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ELIZABETH BACON CUSTER



ILLUSTRATED EDITION

FOLLOWING THE GUIDON



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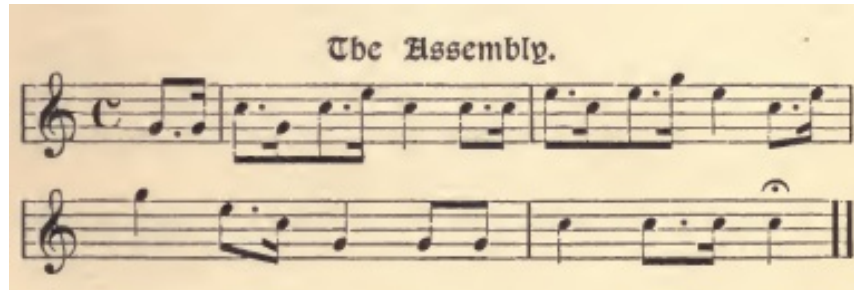
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CHAPTER I. THE MARCH INTO THE INDIAN TERRITORY.

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Around many a camp-fire in the summer, and in our winter-quarters before the huge fireplaces, where the wood merrily crackled and the flame danced up the chimney, have I heard the oft-told tales of the battle of the Washita, the first great fight of the Seventh Cavalry. The regiment was still new, having been organized during the year after the war. It had done much hard work, and had not only accomplished some genuine successes in a small way, but its records of long untiring marches in the chill of early spring, during the burning heat of a Kansas summer sun, and in the sharp frosts of a late autumn campaign, were something to be proud of. Still, the officers and men had little in the way of recognized achievement to repay them for much patient work, and they longed individually and as a regiment for a war record. This would not have been so powerful a desire had not the souls of our men been set on fire by the constant news of the torture of white prisoners by the Indians. History traces many wars to women; and women certainly bore a large though unconscious part in inciting our people to take up arms in attempts to rescue them, and to inflict such punishments upon their savage captors as would teach the Indian a needed lesson.

From the Department of the Platte, which has its headquarters in Nebraska, to the Indian Territory and Texas the trails of the regiment could be traced. It is customary to keep a daily record of each march, and a small pen-and-ink map is added. From these a larger one is made after the summer is over, and when the War Department issues yearly maps the new routes or fresh discoveries are recorded. One of these regimental journals lies before me. The map for each day marks the course of the stream, the place where the regiment encamped overnight, the "ford", the "rolling prairie", "high ridges", "level prairie", with dots to mark the line of the Pacific Railway, in course of construction; "small dry creek", "marshy soil", "level bottom", "stone bluff", etc.. One of the written records goes on to state where, as the days advanced, the troops encamped at night without water, and all the men and horses had to drink was got by digging down into the dry bed of a stream; or where, at another time, they found a "stream impassable", and "halted to build a bridge", together with such hints of experience as these: "struck an old wagon trail"; "marched over cactus-beds and through a deep ravine"; "made camp where there was standing water only"; "banks of stream miry obliged to corduroy it"; "grass along the stream poor, sandy soil"; "banks of next stream forty feet high great trouble in finding a crossing"; "obliged to corduroy another stream for each separate wagon"; "took four hours to cross twenty wagons"; "timber thick, grass poor; struck what is called by the Indians Bad Lands, being a succession of ridges with ravines fifty feet deep between"; two wagons rolled over and went down one ravine; "passed four ranches destroyed by the Indians and abandoned"; "left camp at 5 A.M.; so misty and foggy, could not see a hundred yards in advance; distance of march this day guessed, odometer out of order; marched up a cañon with banks fifty feet high"; "Company E left the columns to pursue Indians"; "all this day marched over Captain S——'s old trail"; "this

was a dry camp, poor grass and plenty of cacti"; "found water-holes, the head of the river"; "total distance of march, seven hundred and four miles."

The names of the streams, the elevated points of ground, or the gulches were seldom taken from the musical nomenclature of the Indian; they seemed to have been given by the outspoken, irreverent pioneer or miner.

