

IN THE WILDS
OF NEW MEXICO

CHAPTER XIV.

A NIGHT ALARM.

BART was very weary when he lay down, after glancing round to see that all proper precautions had been taken; and it seemed to him that he had not been asleep five minutes when he felt a hand laid upon his mouth and another grasp his shoulder, while on looking up, there, between him and the star-encrusted sky, was a dark, Indian face.

For a moment he had thought of resistance. The next he had seen whose was the face, and obeying the sign to be silent, he listened while the Beaver bent lower, and said in good English: "Enemy. Indians coming."

Bart rose on the instant and roused the doctor, who immediately awakened Maude, and obeying the signs of the Indian, they followed him into the shadow of the mountain, for the Beaver shook his head fiercely at the idea of attempting to defend the little camp.

It all took place in a few hurried moments, and almost before they were half way to their goal there was a fierce yell, the rush of trampling horses, and a dark, shadowy body was seen to swoop down upon the camp. While before, in his excitement, Bart could realize his position, he found himself with the doctor and Maude beyond the narrow entrance and on the slope that seemed to lead up into the mountains.

As soon as Maude was in safety, Bart and the doctor returned to the entrance, to find it well guarded by the Indians; and if the place were discovered or known to the enemy, it was very plain that they could be easily kept at bay if anything like a determined effort were made, and there was no fear of that.

Then came a sort of muster or examination of their little force, which to Bart's agony, resulted in the discovery that while all the Indians were present, and Harry was by their side, Joses, Sam and Juan were away.

In the excitement, Bart did not realize why this was. Now he recalled that when he lay down to sleep the two offenders had been snoring stertorously, and it was evident that they were helplessly stupified when the Indians came, and were taken.

But Joses?
Of course he was at his post, and the

question now was, would he remain undiscovered, or would the Indians find the hiding place of the horses, and after killing Joses, sweep them all away?

It was a terrible thought, for, to be left alone in that vast plain without horses, seemed too hard to be borne. At the first blush it made Bart shudder, and it was quite in despair that, with cocked rifle, he waited for morning light, which seemed as if it would never come.

Bart's thoughts were many, and frequent were the whispered conversations with the doctor as to whether the Indians would not find the *cache* of the horses, as soon as it was daylight, by their trail, though to this he had answered that the ground all around was so marked by horses' hoofs that it was not likely that any definite track would be made out. Then, moment by moment, they expected their hiding place to be known, and that they would be engaged fighting for their lives with their relentless foes; but the hours wore on, and though they could hear the buzz of many voices, and sometimes dark, shadowy forms could be made out away on the plain, the fugitives were in dense shadow, and remained unmolested till the break of day.

By this time Bart had given Maude such comforting intelligence as he could, bidding her be hopeful, for that these Indians must be strangers to the place, or they would have known of the way up the mountain, and searched it at once.

"But, if they find it in the morning," Bart, she said, "what then?"

"What then?" said Bart, with a coolness he did not feel. "Why, then we shall have to kill all the poor wretches—that's all."

Maude shuddered, and Bart returned to where the Beaver was at the opening, watching the place where the enemy had been plundering the wagon, and had afterwards stirred up the camp-fire and were seated round.

"Joses was glad that he had put away the powder," thought Bart, as he saw the glare of the fire. "I almost begin to wish it had been left."

CONTINUED

THE STORY OF TWO-BITS.

command consisting of one company of the Fifth United States Infantry, and a troop of California Cavalry, under orders to build and occupy a fort near the town of Prescott, Arizona, recently established as the capital of the Territory. This command had in possession at the time I mention some three hundred head of cattle, eight hundred head of sheep,

and, counting the draught animals and cavalry horses, one hundred mules and forty horses.

The presence of these animals, grazing on the plains and hillsides about our garrison, was a special temptation to the marauding Navajos and Apaches, and we were forced into many fights and skirmishes in the loss of our stock.

Six months after our arrival at Fort Whipple, the California Cavalry was ordered away, and a troop of New Mexican Cavalry took its place. Two days after the arrival of the new troop, its captain turned over to me sixteen worn-out, broken-down, sick, and generally decrepit horses. I receipted for them, and, according to custom in such cases, ordered a public sale of them by auction.

On the morning of the sale the fifer of the infantry company, a neat Irish soldier, known among his comrades as Joe Cain, who acted as my servant, paused in the doorway, and asked permission to speak to me. Consent having been given, he said,—

“Would the lieutenant like to buy a fine horse?”

