretch that ever needed one. He was a reckless dog, and often in scrapes than any man in the command; he received his reprimands and punishments in due course, and when they were over was again as bad as ever. The men adored him and the officers thought nothing that was done was good enough or bad enough unless Curly had a hand in it too. How he used to laugh when an Indian came within range and how incessantly he used to pop at him, "just for fun!"

It was all hard enough work while it lasted, though we never knew from one moment to another when the enemy might storm us, and the horses were kept saddled day and night, in case of a surprise.

We had to keep our eyes skinned, you can bet on that. The Indians were round us, not a hundred yards away, and seemed to divine how scarce our provisions and ammunition were.

For a week or two we had peppered them gaily; but it soon became too expensive an amusement and we had to husband every cartridge we could count, against the day when they might mean men's lives. Right up the hills behind, right on to the river in front, they lay in wait for us; and the curling smoke from their teepee fires told us in what awarms they mustered.

Escape seemed quite impossible. The stores were all but finished, and half rations was the order of the day for man and beast. The horses had the worst of it, I think; deprived of exercise and stunted of their food, their legs began to swell, and the want of water made their coats rough and staring and their tempers vicious and uncertain.

Things went on like this for more than a month, and at last we had not more than three days' provisions left amongst us. The well had dried up completely, too, owing to the awful drought, and the men were beginning to be wild and desperate.

I had just dropped asleep one night after a long night watch when Frenchy woke me to say that a fresh detachment of Indians had crossed the river on a raft, which was moored close to the horses' old watering ground. This he had distinctly seen from the look-out tower on the old hospital roof, and he further added the alarming information that the newcomers had their "feathers" on and were dancing to the beat of the tom-tom.

This was as bad as could be, for the feathered heads and muffled beating betokened bloodshed. I was up in a moment, and every loophole in the corral was stopped as fast as willing hands could do it. The horses were led into the square, and the little squad, armed to the teeth, gathered together prepared to defend their lives as only desperate men know how to do.

We had not long to wait. We saw the mob in front of us grow larger and heard the guttural yells that greeted the big chief's speech, and then they came toward us in a solid mass. Forty yards away they stopped, and forming a circle round the barracks fired volley after volley at us, but their bullets struck harmlessly in the palisades or flew high above our heads.

Occasionally they would fire arrows in the air to which were attached burning rags, with the evident intention of setting fire to our buildings.

For many hours this went on, the Redskins knowing that they had us completely trapped, whilst we dared not waste our ammunition by the discharge of a single shot. At last they succeeded in firing the stables, and the old wood burned like tinder.

Fatty and Frenchy got up to the roof at once to try and save the place, but hardly had they saved themselves when there was a deafening fire, and Fatty fell dead at the edge of the roof, and Frenchy determined that the Indians

should not get his body to mutilate and disfigure, so we laid it in the thickest of the roaring fire to burn. There was no time then for leave-taking nor signs of sorrow, and what we had to do had to be done quickly.

From the stables the fire spread to the hospital, and we were getting scorched with the awful heat, while the horses were becoming unmanageable through fright and excitement.

The moment had come for action and could not be delayed. "Boys," I said, as I looked into the faces of the little group about me, "we've stuck to this old outfit long enough. We haven't another meal to eat nor a drop of water for the horses and the place is on fire all round us. We needn't expect any mercy from these howling devils, and I'm not for asking it either. But we must get away from here mighty quickly, that's certain, so I propose to make a dash for the river and the raft; if we can reach it safely we may save our skins, and if not we may as well be killed out there as burned like rats in here." To this there was a general assent, and that is how the sortie was arranged.

It takes a long time to tell, doesn't it? But it wasn't long of happening, I can tell you.

The horses' girths were overhauled and tightened, and each man slung his rifle on his back. Revolver in right hand, and sabre in left, we prepared to mount, with the understanding that we were to keep together pace for pace, straight out into the open air for half a mile, and then strike to the left for the river.

One moment for a silent, rapid handshake, and we were all in the saddle but Curly, who stood at the gates to open them. I held his horse and saw him jump into his place, almost before the rusty hinges had ceased to creak.

The Indians saw our movement and headed for us immediately; but we were too quick for them and charged smash into them, riding down the nearest and shooting and sabring right and left.

How distinctly I remember in the next few seconds the crimson blood, the thunder of the horses' hoofs, the moans and cries, and the deep labored breathing as the heavy sabres rose and fell.

The firing, unfortunately, was a signal to the Indians near the river bank that we were moving, and we could see the gleam of their rifle-barrels as they ran towards us. There must have been three hundred of them round about us, and we were only six. I don't know how the other fellows felt, but all my nerves seemed strung like wires as we galloped along. Here was a scene of glorious, mad intoxication that overcame all other feeling.