Evidently, if these first wayfarers had difficulty in making a crossing of a stream, they caused the name to record the obstacles. Our refined officers sometimes hesitated in their replies if asked by peace commissioners from the East, whom they were escorting to an Indian village, what the place was called. For instance, one of them said when he replied to such a question, "Hell Roaring Creek", etc. He looked out over the surrounding scenery till the effect of these shocking names had passed. A humorous Western paper, in commenting on this national idiosyncrasy, wonders, since the law requires that our national cruisers shall be called after cities, if "You Bet", "Hang Town", "Red Dog", "Jackass Gap", and "Yuba Dam" would answer. The worst of it all is that these names, given by a passing traveller with careless indifference to the future of the places on which they were bestowed, rest as an incubus upon localities that afterwards became the sites of places of prominence; and it is as hard for a town or region so afflicted as for the traditional dog to get rid of a bad name.

The brief itinerary of this one march, out of the many the Seventh Cavalry made, gives a faint idea of the daily history of a regiment. Concise as is the record, it served to point the way for many a tired pioneer who came after; for, on his map, compiled from these smaller ones, were the locations of places where he could stop for wood and water, as well as the warning where neither of these necessaries could be obtained.

Still, there was often a weary sigh among the young sters who had no war record, and who longed to make some sort

of soldier's name for themselves. Besides, they passed the dismantled, deserted home of many a venturesome frontiersman; they saw the burned stage stations; they met in forts or small settlements placed in a safe position ranchmen whose wives had been killed, or, worse still, made captives; they came upon the mutilated and horribly disfigured bodies of Lieutenant Kidder and eleven soldiers; everywhere on all its marches the regiment followed the trail of the Indian on his frightful career of rapine, murder, and outrage. Many a time the question was asked, what was the good of galloping after foes who knew the country thoroughly, who were mounted on the fleetest, hardiest animals in the world, that needed no grain, and who could go directly to rivers or streams where they could graze their ponies for a few days and start off refreshed for a long raid, and who each day could be bountifully fed on the game of the country without being hampered with a train of supplies. The odds were all against our fine fellows.

They had marched and countermarched over the country so constantly that the wit of the regiment said to the engineer officer who made the daily map: "Why fool with that? Just take the pattern supplement of the Harper's Bazar, and no better map of our marches could be found."

Much enthusiasm was felt when the announcement was made that a winter campaign was to be undertaken. "Now we have them!" was the sanguine boast.

The buffalo-hunting among the tribes was over for the year. Enough meat had been jerked or dried to keep them during cold weather, and the villages were established for the winter. In the summer the tribes travelled great distances. As soon as the grass in a river valley was exhausted by the ponies, everything was packed, the village moved, and another point was chosen. At certain seasons of the year there was a journey to timber lands, where lodge poles could be cut; another was made to certain clay-beds, where material for pipes was obtained; another to regions

where the buffaloes were most numerous, and the winter's meat was prepared, or the hides dressed for robes or tepee covers. It is difficult to estimate the hundreds of miles that the villages traversed in the summer; but in the winter a remote spot was chosen, on a stream where the timber offered some protection from the winter storms, and the grass would last longest, and here the nomad "settled down" for a few months. It was such a village that our regiment was seeking. The command starting into the Indian Territory was formidable enough, and had not the Indians been much emboldened by former successes, they would not have dared dash upon the rear-guard or rush in from a ravine to stampede the animals of the wagon train, as they often did on that march. General Custer, in an unpublished letter to a friend in the East, describes the first attacks of the Indians after the march south began. "I had not been in my camp where I first joined two hours, when we were attacked by a war party. I wish that you could have been with us. You would never ask to go to a circus after seeing Indians ride and perform in a fight. I took my rifle and went out on the line, hoping to obtain a good shot, but it was like shooting swallows on the wing, so rapid were they in their movements. Their object had been to dash into camp and secure some of our horses. Disappointed in this, they contented themselves with circling around us on their ponies, firing as they flew along the line, but doing no injury. As it was late in the evening and our horses all unsaddled, I prevented the men from going from camp to fight. Sometimes a warrior, all feathered and painted, in order to show his bravery to his comrades, started alone on his pony, and with the speed of a quarter-horse would dash along the entire length of my line, and even within three or four hundred yards of it, my men pouring in their rifle-balls by hundreds, yet none bringing down the game. I could see the bullets knock up the dust around and beneath his pony's feet, but none apparently striking him. We shot two ponies,

