

The Free Press Short Story

RED FLANNEL CAYUSE

By REED FULTON

"The war, whoop may echo from your mound at any moment so antagonized the Sioux," groaned Sieur de la Verendrye, evidently much agitated. "Tell me, Francois, what you did when you went to recover our stolen supplies. Did you not realize that our food is almost gone, that our quest for the western sea in this year of 1738 is at an end if we cannot run buffalo alone in winter? Better we had never recovered our goods—"

"Fardon, my father, trade is now possible since I have recovered the red flannel with which we purchase horse flesh." "But Pigeon claims that the Sioux will sell us no more cayuse! He swears that already he has heard their tom-toms." As he spoke, the gray-bearded man gazed steadily across the snow-covered plain toward the small hill that hid the Sioux camp from view.

"Judge for yourself, Sieur, as to what I have done," cried Francois. "When we neared the camp, the Sioux came out in groups, fully armed. I was determined to play a bold hand, fearing otherwise that all were lost, including our scalps. We surrounded the first wigwam with a rush, I entered, and with my dagger slashed open everything that might have hidden stolen goods.

"In such manner we overhauled six lodges with some success while the Indians moved about in increasing consternation. The chiefs then demanded a parley and gave us to understand that they would produce our stolen property if we would cease the destructive search. I agreed with open reluctance and they asked us to withdraw from their camp. This I refused, knowing that we were safer near the squaws and children.

"The chiefs, then, set up a search and within two hours had delivered over the bulk of our goods. Whereupon we withdrew, well pleased at the success of our experiment." "Experiment indeed! Ah, Son, I rejoice that you have come off so luckily." The sieur spoke with evident pride in his son. "Your surprising actions saved your father, had the Sioux guessed your purpose, they would never have allowed you in their camp. You have done well in bringing back our goods; but how shall we now meet the greater problem of food?"

"Francois, the chevalier, well knew that his father, while by no means unresourceful himself, had come to an age when he was content to pass physical problems on to his favorite son. Almost constantly in the twenty years of Fran's life, the lad had been under his father's subtle tutelage. In a wild country of isolated fur stations and pioneer gangsters, Francois had been trained to hardness of body and keenness of mind largely through the Sieur de la Verendrye's method of placing responsibilities.

"The youth's extraordinary skill with his rifle, his running speed, and his ability to read the characteristics of the savages, had been of prime value to the expedition that had so far swung down from the home post, Michilimackinac, and out across the plains ever in hopes of finding the pathway to the western sea. Further progress was now impossible unless food could be obtained from the Indians at this point. If the interpreter's tale were true, the quest was done for this year, the little band of explorers would turn their courses backward, and within a month Francois would back once more to the fireplace in her father's house. The thought was, as always, a temptation to the chevalier; yet again he put it aside, knowing that his present duty lay with his father's wishes. "Helene would scorn me," muttered Francois to himself, "did she learn that I had fallen short of my finest effort. All things come to an end; so must this journey, and Helene will wait for me—I think."

As he dusted the powder of snow from the fringe of his leather leggings, he spoke aloud to his father, "I shall be convinced of what Pigeon has said when I have myself been refused horses. The Assiniboines and the Mandans could not resist barter. While the Sioux are greater warriors, they may still covet our trinkets, our knives, our red flannel. I shall make up a bundle in payment for a fat horse. Pigeon and I shall try our hands at trading." "My Son, keep distant from their camp. Deal with small groups only and go no farther than you can well retreat. The rest of us will remain here, for the Sioux may barter with two. We will be in readiness to rally to your support. Remember, Son, as you plan, that an Indian is cowed most quickly by that which he cannot comprehend." "True, Sieur, and herein they are brothers to us all; yet there are things which the white man understand which are as dark as the inside of a bear to the redskin and in that the advantage is mine. Send Montreaux to the river bank with his hair rope. Let him watch for floating horse flesh."

been summoned by the Sieur de la Verendrye from a neighboring tepee. Taking up the bundle, the young trader led the way from the camp across the snow-covered slope to skirt the mound that hid the Sioux camp.

As his eyes reached a level that permitted a view of the country beyond, Francois paused and motioned Pigeon to remain in the place where he was standing. The chevalier was not interested in the twenty skin lodges that spotted the whiteness of the snow, two hundred yards away, nor in the buffalo-robed figures moving between them. A scant two hours earlier he and his men had seen the village intimately. At present his attention centered on the band of horses feeding on the willow tops along the ice-fingered river. He studied their actions carefully, for it was from these animals that he hoped to provision the expedition.

