

PUNISHING THE WOLVES

Alford's ranch lay silent and apparently deserted. The July sun was nearing the zenith, the brown waters of the Platte slipped sluggishly along between their banks, and all the wide level of the valley was filled with shimmering waves of heated air. Across the level carpet of short brown grass a small herd of horses was grazing, at the foot of the bluffs about a mile from the ranch-house; and far away down the river a tiny speck of white, coming slowly up the valley, marked the course of a single white-topped prairie schooner.

An hour dragged silently away, and at last the wagon drew near enough for the creaking of its wheels to be heard. There came a stir within the low, flat-roofed abode ranch-house, and a boy, evidently under eighteen years of age, came to the open doorway and looked out. He was clad in a blue flannel shirt, open at the throat, and buckskin trousers, whose legs were tucked into the tops of long boots which had grown rusty for want of blacking. An old blue fatigue cap, with a pair of tarnished brass cross sabers pinned to its front, and the yellow stripes of his shirt sleeve proclaimed him a sergeant of cavalry.

The young soldier stood in the doorway, watching the emigrant outfit approach. The big wagon was drawn by a team of large bony sorrels, a collar dog trudged wearily along beside the horses, and on the seat sat a tall man of middle age, black bearded and keen eyed, with a little girl sitting at his side.

"I suppose you are Sergeant Johnny?" said the tall emigrant, as he halted his team.

"Who told you so?"

"We met five of your men down the road at the station below here."

"Where is Alford?" asked the emigrant.

"Alford! Lord knows! He abandoned this place over two years back. Me and my detachment of ten men have been quartered here since last fall. You are not looking for Alford?"

"Oh, no," replied the emigrant. "We're bound for the slope. I just thought since this is Alford's ranch there might be an Alford somewhere about the premises. You are alone to-day?"

"Yes. I sent the five men for supplies, and the rest of the boys are out beyond the bluffs after buffalo. You going to noon here?"

"We would like to, if you don't object," replied the emigrant.

A woman pale, thin faced, appeared at the opening, and the boy's sergeant touched his cap shyly as she glanced at him.

"They told us down the road," said the emigrant, "that the Sioux were very bad just west of this place."

Sergeant Johnny grunted indignantly. "Them men down below never see eyes on a Sioux," he growled. "The burnt thigh band is hunting buffalo just beyond here, but they are peaceful as can be. They don't bother nobody, and won't unless they are set upon and forced to fight. If you see old Two Lance tell him you are a friend of Little Soldier, and he'll treat you the best he knows."

"They call you 'Little Soldier,' do they?" asked the emigrant's wife.

"Yes," said Sergeant Johnny. "They call me that when they are in a good humor. When they get cross they usually speak of me as 'that little red-headed pony-soldier.'"

"Your hair is brown," asserted the little girl.

"Course it is!" laughed Sergeant Johnny. "but I reckon injuns are all colorblind."

"You had better camp for the night in the big bend of the river, six miles above here," said the young soldier, when the team had been hitched to the wagon again and the emigrants were about to start. "Follow the river road. There's a shorter cut-off road over the bluffs, but it's too steep for your team."

II.

On the same afternoon, while the troopers at Platte Stage Station, twelve miles above Alford's, were gathered about the doorway for the appearance of the up-coach, two strange horsemen rode in from up the river. The newcomers were frontiersmen, clad in buckskin, heavily armed, and mounted on sturdy Indian ponies. They were both tall and lean, with hawk-like features, thin and bronzed, glittering black eyes, and straight, cruel-looking mouths.

"How are you, varmints?" cried one of the troopers. "You don't look happy. Has them pesky injuns been worryin' you? We heard up the river the burnt thighs had been carrying on down this way."

"Injuns are at peace," said the big sergeant curtly.

They came out upon the river road again, and as they turned a point of the bluff, came in sight of a white pony, which was grazing near a clump of willows on the river bank. As the two men approached the pony an Indian woman emerged from the willows and catching sight of them, stopped abruptly.

"Huh! Not much for looks,"

grunted Bill, sitting sideways in his saddle and looking coldly at the poor creature.