How the horses ran, half plunging, half in air, and how the hail whizzed on every side of us! We got well in the open, and "Left wheel," I shouted, and then we were making straight for the river.

A rattling volley from a little thicket we were nearing passed right amongst us, and I saw Curly's right arm fall limp and helpless by his side. The bright cheeks blanched, but he never uttered a sound, and I saw him let his pistol fall and put his sword between his teeth as he tore along.

The parson was swearing at the top of his voice and slashing like a butcher as he stood high in his stirrups, and we went on neck and neck, like a rolling wave. We were within half a mile of the water now, and the sabres were jamming hard and fast.

Oh, if we could only make it! Another volley and Curly fell forward on his saddle, but was up again in a moment, ghastly white and with the blood pouring in torrents from his mouth. He staggered and swayed but shook his brave head and smiled as if to say he was with us still.

"Hold on, Curly," I cried. "Sit steady, man—for Heaven's sake, sit steady! We are almost there."

In another moment we were at the raft. Ananias was cutting at the ropes, and I had Curly in my arms, while the others covered us against the yelling mob now fast overtaking us. The horses flod madly off as soon as we dismounted, and we could see the braves pursuing them already far away.

The rest is quickly told. We got afloat and dropped smartly down the stream, lying flat on our faces to lessen the danger of being hit by the shots the enemy kept dropping at us.

For hours they followed us down the bank, and every now and then when the river narrowed and brought us too close to them, we would give them a dose, dropping the nearest and scattering the rest. But when the evening came and the sun went down we saw the last of them and knew that we were safe.

Not a man was hurt but Curly. Why was it that he alone—the bravest and the best—should have been singled out for such a death? His arm was shattered, and a bullet had gone in at his back between the shoulders. He was in agony and we had not a comfort to offer him. We laid our tunics on the rough log knots, to make it softer for him, and the parson pulled his shirt and socks off to make a pillow for him. Frenchy tore his shirt into strips for bandages, and Peter used his to cover up the poor old feet.

Yes, Curly was dying. He groaned with pain, but he never complained, and although he could hardly speak he smiled at us to thank us for what we had tried to do for him. There were few words spoken as we drifted on, and when the great moon rose in a blaze of silver light she looked down on one hard sight that night: a little log raft dancing on the water, and on it six weary men, blood-stained, half-naked, dust-begrimed, and one of them with glazing eyes fast traveling to the farther shore from which no man returns.

Just before midnight Curly spoke. "Good-bye," and the boys knelt round him in a group and took his hands. The tears were trickling down their faces, who would themselves have died without a tremble. "I'm going, boys; good-bye." And then he put his hand up to his neck and showed the little chain he always wore, and which he used to call his dog collar. "Give it to her by-and-by," he whispered. "Dear little Jeanie," and then he fell back exhausted. He was so white and still we thought him dead, but soon he spoke again. "How dark it is! Well done, parson. Jeanie, come back to me! Steady, there. Dear little woman—"

And Curly's life went out forever. When the stars gave way to the rose tints of the early dawn we landed in a little pine wood. With swords and hands we dug a grave and placed him tenderly in it, kissing his dead cold face. The parson's shirt was still his pillow and Peter's red tunic his

winding sheet. His sword and rifle and spurs were laid beside him, and dear old Curly was left alone.

Who Jeanie was we never knew, but the heart that loved her was as true as steel.

Did you ever care for him, oh, well-loved Jeanie? or was he less than nothing to you? Are you hoping still to hear his laugh and feel his strong arms round you? or have you long since ceased to think of him?

No monument is standing to tell his worth, no prayer was chanted over his mossy grave, but the pine trees wave all round it and the song birds sing above it, and Curly—dear old Curly, the lion-hearted, the best and truest of men—sleeps in it alone the sleep that knows no waking.

Shall Women Vote?

[While the recent international Congress of Women is a recent thing, it may interest readers to see an extract from a paper read before the Rhetorical Society of the Seminary at Morgan Park, by Miss Mary J. Spelcher, a member of one of the seminary classes.]

At the crisis we stand. The woman question is being agitated around the world. It presents itself in four prominent phases: (1) Education, (2) Employment, (3) Civil franchise, (4) Religious activity.

The question of higher and lower education for women is being extensively and spiritedly discussed. Time forbids inquiry into this subject in this paper. The question of employment for women is about settled. When the equal rights agitation began women were employed in less than a score of occupations. They are now employed in 222 of the 265 different occupations enumerated in our census of 1880.