"These Sioux," he muttered, "would be more apt to barter the carcass of a dead horse than to part with a live one. Still more apt would they be to trade if my side before I offer to barter. Good fortune with me, and the glory of New France shall not be held back from lack of food."

With this, the trapper noted that at one small place on the river bank the ice that edge the rushing water had been broken away to enable the horses to drink. This fact was the key to his plan. He tested the air, observed that the bend of the poplars along the river betokened prevailing winds almost directly from the Sioux camp to the mound, and then chose a place on the north slope where the camp was cut from view, but where he could see the herd.

Here Francois scraped away some of the snow and built up a hard ledge a foot wide on the side next the horses. With infinite care the trapper trained his musket across the ledge so that its aim held some distance above and to the windward of the drinking place. According to the chevalier's calculations, a shot from this position should strike an animal drinking at the ice-cleared bank. While Francois held the gun in position, the Cree packed snow along the length of the barrel and around the stock, leaving only the lock, trigger, and butt exposed.

"The weapon was now firmly held by the snow. "Too long way," exclaimed Pigeon. "No can hit. You hit, how you get cayuse? Gun talk, Sioux come, and scalps whist!" Francois smiled at the Cree's terseness. "The fellow had summed up the situation that would develop should the trapper's knowledge of his weapon prove faulty. "Have patience, Pigeon. Our preparations are not complete." With this he dropped a loose covering of snow to the depth of a foot, over the muzzle and beyond for a distance of a foot. The shot must now travel through the loose snow before starting and the report of the gun should be smothered by this covering.

"See, Pigeon, the gun will not talk so loud. The drums in the Sioux camp will help cover the sound. Patience will see a horse at the drinking place. Let us hope it is one with well-covered ribs. As I have aimed, the bullet will carry the distance, unless I am mistaken. Go you higher on the mound that you may watch the camp for stray warriors, but see that they do not discover they are being observed."

"Francois departed with expressive grunts, Francois laid his buffalo robe in the depression behind the gun and sat down with his gaze fastened on the herd of Indian horses. "A cold business," thought the trapper, "with no food in one's stomach and a hundred scalp lifters whetting their knives within two hundred yards. Oh, well, this is not the first time I have had to lighten my belt and to go on as I am in such a country, I must risk my scalplock."

"For perhaps a half hour Francois crouched on the robe with only an occasional glance toward the three lodges of the expedition, or up the slope of the mound to the place where Pigeon stood knee deep in the snow. Suddenly his shoulder advanced to the butt of the musket and his finger closed upon the trigger. A mottled horse had moved to the brink to drink from the rushing stream. There came the muffled report, a faint blue of smoke, and a long second of strained anxiety. Would the calculation of distance and wind place the bullet in a vital spot? Had the sound of the discharge been waited to the ears of the watchful Sioux?"

Even as these questions flashed in his mind, he saw the horse plunge forward into the water beyond the ice edge, to be swept downward toward the awaiting stream behind the clump of willows. Montreaux heard a howl of surprise go up from some observer in the Indian camp. With the quickness of a wolverine, Francois tore his gun from his snow bed, signalled Pigeon, and leaped forward toward the other side of the small hill.

As Francois advanced toward the camp form which he had so lately secured the stolen supplies, he noted that the general excitement had run like a trail of lighted powder from the river bank to a particular lodge on the outskirts of the camp. "As I hoped," said Francois, softly, "my shot was not heard. Fortunately, the water was deep enough to carry the horse away or else the Sioux would have found the bullet hole. Now they cannot understand the sudden death of the cayuse and have laid the blame on a medicine man for not having prevented the catastrophe."

"The approach of Francois and Pigeon was noticed by the Sioux, judging by the hoarse cries, the brandishing of bows and knives, and the sudden rush that carried forward a haggard medicine man with it.

"The chevalier paused rested the butt of his musket on the snow crust, and leaned slightly upon the gun while the terrifying mob of savages moved about him. To outward appearances he might have been awaiting tea from the hand of glorious Helene, for well he knew that at this critical moment a show of alarm would prove disastrous. "Tell them we would buy red flannel cayuse," Pigeon, said Francois.

"Cayuse!" cried the chief at the words of the interpreter. Then he shouted out a sentence at Francois and turned a torrent of abuse upon the head of the originating medicine man. "Him say, 'White man eat wigwam when he come last time. Good he starve now. Him plenty kill medicine man now. Let cayuse fall dead in river.'"