"Come on," said McBride, impatiently.

"McBride!" called Bill.

"Well?" McBride stopped and looked back.

"What you reckon would happen if that 'squaw' was to be discovered with her toes turned up?"

McBride turned his pony and rejoined his companion. "I reckon the buck injuns would raise particular biases," he remarked.

"Bet your boots!" said Bill, beaming upon the trembling woman. "Then the troops would come to lick the injuns; the road would be unsafe, an' you an' me would get all we could do guardin' emigrant trains. You savvy all that?"

McBride savvied. He drew a long navy revolver from its holster in a grave, thoughtful manner, and Bill followed suit. The Indian woman, on seeing the dreaded white men draw their weapons and turn their cold black eyes on her again, threw off her blanket and screamed "Squaw! Squaw!" evidently believing that they had mistaken her for a man.

"Let's plug together," suggested Bill. And they plugged.

III.

It was growing dark. Sgt. Johnny's men had returned, and supper was being prepared at Alford's when suddenly the distant thudding of hoofs on the road broke in upon the conversation.

"Hullo! Who's coming?" cried the Deacon, a tall, gray-haired private, and followed by several others he ran out into the road.

"An injun, by thunder!" explained one of the group, gazing intently at the solitary horseman approaching rapidly through the dusk. The rider was quipping his pony mercilessly and bending far forward as he rode.

"Two Lance!" cried Sgt. Johnny, seizing the old Indian by the arm. "What on earth is the matter?" he demanded.

"War," gasped Two Lance. "Little while ago. Two white men. They shoot Blue Shield's woman." The old man spoke in short phrases. He was breathing hard and nearly exhausted.

"The woman was found," went on the Indian. "Her relations got very mad. They painted and armed. They rode out. Down to the big bend. They found white people there. They were in camp—a man, a woman, a girl. They kill the man and the woman and brought the girl to the camp."

"My God!" cried the sergeant. "It is the family that nooned here! Boys, saddle up; we have work ahead. One of you ride down and tell the lieutenant at the station below. Two Lance, do you know what the men who killed Blue Shield's wife looked like?"

"They did not kill her," replied the old Indian. "They thought she did. She is alive. She says two tall men with black eyes and long black hair. One had a claybank pony, the other a buckskin."

"Give that description to the lieutenant," commanded the sergeant. "and tell him to arrest those men if they come along. You keep a good lookout here, too. I am going with Two Lance to his camp."

It was about 9 o'clock when the young soldier again rode up to Alford's, with the little girl asleep in his arms.

"Them two galoots is at the station below," announced the Deacon.

"Good," growled Sgt. Johnny. "No it isn't good," snarled the Deacon. "The lieutenant won't arrest them two fellows. He says there's no evidence agin' 'em exceptin' what that injun woman said an' he allows he ain't a-goin' to take no injun's word agin' a white man's."

As Sergeant Johnny listened, his face grew set and stern, and when the Deacon had ended, he handed down the sleeping child to him, dismounted and asked if the men were still at the station below.

"They're thar," replied the Deacon. "They ain't in no hurry to leave. They're chummin' it with the lieutenant."

"One of you boys saddle me a fresh horse," said the sergeant, "and some one load my navy Colt while I snatch a bite to eat."

"Look here," said the Deacon. "what are you goin' to do now? You might stay at home a while after all you've been through."

"I'm going down to argue with the lieutenant," replied Sgt. Johnny.

IV.

The up coach arrived at Blair's station at about seven in the morning and halted to change teams.

Down upon this scene came Sgt. Johnny and reined in his horse beside the coach. "How are you, Haines?" he said to the driver.

"Fair to middlin', Johnny," replied the official, noting with surprise the young soldier's pale face and compressed lips. "What's up, sergeant?" he asked.

"Are those two fellows who shot the injun woman still here?" inquired Sgt. Johnny.

"They're inside there," replied Haines.

"Under arrest?"

"Lord no! The lieutenant won't arrest no white men on such a charge."