however, in this way, and may have inflicted greater damage; but in this as in all things pertaining to warfare, the Indians are so shrewd as to prevent our determining their losses. Occasionally a pony is captured. I have one now which is white, with a tail dragging on the ground. We have also captured an article of great value to them, an Indian shield. It is made of the thickest part of the buffalo-hide, adorned with rude paintings, and is usually hung in front of a tepee to keep off evil spirits."



INDIANS PREPARING TO MOVE.

It gave the men excellent practice, this running fire on the march. The necessity for troops was so great that raw recruits were sent out, without taking time to drill them in target practice. It came to pass that many a soldier drew his carbine on an Indian in the first shot he had ever fired. A corps of forty sharp-shooters was formed from men who day by day showed unusual skill in the use of fire-arms, and these were allowed some privileges, such as being marched as a separate organization, which of itself is a great favor. It is far from agreeable to submit to the irksome rules of a marching column. No guard or picket duty was expected from these sharp-shooters, so that they attained what is the

supreme good of a soldier's life, "all their nights in bed". The soldier detailed for guard duty has two hours on and two off for twenty-four hours, and unless the command is large these times of duty come very often in the estimation of the men.

In looking over some of the war poetry that filled the papers from 1861 to 1865, I came across a little jingle that describes a soldier's glory and grumbling, whether he be fighting the white or the red man:

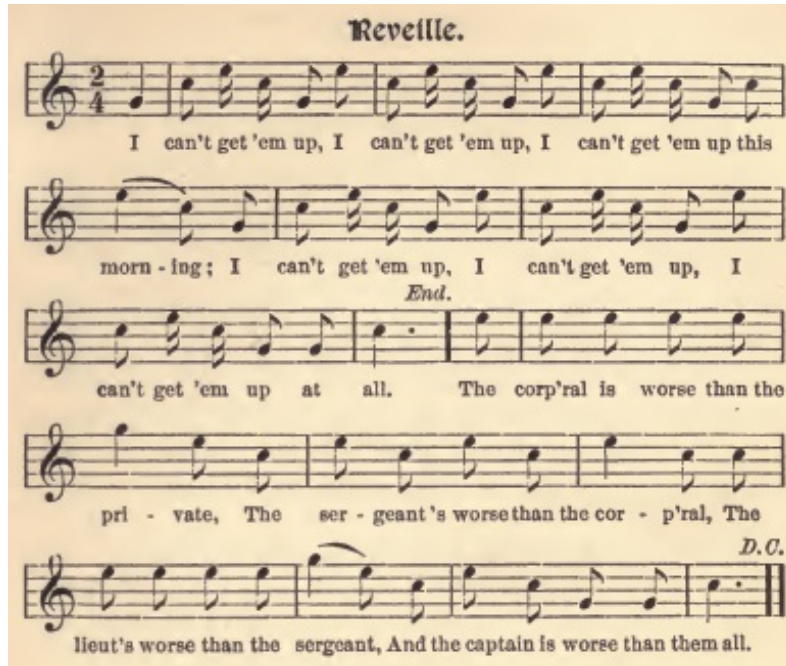
"And how we fought and how we tramped,
Too long a tale perhaps I'll spin ye;
But, first and last, I think we camped
In every field in old Virginny!

" 'Twas a gay old life, but Lord! 'twas hard
No rest for the good, no peace for the wicked;
When you didn't fight you were put on guard,
And when you came off you went on picket."