Evidently intending to put his threat into execution, the Indian chief seized the medicine man by the tuft of his scalplock, jerked him to the snow, and flourished a knife over him.

"Tell the chief we will give two yards of red flannel for the horse that has gone down the river if he will sell us two live horses."

At these words the Sioux chief paused. A look of surprise came over his face, only to cloud to anger. He almost stuttered as he answered. "Him say, 'White man no good. No red flannel cayuse. Must go way. Go back trail,'" was Pigeon's interpretation.

"True enough," ran Francois' thoughts, if he failed to get the meat the western quest must be abandoned and they must move back to the more friendly Assiniboines, and eventually reach the home post—and Helene. It would be easy to give in to circumstances and withdraw from this horse of savages all to eager to shed blood. How would his illustrious father look when his son returned with no more to show than the one horse that Montreaux must by now have pulled from the river?

In that second of thought, Francois observed that the trembling medicine man had mustered courage and composure enough to address the chief. Pigeon whispered the words as the fellow continued with growing confidence.

"Oh, White Bear, the great spirit struck cayuse because young men stole the goods of the white man. He strike again until our herds is gone if Sioux do not help the white man. Sell plenty red flannel cayuse. White man go, and no more horse jump in river. Great Spirit angry now."

"With an inward sigh of relief at this new turn, Francois watched the faces of the savages as their expressions changed with this explanation of the death of the mottled horse. Pliability shaded gradually into simple belief and awe. The circle dropped back a step and all eyes held on White Bear as he allowed the medicine man to regain his feet.

The chief turned slowly to Francois and again Pigeon translated: "Does the Great Spirit protect the white man?" asked White Bear.

"He does," replied Francois, measuring out lengths of red flannel, "and so he will all men who do right."

Did You Ever Stop to Think?

By Edson R. Waite, Shawnee, Oklahoma

Many people by deep reasoning, and others more or less by instinct, feel that now is the time to pay more attention to business and less to politics.

If the business men of neighboring cities get into your trade territory and get the business you should get, it is because they are awake and you are asleep. When this happens, don't send for an undertaker --- send for the advertising man of this newspaper. He can help you!

There are many bright spots in the black cloud of depression and now is the time to seize those bright spots and enlarge them, rather than dwell upon the blackness. So let us get ready to receive the advantages that are before us.

I never could see what benefit daylight saving is to the farmer. The farmer is up before sunrise, works by the sun and ceases work by the sun. Of course, those who work in the city are in a different position. They work by the clock.

The way to keep a business before the public is by continuous advertising. People are forgetful. When a business concern takes its name from public view it means an immediate loss to them.

There seems to be no reason for the wave of economy hysteria that is sweeping the country. It floats about like a specter in the night and the timid buying power of the people is being bitten day by day by the dragon of Economy propaganda. Instead of helping business, it is putting thousands out of business.

Good merchandise, good prices and good advertising make a growing business.

BERTHA SETTLES THE ARGUMENT

By Betty Barclay

"That's enough bread for this time, Henry," remarked Mrs. Powers, setting her lips in a manner which Henry knew only too well.

"Two slices enough after a hard day's work? That's ridiculous! I never—"

"You may have more potatoes, Henry," granted his wife. "We shall drop the question of bread."

"You've been reading those food diet stories again," exploded Henry. "One slice of roast beef, two slices of bread, four diced cabbages served in soup dish, enough lettuce to keep the rabbits overfed for a month—and, well, and nothing to eat for a hungry man. I've lost three pounds since you became one of faddists."

"Faddists, Henry!"

"All right, faddists!"

"Those potatoes are delicious to-night. Better try another spoonful or two. We hardly want Bertha to overhear this silly argument."

Bertha, fresh from normal school, broke in at the opportune moment.

"I couldn't help hearing it, Mommie," she remarked. "Wasn't listening, but heard the whole conversation while I took off my overcoat and rubbers."

"And you agree with me, don't you?" smiled her mother.

"For once in my life, I do not," replied Bertha. "Ninety-nine times out of a hundred you have poor Dad beaten in an argument," she continued diplomatically, "but this time you have been reading something in that favorite magazine of yours that was either written by an old-fashioned fog, or by someone who had fish to fry on behalf of a few favorite foods of hens."