Johnny swung from the saddle and hitched his two long holsters around from his hips to the front. He halted in the open doorway and glanced inside. The soldiers were gathered about a table near the window, watching the conductor and the lieutenant, who were searching the way pouch for mail; farther back in the room sat Bill and McBride, playing poker at another table. Without the least hesitation the young sergeant drew his revolver and fired. The two men fell from their chairs, and Sgt. Johnny instantly turned and covered the group of startled bluecoats; but McBride had snatched his revolver as he fell, and now fired from the floor, the ball striking the sergeant a glancing blow on the forehead and nearly knocking him down. Even as he staggered back, Johnny jerked one weapon around and shot McBride, again, then turned on the soldiers once more, holding his head on one side to prevent the blood running into his eyes.

"For God's sake, don't shoot, sergeant!" gasped the lieutenant, holding up his hands before his face. "You come outside," ordered Sgt. Johnny. "I'm going to take you along as a sort of receipt for my safety. If your men make trouble, I'll shoot you."

Then the sergeant closed the station door warning the men inside to remain quiet, and marched his captive to the coach. With the muzzle of one weapon in contact with the back of the lieutenant's neck, he put the other one back in its holster, and taking up his handkerchief wiped the blood from his face.

"Here," said the younger of the two women passengers, poking her head out through a window, "some nearer and I'll be up your forehead." She dismounted her father of his black silk handkerchief and tied it about Johnny's head as he stood beside the window; then she opened the coach door, and Johnny and his prisoner got in.

"He won't bother you long, ladies," explained Sgt. Johnny. "I will set him down as soon as we get a little way from the station."

Next day the word was passed along the road that Johnny and the Deacon had deserted, taking the child along with them. No more was heard of them until some years later when a letter was received in the Iowa town in which Johnny's company had been recruited. The writer of the letter had discovered in a small Montana mining camp two very respectable citizens, Colonel Johnny and the Deacon, and had come very near being shot by the colonel for expounding to the camp how it was that Johnny although a confessed bachelor, could be the happy possessor of a daughter, the twelve-year-old belle of the camp.—The Argonaut.

THE SKEWER LANGUAGE.

There are about fifty men in New York City who know how to make meat skewers keep a record of their business transactions. These men are the representatives of the Chicago packers, who sell thousands of quarters of beef every day to butchers.

The work of these men is accomplished with great rapidity. Frequently they are making sales to a dozen butchers at the same time, and to record these sales in a book would not only consume a lot of time but would be difficult, as all quarters of beef look alike.

As soon as the sale is made the salesman sticks skewers into the quarter selected by the butcher. The skewers are placed in such a way that each butcher purchases are easily picked out when the time comes for delivering them.

As some of the salesmen have as many as a hundred customers in a day it is evident that as many combinations of the skewers have to be formed. In no case are more than three skewers used on a piece of beef.

In one big icebox there were twenty rows of quarters of beef, with forty quarters in each row. In each piece of beef were skewers, placed at various angles, straight up, two of them crossed and in every conceivable combination.

"I know by these skewers who each piece belongs to," said the salesman. "Every beef house salesman has his own signs."

"This method of marking the meat serves several purposes in addition to that of saving time. A salesman from another house could not come in here and find out what my customers have bought by looking at the skewers, which would be easy enough if the meat had their names on."

"Neither can one butcher find out what quality of beef another is buying. I could make a thousand signs without using more than three skewers on any one piece of meat."

GOLF INVESTMENTS.

It is estimated that \$10,000,000 is invested in the outfit of golf clubs in England and that 20,000 people were converted to the game in 1906. There are 2,000 clubs and about 200,000 players and their total annual expenditure is estimated at over \$21,000,000, an average of \$90 for each player. At the rate of a ball a golfer each week 15,000,000 balls are used every year by golfers in British links.

RELIANCE OF ROMAN OCCUPANCY.

During excavations near Prospect Park, Reading, England, a workman struck his pick against something hard, and on removing the clay he unearthed a quern, or hand mill, which had probably come from the neighboring Romano-British city of Silchester, which was on the great trade routes. The relic has been deposited in the Reading Museum.