On the expedition the cavalry marched in a column of fours; then came a long wagon train, hauling the forage, tents, rations, and extra ammunition, and following all this was the rear-guard. The great struggle of the Indian when not actually ready for battle which he never is unless all odds are in his favor is to cut off the wagon train; this he tries to accomplish by frightening the mules. Sometimes the country admitted of the wagons being marched in four lines an arrangement which required fewer soldiers to be deployed on either flank and in the rear for their protection.

In letters to his Eastern friend, from one of which quotations have been made, General Custer speaks with the greatest enthusiasm of the stag and fox hounds his correspondent had given him. The former were a new breed to him, and their feats, while only puppies, were daily marvels to their proud owner.

"Maida and Blucher both seized the first buffalo they saw while running, which was pretty plucky for pups, I think. The dogs have gone beyond my highest expectations. Three days ago Maida alone ran down a jack-rabbit and killed it, and they are the fleetest animals we have, except the antelope. Yesterday while looking for camp, accompanied by a few scouts and headquarters men, we jumped a prairie-wolf. Maida and Blucher, Rover and the other little fox-hound, started after it, the stag-hounds, of course, leaving the other two far behind. Blucher was the first to come up with the wolf; he had never seen one before. As soon as he reached it he seized it across the back, and never relinquished his hold until he had killed it, and this he did by breaking its backbone. Blucher held on like a bulldog. A wolf is one of the ugliest animals a dog can handle. Of the many dogs that are in this regiment there is but one that will attack a wolf, and he needs to be encouraged. Don't you think that is pretty good for a pup? The other day all the dogs went in chase after a jack-rabbit quite out of sight. An officer mounted and started after them, and met the dogs, Blucher at the head carrying the rabbit in his mouth. What do you think of a stag-hound as a retriever?"



CHAPTER II. GENERAL CUSTER'S LETTERS DESCRIBING THE MARCH.

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I here make some extracts from many of my own letters from General Custer, in the belief that they will make the daily life on the march, and in camps which were established for unavoidable delays, on the journey into the Indian Territory clearer than it would otherwise be to the reader, who knows little of the progress of a military expedition.

FORT HAYS, KANSAS, October 4, 1868.

I breakfasted with General Sheridan and the staff. The general said to me, "Custer, I rely upon you in everything, and shall send you on this expedition without

giving you any orders, leaving you to act entirely upon your judgment."

The expedition will consist of eleven companies of cavalry, four of infantry, and two howitzers, accompanied by a large train.

FORTY-TWO MILES FROM FORT DODGE, October 18th.

We have been on the war-path but one week. I joined the regiment near our present camp a week since, and within two hours the Indians attacked camp. We drove them away, killing two ponies. That night I sent out two scouting parties of a hundred men each, to scour the country for thirty miles round.

I never heard of wild turkeys in such abundance. We have them every day we care for them, and there are five dressed in the mess chest now. All the men have them, and in one day eighty were killed. Tom shot five in a few moments.

Now I want to tell you about my splendid stag-hounds. The other day Maida caught a jack-rabbit alone. Yesterday she and Blucher took hold of a buffalo, and to-day, as we came into camp, Blucher started a wolf and caught it alone. Within half an hour a jack-rabbit was started near camp. My three stag-hounds, Flirt, Blucher, and Maida, and two greyhounds, went in pursuit.

We could see the chase for nearly a mile, and it was a pretty sight; then they disappeared over a hill. The officers are constantly trying to buy the stag-hounds of me.

I wish that Eliza¹ was out here to make some nice rolls instead of the solid shot our cook gives us.

Tell Eliza she is the awfulest scold and the most quarrelsome woman I ever met. She and the man who waits on the table have constant rows.²

TWELVE MILES FROM DODGE, October 22d.

We will probably remain here ten days before moving towards the Washita mountains. Some of the officers think that this may be like others before its campaign on paper; but I know General Sheridan too well to think that he will follow any such example; he does not readily relinquish an idea. The general has sent to the Osage Indians to employ them on our side; they will be a profitable assistance.