The next phase that presents itself is civil franchise, Woman's suffrage. I approach the subject with profound respect—for the subject and its opposers. I, myself, was once an opposer, alas, in my blindness. But whereas I was blind, now I see. Woman is not praying for a chance at the honors of the state, but she is pleading for the right to throttle the viper that stares her in the face. Our mothers did not need to ask for the right to use the tomahawk or knife on the Seminoles or Chippewas that came to murder their children. But now an enemy confronts her who takes husband and brother as well as children and drags them down to hell. Do you wonder that she supplicates for a weapon of defense? Can you hear the

"Mother and children pleading,
That heaven relent would quickly send,"

and disregard the cry? That the saloon element fights woman's suffrage is not remarkable, but why will Christian men do so? That politics are dirty, and are becoming more and more so, is only another reason why woman's refining influence should be brought to bear upon them. If politics were necessarily such, then Christian men should leave them alone. But they are not, and it is every Christian's duty to see that they are purified. And the welfare of the nation depends upon it. Scores, hundreds, thousands of Nihilistic, Socialistic, beer-drinking, law-breaking foreigners every year come to our shores. For five dollars each one of them is allowed to help in making laws for the country, while the pure women of the land are repulsed when they stand pleading for the privilege to counteract the great evil.

Do you deny her because you are so solicitous of her good name? Do you fear she will be any less the woman? God himself is no more fixed in his nature than is woman. God's laws never go wrong. A woman will be a woman to the end of time. A woman's a woman, "for a' that and a' that."

Do you say women should not vote because they cannot go to war? Military statistics show that more than one-quarter of the men are unfit for military service. Will you take the vote from these journalists and preachers, physicians, and lawyers, who are the disqualified ones, and give it alone to the hardy artisans? It is said, "No true woman would want to go into a saloon to vote." No, emphatically. But let her vote, and she won't allow any saloon around to vote in. Mrs. Corbin, an anti-suffragist of Chicago, says that the vast majority of women do not want to vote. Alas, 'tis true, 'tis a pity. Neither do the majority want the Saviour. But it is the good women who want it.

Much has been done, and the future is bright with hope. In twelve States suffrage in some form has been granted to women. In Wyoming the objectors have been converted or silenced. The one election in Kansas since she conferred municipal suffrage upon woman, has resulted in victories for law and order in most of her cities and towns. Gov. Ames, of Massachusetts, and Gov. Larrabee, of Iowa, recommend municipal suffrage for women in words of frank manliness. The Woman's Christian Temperance Union, 200,000 strong, are asking for suffrage.

The cloud of a hand's breadth is encompassing the world. The victory is as good as won. The pioneer work is about done. It only remains for the skilled workmen to build up the waste places.

The African Puff Adder.

It is essentially a forest animal, its true habitat being among the fallen leaves in the deep shade of the trees by the banks of streams. Now, in such a position, at the distance of a foot or two, its appearance so exactly resembles the forest bed as to be almost indistinguishable from it. I was once just throwing myself down under a tree to rest when, stooping to clear the spot, I noticed a peculiar pattern among the leaves. I started back in horror to find a puff adder of the largest size, its thick back only visible and its fangs within a few inches of my face as I stooped. It was lying concealed among fallen leaves so like itself that but for the exceptional caution which in African travel becomes a habit I should certainly have sat down upon it, and to sit down upon a puff adder is to sit down for the last time. I think this coloration in the puff adder is more than that of warning, and that this semi-momentary attitude is not always the mere attitude of repose. This reptile lay lengthwise concealed, all but a few inches among the withered leaves. Now, the peculiarity of the puff adder is that he strikes backward. Lying on the ground, therefore, it commands, as it were, its whole rear, and the moment any part is touched the head doubles backward with inconceivable swiftness and the poison fangs close upon their victim. The puff adder in this way forms a sort of horrid trap set in the woods which may be altogether unperceived till it shuts with a sudden spring upon its prey.

Bad-Word Societies.

The "Bad-Word Societies" that have sprung up lately in the New England schools are by no means to be laughed at. They may do a great deal of good, and that good is of a nature that generally lies beyond the reach of teachers. There are few playgrounds attached to boys' schools in this country where language is not constantly used which would grieve and astound the mothers of those who utter and of those who hear them.

The "Rules" of the Bad-Word Society are usually not written down; but they are something like this: "One cent fine for every bad word spoken; every boy to report his own bad words to the treasurer, and pay up; no telling of any other boy's bad words; the money to go to the school library."

This is simple and practical. Perhaps, the scheme might be enlarged a little so as to include the grosser forms of bad grammar, such as "I done it," "them cabbages," and "you was." It is highly absurd that the boys who have been going to a grammar school for years should violate the most rudimentary laws of grammar every time they speak ten consecutive words.