HARD BITING GILA MONSTER.

Why It Is Poisonous—The Creature's Tenacity and Quickness.

Of some of the strange ways of the gila monster, that little known creature of the Southwestern deserts, a correspondent writes: "I have had some experiments with gila monsters and can state that no matter what scientists may claim the gila monster is a good thing to shun. Indians and Mexicans have a horror of them and fear them more than a rattlesnake. I believe that the bite of the gila monster is dangerous because of the creature's habit of eating lizards, bugs and rodents and then lying on sand so hot that it blisters the hands and feet of men. The teeth are often covered with a fermented, putrefied froth from the food. A bite has the same effect as the cut of a dissecting knife used on a cadaver; in other words, the inoculation of a deadly poison."

"When frightened or angry he can move quite rapidly. That short, thick stubby tail is used in jumping, just as a kangaroo uses its tail. The gila monster bites like a bulldog and has the tenacity of a snapping turtle. I once saw some men teasing a gila monster brought to Tucson. A string was tied around his neck. The gila monster was crawling around on the ground trying to get away, but was pulled back by the string. Suddenly he sprang up and bit a man among the crowd on the hand, leaving fully two feet from the ground."

"Another instance, this of a man whose chief object seems to have been a foolhardy display of fearlessness. He was holding one of the monsters in his hand by the back of its neck, so it could not bite him. He dropped his hand to the side of his leg. The gila monster shut his teeth down on his heavy duck overalls, taking a double place out where the cloth folded, as quickly as a pair of scissors could have cut the fabric, and so cleanly."

TROPICAL PLANT THAT COUGHS.

Way of Freeing Itself From Coating of Dusty Sand.

"I heard a cough and looked behind me nervously," said a hunter, "for I was stalking gazelle in that lion colored waste, the Sahara Desert; and having gotten rather too far south, I expected at any moment to become a plume for the poisoned darts of the dread Touaregs."

"But there was no one there. The fat desert quivered in the sunshine, and here and there a dusty plant stood wearily. But though I commanded the landscape for a radius of fifty miles not a living creature was in sight."

"Another cough. I swung around quickly. The same plant, yellow with dust, drooped in the dry heat. That was all."

"Hack! Hack!"

"On my left this time. I swung around again. A like plant met my eye. The thing was growing rather ghastly."

"As I regarded this last plant a cough came from it. Believe me, the plant coughed. It shook all over, and then, tightening up as a man does when he is about to sneeze, it gave a violent cough, and a little cloud of dust arose."

"I found out afterward that the plant was the coughing bean, which is common in many tropical countries. In the long, dry heat this weird growth's pores become choked with dust, and it would die of suffocation were it not that a powerful gas accumulates inside it, which, when it gains sufficient pressure, explodes with a sound precisely like the human cough. The explosion shakes the plant pores free of their dust and the coughing bean is in good health again."

Sheepdog Trials.

Sheepdog trials are becoming popular in Canada, and there is some call for them in the neighborhood of New York. But the East can hardly be called a sheep country, and where there are no sheep there can be little use for working sheepdogs. Sheepdog trials are looked upon as a sort of national pastime or game in Wales and Australia, and to watch the dogs work is to recognize the marvelous intelligence of these aids to shepherds.

The great Toronto Show or Fair is now the gathering place of the sheepdog owners, and the entertainments that their dogs have given have been greatly applauded. Major G. M. Carnochan is the chief supporter of the trials near New York, and his dogs have given very good exhibitions.

The uses of these competitions are manifold. They point to the dog as a utility animal for man, and of what service he is particularly to the shepherd. In the great paddocks of Australia and on the mountains of Wales and Scotland one dog can do the work of a hundred men; he is an indispensable animal. Again, these trials give to townfolk an inkling as to the intelligence of a dog and it is to be hoped they will treat him accordingly.

When an Indian paints his cheeks in scarlet lines and daubs a yellow square on his forehead, the world knows that he is in love. When he covers his face with zigzag black lines upon an ochre base it is his purpose to get just as sketched as the possibly

THE WORLD'S GREAT CANALS.