October 24, 1868.

The general has finally decided upon a winter campaign. If we cannot find the Indians, and inflict considerable injury upon them, we will be on the wing all winter. We are going to the heart of the Indian country, where white troops have never been before. The Indians have grown up in the belief that soldiers cannot and dare not follow them there. They are now convinced that all the tribes that have been committing depredations on the plains the past season have gone south, and are near each other in the vicinity of the Washita mountains. They will doubtless combine against us when they find that we are about to advance into their country.

To-day I gave the regimental saddler directions how to make me a large pair of saddle-bags. They will contain nearly all that I desire to carry, and can be put on my led-horse.

The men are at target practice, and it sounds like a battle. All the officers of the regiment are now learning signals. Books have been furnished us from Washington. I found all the line-officers to-day in the classes. Most of the officers can now converse quite readily as far as they can see the signals. This is just the country for signalling, Nature having formed admirable signal stations over this part of the

territory. General Sheridan, in his letter yesterday, said furloughs would be given to every enlisted man who would do well.

CAMP "SANDY" FORSYTH, November 3d.

You see I have named our camp after the brave "Sandy". I suppose that you have seen considerable excitement to-day over the Presidential campaign. I do not presume that of the many hundreds of men here a dozen remembered that today is Election Day, so little is the army interested in the event. I have been quite busy coloring the company horses. Don't imagine that I have been painting them; but I have been classifying all the horses of the regiment, so that instead of each company representing all the colors of the rainbow by their horses, now every company has one color. There are pure bays, browns, sorrels, grays, and blacks.

This morning I ordered "Phil" saddled, and rode up the valley looking for a new camp.³ I was accompanied by my inseparable companions, the dogs (except Flirt, who is lame). When about three-quarters of a mile from camp, I discovered a large wolf lying down about half a mile beyond. Calling the four dogs—Rover, the old fox-hound, Fanny, the little fox-hound, Blucher, and Maida—I started for the wolf.

When within a quarter of a mile he began to run. The two stag-hounds caught sight of him, and away went the dogs, and away went Phil and I, full chase after them. The fox-hounds, of course, could not begin to keep up.

Before the wolf had run three-quarters of a mile Maida had overtaken him. She grappled with him at once and threw him over and over; before he could regain his feet or get hold of Maida, Blucher dashed in upon him, and he was never allowed to rise afterwards. These two puppies killed the wolf before Rover and Fanny could reach the spot. I had put Phil to his mettle, and was near at hand when the wolf

was caught. Blucher and Maida were perfectly savage; each time they closed their powerful jaws I could hear the bones crunch as if within a vice. There did not seem to be a bone unbroken when the dogs had finished him. All the officers and men were watching the chase from camp.

We started a jack-rabbit just at evening, and all the dogs joined in. I never saw any race so exciting. The dogs surpass my highest expectations. All four are lying on my bed or at my feet. I have a pair of buffalo overshoes, the hair inside, and I am to have a vest made from a dressed buffalo calf-skin, with the hair on. When we were encamped near Dodge I sent the tailor, Frank, in to buy some thread and buttons. He came home very "tight", and when I asked him if they kept thread and buttons in bottles at the sutler store, he answered me in droll broken English that made me shout with laughter.

November 7th.

I want to tell you something wonderful. A white woman has just come into our camp deranged, and can give no account of herself. She has been four days without food. Our cook is now giving her something to eat. I can only explain her coming by supposing her to have been captured by the Indians, and their barbarous treatment having rendered her insane. I send her to-night, by the mail party, to Fort Dodge. I shall send by the paymaster a live pelican, to be presented to the Audubon Club in Detroit. It is the first I ever saw. It measures nearly seven feet from tip to tip, and its bill is about ten inches long. One of my Cheyenne scouts caught it in the river near camp. He first struck it, and stunned it long enough to effect its capture.

CAMP ON BEAVER CREEK (100 Miles from Dodge), Nov. 21,
'68.