“No, Cain,” I replied. “I have one horse, which is sufficient for my use, and I cannot afford the expense of another.”

“But this horse can be had for little or nothing, sir.”

“How much?”

“If the lieutenant will let me have five dollars, I’ll buy him the best horse in the post.”

“The best horse in the post for five dollars! Cain, you are talking nonsense,” I replied, and turned with some impatience to my table, where some writing demanded my attention.

“If the lieutenant will buy the horse I spoke of, he’ll never repent of his bargain. I’ve known the baste for ten years, sir; from the time I joined as a music-b’y at Craig, sir.”

I thought I detected the least tinge of feeling in the old soldier’s voice. Evidently this was no idle whim with him.

More to please a valued and trustworthy attendant than with the expectation of obtaining a good horse, I gave Cain the five dollars to enable him to attend the auction and “buy the finest horse in the post.”

Cain bought the animal, a large, fine bay horse, and proceeded to tell me how he came to ask me to buy him. He was at the corral one day to bring me my horse for a ride, when he saw one of the stablemen kicking an old horse to make him rise to his feet. The beast made repeated efforts to stand, but each time fell back through weakness.

Cain approached, and recognized in the animal an old acquaintance from certain saddle-marks and a peculiar star in the forehead. He had known the horse while in service at another post, where the name of Two-Bits had been given to him.

Cain insisted that the old horse knew him, and placed his muzzle in his hand in an appealing way. Cain began his care of the horse at once, and as soon as the auction was ordered, he determined to ask me to buy him; with what success I have already related.

From this time on I had many long rides on Two-Bits in the weary and tiresome pursuit of the Indians, who never neglected to take advantage of the unprotected state of the Territory. I grew very much attached to him, and often wondered at his intelligence and almost human discernment.

He would never desert his rider in danger, no matter what the temptation.

In the fall of 1865 the Indian troubles became so serious that it was with great difficulty that we could maintain our communications with the outer world. Express riders were frequently killed and scalped, and the contents of the express pouches were scattered for yards around their dead bodies; all letters were opened, and the papers torn to shreds.

The danger from the Indians became at last so great that no citizen could be hired to take the mail over the route between Forts Whipple and Yuma at any price I was authorized to pay. The only way to get it carried was by the detail of soldiers in sufficient numbers to insure their safety. One of the results of a capture of the mail was that a requisition for supplies did not reach the subsistence depot on the Pacific coast, and we were on half-rations in consequence for nearly a month.

On the 20th of October a despatch was received from San Francisco, with accompanying instructions that it should be at once forwarded to Sante Fé. Accordingly I advertised for an express rider, offering the highest pay allowed for the service. As the road to the northeast was out of the mining region, and for a long portion of the way over a tract of country lying between the Navajo and Apache ranges, it was not considered to be as dangerous as that lying to the south and west.

Still I had no response to my offer, and began to consider the expediency of asking for a military detail for the service, when a proposition came from an unexpected quarter

CONTINUED

CHARACTER READING BY LEAD PENCILS.

THE first pencils were supposed to have been made of earth or chalk, but the Greeks, in writing and drawing, applied wet colors with a fine pointed brush, which was also called a pencil.

Lead pencils are made of graphite or black-lead as it is sometimes called, although it is not lead but a mineral much resembling anthracite coal. The first lead pencils were made from a graphite mine in England. So valuable was the deposit found in this mine that underground passages were dug from neighboring mines for the purpose of stealing it.

Graphite is generally so full of impurities that it is pulverized and then solidified into blocks by pressure. In making pencils the blocks are sawed into little square bars and placed in corresponding grooves in pieces of wood, which are then glued together.

Do you know that you infallibly indicate your character by the point you put upon your pencil, and have you noticed how other people’s pencils are sharpened? If not, you may gain a good deal of insight into their disposition and habits, by aid of the following illustrations.



As a general rule, the more artistic a person’s temperament the longer will be his pencil point, while the more regular and methodical and well-balanced the owner.



Here is the school-boy’s, with the wood mostly bitten off, probably because the teacher has just taken his knife away for whittling his name upon the benches. But we can all guess just what sort of a point he would put on if he had it.



The happy go lucky, easy going individual sharpens a pencil somewhat like this. While