In Our Country There Are Links Between the Great Lakes.

There are nine great ship canals in the world and all of these have been built within the last seventy years. They are the Suez canal, the Corinthian Canal, the Manchester Ship Canal, the Kaiser Wilhelm, the Elbe and Trave, the Welland, the two canals connecting Lake Superior and Lake Huron between Canada and this country.

In a single year a greater number of ships pass through the lake canals of the North than through the Suez Canal, though there is no doubt that the latter is by far the most important water link in the world. It is the longest being ninety miles from entrance to exit, and it cost more than \$100,000,000 to build. About four thousand ships pass through the Suez Canal annually. It takes eighteen hours for a vessel to go the entire length of the canal. There are no locks and a part of the route, about two thirds of it, is made up of a series of shallow lakes.

The Corinthian and St. Petersburg Canal is altogether about sixteen miles including the bay channel. It is an important commercial waterway and connects the capital of Russia with the Bay of Constantinople.

After the construction of the Corinthian Canal, which is only four miles long, a saving of 175 miles was made by ships sailing from Adriatic ports. A part of this canal was cut through solid rock, and, short as it is, it took nine years to build.

A direct route from Manchester, England, to the Atlantic Ocean was obtained by the digging of the Manchester Ship Canal. From Manchester ships now go through the artificial waterway to the Mersey River and from there to the open sea. This canal is filled with hydraulic locks.

For the express use and convenience of military and naval forces the Kaiser Wilhelm Canal was begun in 1891 and completed less than two years later. Since it has been opened it has been found of great value to merchant ships. The canal is sixty-one miles long and extends from Kiel, on the Baltic, to the North Sea. The Elbe and Trave Canal is another important connecting link between the Baltic and North Seas.

In our own country are three great canals, all of them links between the Great Lakes. The Welland connects Lake Ontario and Lake Erie on the Canadian side of the river. It is twenty-seven miles long and has twenty-five sets of locks.

VIRTUES OF THE PINEAPPLE.

Fresh Juice Has Remarkable Effect on the Digestion.

The annals of the French Medical Academy say that the eating of a slice of pineapple after a meal is said to be in accordance with physiological conditions, though it may not be generally known, fresh pineapple juice contains a remarkably active digestive principle similar to pepsin.

This principle has been termed bromelain, and so powerful in its action upon proteins that it will digest as much as 1000 times its weight within a few hours. Its digestive activity varies in accordance with the kind of protein to which it is subjected. Fibrous disappears entirely after a time. With the coagulated albumen of eggs the effect is slower, while with the albumen of meat the action seems first to produce a pulpy glutinous mass, which, however, completely dissolves after a short time. When a slice of fresh pineapple is placed upon a raw beefsteak the surface of the steak gradually becomes gelatinous owing to the digestive action of the enzyme of the juice.

Until recently the digestive principle of the pineapple will operate in an acid, neutral or even alkaline medium according to the kind of protein to which it is presented. It may, therefore, be assumed that the pineapple enzyme would not only aid the work of digestion in the stomach, but would continue that action in the intestinal tract.

Pineapple, it may be added, contains an indigestible matter of the nature of wood, and this is a quality possible that the decidedly digestive properties of the juice more than compensate for this fact.

Friday an Eventful Day.

In Friday's unlucky Glasgow, Scotland, Washington, Blumenthal, and Spurgeon were born on Friday. Henry VIII. gave Calais to France, which led to the discovery of North America. Columbus actually discovered this continent and the pilgrims' fathers landed at Plymouth Rock on Friday. Once more, the first newspaper, "ad" and the first newspaper printed by steam power (the London Times) appeared both on a Friday. While the stamp act was repealed in England on the same day of the week. With Charles Dickens Friday was an especial favorite.

American and English women married to great Roman nobles have done much toward raising life in the present city. They discouraged the rough street play and the practical joking so common under the old regime even in the best houses. They have introduced such amenities of life as open fire places, bathrooms and improved sanitation and, in short, they exercised the same softening and humanizing influence upon the Roman nobility of the last half of the nineteenth century.



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