The day that we reached here we crossed a fresh trail of a large war party going north. I sent our Indian scouts to follow it a short distance to determine the strength and direction of the party. The guides all report the trail of a war party going north-east, and that they evidently have just come from the village, which must be located within fifty miles of us in a southerly direction. Had the Kansas volunteers been here, as was expected, my orders would then have allowed me to follow the back trail of the war party right to their village; and we would have found the latter in an unprotected state, as their warriors had evidently gone north, either to Larned or Zarah, or to fight the Osage or Kaw Indians, who are now putting up their winter meat. We did not encounter an Indian coming to this last point, which proves that our campaign was not expected by them. Tonight six scouts start for Dodge with our mail and despatches for headquarters.

November 22d.

It lacks a few moments to twelve; reveille is at four, but I must add a few words more. To-day General Sheridan and staff, and two companies of the Kansas volunteers, arrived. I move to-morrow morning with my eleven companies, taking thirty days' rations. I am to go south from here to the Canadian River, then down the river to Fort Cobb, then south-west towards the Washita mountains, then north-west back to this point, my whole march not exceeding two hundred and fifty miles. Among the new horses sent to the regiment I have selected one, a beautiful brown, that I call Dandy. The snow is now five or six inches deep and falling rapidly. The general and his staff have given me a pair of

buffalo overshoes, a fur cap with ear lappets, and have offered me anything they have, for winter is upon us with all its force.

As a winter's campaign against Indians was decidedly a new departure for our regiment, and, indeed, at that time for any troops, and as this one ended with a notable victory for our people, it was the subject of many conversations on the galleries of our quarters, at the fireside, and around our dinner-tables for years afterwards. Certain ludicrous affairs fastened themselves on officers seemingly for all time. For instance, one night during the winter, when the regiment was away from its base of supplies, tents, and luggage, except what could be carried on the horses, the troops were obliged to sleep on the ground, and blankets were so scarce that everybody took a bunkey, officers and all, in order to double the bedding. One very small officer rolled himself against the back of a huge man, six feet four inches high, who on other windy nights had served as a protection; but he did not combine every virtue, and when it was both windy and cold he had the inhumanity to turn in the night, and leave the poor little dot of an officer entirely uncovered. This is never thought to be an agreeable thing for a bedfellow to do, but on a bitter winter night, when the only awning over the victim was the starry sky, it was such a trial that the manner in which the sufferer told of his woes the next morning made him the laughing-stock of his comrades all winter and long afterwards.

Officers will run almost any risk to get a bath, but the way in which two of our brave fellows retreated from their toilet was also for years kept as a standing subject of jesting. I believe that it was their first and only retreat. In going into the Indian country the officers sometimes relaxed vigilance for a time. Perhaps days would pass with no sight of Indians. At such a time these two daring fellows went down the stream some distance to bathe, and to their delight found water deep enough in which to swim. They

forgot everything in the enjoyment of clear water, for many of the streams west of the Mississippi are muddy and full of sand. Their horses saved their lives. Their attention was called to the telltale ears, quivering and vibrating, the nervous starts and the snorts that many old cavalry horses give at sight of Indians or buffaloes. Heeding these warnings, the bathers sprang to the bank. Within a few hundred yards of them Indians approached. There was no pause for clothes or for saddles. Unfastening their horses, and with a leap that would have done credit to a circus rider, they sprang upon the bare backs of the terrified horses, and digging their naked heels into the sides of the animals, they ran a race for life. Fortunately, the Indians came from a direction opposite that of the camp, but they had the temerity to follow with all the speed of their swift ponies until almost within sight of the troops. Our officers' perfect horsemanship and the fright of the animals saved their lives. As the Indians yelled behind them, and finally sent their almost unerring arrows whizzing about the ears of our two men, they had little idea of escape. When they entered camp, if there had been a back way, an alley, a tree-bordered walk, through which these lately imperilled men could have reached their tents, it would have been a boon; but everything in military life is en évidence, and the camp is often laid out in one long line. Past all these tents, where, at the entrance of each, appeared at once the occupants, on hearing the unusual sound of horses' flying hoofs within the company street, and in the face, indeed, of all the regiment, these nude Gilpins reached their own canvas, and flinging themselves from their foaming horses, darted under cover. Then came the scramble for other clothes, which was a very difficult affair, as few officers carried extras, save underclothes, and the quartermaster's supplies were at Camp Supply, far in the rear. But every one shares freely with a comrade on the frontier, and a pair of