Mrs. Powers gasped, but an unwavering faith in Bertha's knowledge of foods kept her from again voicing her opinion. Incidentally, Dad Powers took advantage of conditions to pick up daintily his third slice of bread and not quite so daintily deposit it in a shallow pool of gravy on his plate.

"Many of the statements made about certain foods to-day," continued Bertha, "are far from accurate. Of course, many of the true and we are learning a great deal about foods that we did not know a few years ago, but we must analyze claims carefully and use a little common sense before making radical changes in our diet. Let me tell you a few facts which will give you a new idea about bread."

"Only thirty per cent. of the American diet is bread. In England the percentage is fifty, and in France sixty. Do you notice any over-weight among the English or French, or any illness that would indicate that this excess bread was causing trouble?"

"Bread and butter contains 1,624 calories to the pound. Baked rice contains but 510. Baked eggs contain 765, and oatmeal contains only 285. This should prove that bread supplies one of the most important needs of the body—energy. And it supplies it at a low cost, too."

"In other words," concluded Bertha, "spreading her opinion daintily over her lap, "good white bread is an inexpensive, easily-digestible energy food that may be eaten by Dad as it was eaten by his father and his father's father. No one should eat bread alone—and we never do it. We have plenty of milk, good butter, eggs, fruit from line orchard and vegetables from the garden."

"So pass the bread, Mommie! Your big daughter needs energy after this lecture. And, by the way, Dad, you'll need about one more slice to take care of that gravy."

Mr. Powers beamed affectionately upon his daughter, as he followed her suggestion.

DAIRY STERILIZING RINSE

For the sterilization of the parts of milking machines and other dairy utensils the following home-made hypochlorite solution has been found useful. Obtain a 12-ounce package of the very best chloride of lime. According to the directions of the Dominion Department of Agriculture, this lime should be fresh, non-caked, and preferably marked with the available chorine content. Mix the contents with just enough water to form a moist paste, then add the remainder of a gallon of water, breaking up the lumps and straining through screen wire into a glass or earthenware container. Dissolve one pound of washing soda in a gallon of water, then add this to the chloride of lime solution, stirring thoroughly. Allow the mixture to stand overnight, then draw off the clear, greenish liquid on top. This is known as the Stock Solution, and should be stored in a tightly stoppered brown glass or earthenware jar in a cool place. This stock solution may also be used to make up sterilizing rinses for metal utensils and for washing the cows' udders before milking. To sterilize the milk tube system, obtain a large earthenware crock of sufficient capacity to hold the tubes from all the units without crowding. Construct a tightly fitting lid to keep out dust and dirt. For a 10-gallon crock, place 30 pounds of salt in the bottom, and fill the crock with clean cold water to within six inches of the top. To the stock solution add 1 quart of the stock solution of hypochlorite at the start, and an additional four-ounce change every day in summer, and every other day in winter. Add salt and clean water as necessary to maintain the original level of the solution. As soon as the solution begins to look dirty, discard it and make up a fresh one. No solution should be kept in use for longer than six weeks.

A GOOD EXCUSE

"Why are you late this morning, Jack?"

"I saw a sign."

"What has that to do—"

"Please, ma'am, the sign said, School Ahead—Go Slow." — American Newspaper Boy.

THE POOR WILL MISS HIM

By Arthur B. Rhinow

"It's the poor that will miss him." This compliment was paid to a physician shortly after his death. It is a splendid compliment.

We believe, to be sure, that a doctor is entitled to a compensation commensurate with his knowledge, skill, and the many years of preparation, and the profession has to its credit. But it makes us feel good to hear of any man in any profession, who, in spite of the hardening process of struggle and years, has kept his heart tender toward the needy.

Of that hardening process there is no doubt. There is a time in life when the professional ideal is vital and plastic, but unless we are very careful, it is likely to harden into a mere set of rules, as time goes on and competition grows keen. "We must make a living," we plead in excuse, as we think of the fee more than the work, and part company with them that found their richest reward in alleviating suffering and helping the helpless, the world's true nobility.

"The poor will miss him" is a fine compliment, but the perfect compliment would be, "He will be missed by rich and poor, for his heart was in his work." If it must be rich or poor, however, we cast our vote for excellency in favor of him who befriends the poor.

There are those in every profession who live and work in the spirit of the Great Physician, of whom it is said that he went about doing good.

The cheapness of Mother Graves' Worm Exterminator puts it within reach of all, and it can be got at any druggist's.