But the main point is to destroy the habit of polluting the mouth and corrupting the heart by the use of words which are properly called "bad." Every boy knows what they are, for no one can keep beyond the sound of them.

They pollute the air of every street and are heard, more or less, wherever and whenever there is a company of boys playing together.

They partly cause the dread that mothers feel when they see their little sons going for the first time to a boys' school. The mothers watch their boys' departure with a mixture of pride, pleasure and apprehension, and turn away from the window at last with a sigh, because they know that few older boys yet realize what a duty they owe to younger ones in the way of a good example.

There is one reason for the suppression of bad words which no boy can know anything about. It is this: we seldom forget the evil things we learn in our school-days. They cling to the memory, in spite of all we can do to forget them. They return to us sometimes in our dreams, in our most sacred moments, in sickness, in scenes the most remote from the horrid reminiscence.

The N. Y. "Tribune" Retorts.

The claim set up for Canadians recently by a Toronto journal that they are above all people pre-eminently remarkable for distinction has called forth a rather ill-natured retort from the New York Tribune. It says:

"However, assuming that the mission of Canada is to impart distinction to this western continent of ours—she cannot begin the good and delicate work too soon. Let chairs of applied distinction at once be established at Yale and Harvard and the other higher educational institutions of this country, and let Canada be requested to select the men or women to fill them. Mr. Gough was accustomed to tell of a man whose bearing was so uncommonly distinguished that when he appeared in a strange town small boys were wont to hail him with the query, 'I say, mister, are you anybody in partic'lar?' The man in question was doubtless a Canadian. If this should meet his eye, will he not be good enough to make the tour of the United States and explain how he does it?"

Their Project Commendable.

The Irish exhibition to be held in London this year promises to be a great success. Four hundred exhibitors have already applied for and secured space. The promoters announce the following objects which they have in view:

"To place before the English public a clear view of the predominant industries of Ireland; to awaken public interest in the efforts being made to revive her trade; to exhibit to the many thousands of persons in England who have never crossed the Irish Channel somewhat of her deeply interesting historical and antiquarian treasures; to illustrate the worth and significance of Irish art; and to help to moderate prejudices which, frequently tending to fetter the judgment, are at the very root of misunderstandings between people and people."

These very praiseworthy purposes should command the sympathy and support of the British people.

Is It Haggai's Signet?

A shaft sunk outside the great walls of the city of Jerusalem, near the south-west angle, disclosed an ancient pavement 23 feet beneath the present surface, and 20 feet below that a second pavement. There, amid fragments of pottery and glass, a gentleman's seal was found. It is about the size worn to-day in gentlemen's rings, and is a finely-grained black stone, inscribed "Haggai, the son of Shebnaiah." The letters resemble these employed during the age of the captivity in Babylon. The prophet Haggia was one of the exiles who returned with Zerubbabel. "He is," says Mr. King, "the only one of the minor prophets who mentions a signet, and one can imagine him holding the ring upon his finger before his leader's eyes to emphasize the words which close the book of the prophecy which has come down to us under his name: 'I will take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the Lord, and will make thee as a signet; for I have chosen thee, saith the Lord of Hosts.'—Ancient Cities.

Pigeons.

Few are aware that pigeons can be kept at a large profit. One has only to note the quotations at 30 to 75 cents a pair, or dine at a first-class restaurant and pay 75 cents for a squab, or note the item of 900 dozen squabs consumed in ninety days at a first-class hotel, to be convinced that the common rock pigeon is by no means to be despised.

A subscriber informs us that his squabs averaged 22 cents each, and he keeps several hundred old birds. He keeps them housed during seeding time; then they fly at will and gather a large share of their living, he feeding them at four o'clock or thereabouts. The males sit during the forenoon to liberate the females. By feeding them at four o'clock the females are sure of a full crop to sustain them during their long vigil of incubation. We believe that 500 pigeons would pay a man well for his year's work in caring for them.

Some of the fancy pigeons are very large. Of the runt breed, Dr. Cook showed a pair at New York that stood twenty inches high and measured eight inches across the backs.

PEARLS OF TRUTH.

Nothing sets so wide a mark between a vulgar and a noble soul as respect for and reverential love of womanhood.

In life, as in what, how nothing from the way that cards may be dealt to you. Play the cards, whatever they be, to the best of your skill.

Man is many-aided, and one of the best proofs of his advancement is his ability to develop each side harmoniously, suffering none to grow out of proportion and none to wither from neglect.

The art of happiness is to extract the good wherever it may be found, make it prominent and keep it uppermost in the mind, to emphasize every blessing, to welcome every joy, and to take delight in witnessing the happiness of others and in adding to it wherever it is possible.

Of all the authors who have written about plants, it has been noted that Mr. Ruskin goes to the root of the whole matter with one dip of the pen. He tells us that vegetation resolves itself into four things—"corn for the granary, timber for the builder's yard, flowers for the bride's chamber, and moss for the grave. Food, shelter, and beauty for all of us, living or dead is the sum-total of the world's vegetation."

No man requires to practise unselfishness more than the silent man; for, as everybody is able to contribute, and ought to contribute something, so the man who thrusts himself into society to enjoy the talk of others, and will take no trouble to help, to suggest, or to encourage, is really, says Mr. J. P. Mahaffy, a serious criminal. These silent people not only take all they can get in society for nothing, but they take it without the gratitude, and have the audacity afterwards to censure those who have laboured for their amusement.

In money-matters the orderly habit is invaluable. It not only avoids loss of time and trial of temper; it prevents that ignorance and confusion which so often lead to extravagant and unwarrantable expenditure, and sometimes even to deceit and fraud. Doubtless many of the embezzlements and broken trusts that bring ruin and grief to thousands, could they be traced back, would be found to have had their origin in a careless and disorderly use of money long before any idea of dishonest dealing was entertained. The duty of keeping careful accounts, of always facing and knowing one's financial condition, and of regulating expenses accordingly, cannot be too early or too forcibly impressed upon youth, for order in this matter means peace of mind, freedom from care, and name beyond reproach.

The Earth.

In the universe everything is changing and everything is in motion, for motion itself is the first condition of vitality. The firm ground, long thought to be immovable, is subject to incessant motion; the very mountains rise or sink; not only do the winds and ocean currents circulate round the planet, but the continents themselves, with their summits and their valleys, are changing their places and slowly traveling round the circle of the globe. In order to explain all these geological phenomena it is no longer necessary to imagine alterations in the earth's axis, ruptures of the solid crust, or gigantic subterranean downfalls. This is not the mode in which nature generally proceeds; she is more calm and more regular in her operations and chary of her might, brings about changes of the grandest character without the nourishes. She upheaves mountains and dries up seas without disturbing the flight of the gnat. Some revolution which appears to us to have been produced by a mighty cataclysm has, perhaps, taken thousands of years to accomplish. Time is the earth's attribute. Year after year she leisurely renews her charming drapery of foliage and flowers, just as during the long lapse of ages she reconstitutes her seas and continents and moves them slowly over her surface.

How Bees Make Wax.

As to how bees make wax, an English periodical, Murray's Magazine, says it is no mere extraneous substance which needs only to be collected for use; it is a bit of individual organic home manufacture. If you examine the under surface of a cell-building worker, you will find beneath the abdomen four pairs of white plates projecting from as many pockets in the inclosing rings in this part of the body. These are the wax plates, made from the life blood of the worker. Examine now with a lens one of the hinder legs. You will find that the stoutest joints are very square shouldered at the hinge, and that the hinge is well over to one side, so that the shoulders form a pair of jaws, which open when the limb is bent and close when it is straightened. The upper jaw has a row of spines which bite on a plate on the lower jaw. With this apparatus, piercing it with these spines, the worker withdraws a wax plate from its pocket, transfers it to the front legs, and thence to the mouth, whence it is laboriously masticated with a salivary secretion. Unless it undergoes this process it lacks the ductility requisite for cell-making.

Why Do Bees and Wasps Sting?

Their weapons very often serve to protect them from their enemies, especially the honey or hive bees, at the approach of winter, the drones or males are no longer of any use, and are killed off by stings of the workers, to save the stores of honey they would otherwise consume. With many of the wasps their stings are food preservers. The large wasps which make their holes in the ground, and some bees, like the carpenter bees, which cut circular holes in boards or other wood, deposit an egg in one of these holes, place food for the grub that will hatch from this egg to feed upon, and when the grub has made its growth it goes into a chrysalis state and in time comes out a perfect bee or wasp, as it may be. But, you will ask, what has this to do with the sting? A great deal. If the caterpillar or other insect intended as food for the young bee or wasp were dead when stored away it would decay and be useless. The effect of the sting is to keep it in a semi-torpid existence, alive but still dormant, and thus preserve the food in a proper condition to be eaten by the grub of the bee or wasp. In this respect we can see that the sting plays a very useful part, but when the sting is employed upon ourselves we fail to see what good is accomplished. Even when a bee-keeper is doing his best for the comfort and welfare of his bees they will often turn and sting him most needlessly and painfully.