pantaloons from one, a jacket from another, a cap from a third, fitted out the unfortunates.



Later a misfortune happened to one of these same men, our brother Tom, which bade fair to oblige him to adopt the costume of his red brethrena blanket and a war-bonnet. His favorite dog, Brandy, the most tenacious of bull-dogs, refused to let go of a polecat that he had chased, with the dog delusion that it was a rabbit. Colonel Tom plunged into the fight in an effort to drag Brandy off, when the animal used the defence that nature has provided, and Colonel Tom's clothes were gone the second time. He realized that with this adventure added to his late aquatic episode, which had been followed by a deluge of jokes from his brother officers, there would be no mercy shown him, and he quickly decided to share with the others his unsought baptism. It was nearly dark; the tents were closed, the candles lighted, the pipes at full blast. Captain Hamilton, whose sense of fun was irrepressible, started out with the victim of misfortune to pay visits. Several of the tents were crowded, but both of the visitors being jolly men, room was made for them; but

soon there was a general sniffing around and forcible expletives used about the dogs. "They've been hunting on their own hook again", was said, "and pretty close here, you bet"; and hands were stretched out for something with which to drive the creatures out. The guests having made sure the aroma Tom carried had become sufficiently apparent, departed, only to enter another crowd farther on. A tent is supposed to be well ventilated; but fill one with officers whose tobacco, obtained far away from a good base of supplies, is, to say the least, questionable, add the odor of rain-soaked clothes, the wet leather of troop boots, a dog or two with his shaggy, half-dry coat, and one can well imagine that Colonel Tom was the traditional "last straw."

When the pair had been in the second tent long enough to have the joke take effect, they bolted out into the night, roaring with laughter, and then went on to a third. The jeers of the officers next day were some-what toned down because of the evening episode, but poor Tom was around, begging for clothes again, and soon every one knew that his own outfit lay "without the camp" for all time.

Arrests are not at all unusual in military life, and the discipline is so strict it often happens that this punishment is inflicted for very small delinquencies. Sometimes, of course, it is a serious matter; a set of charges is preferred, and a trial by court-martial and sentence ensue. Still, to be in arrest is so common that it is not in the least like the serious affair of civil law. If an officer was missed from the line that winter, and inquiries made by his comrades for him, his messmate or captain, laughing lightly, replied, "Why, don't you know he's leading the pelican?" and this expression, as a synonym for being in arrest, stayed by the regiment for a long time after the bird had gone.

The pelican General Custer refers to in the letter already quoted was a rare specimen, and all the command had great curiosity about it, considering it was unusual in the country where it was captured, and it was also the first

specimen most of our command had seen. The bird was carried in a box in the wagon train that always travels at the rear of a column, and as an officer or soldier is condemned to this ignominious position also, when deprived of his place with his company, it became the custom to describe arrest as "leading the pelican."

A perfect fusillade of wit was always being fired at men to whom accidents had happened or on whom jokes had been played. One unfailing subject for badinage was the matrimonial opportunities neglected in the winter's campaign. After the battle, the old squaws were as full of admiration for the successful troopers as they were for their liege lords, and the willingness to part with their daughters was quite equal to that of the predatory mother in the States, who is accused of roaming from one watering-place to another in search of game. But the primitive mother and father resort to no subtle plan; they offer their daughters outright. One officer was proffered a dusky bride by her father, and a cup of sugar was asked for in exchange; while the commanding officer, after hearing a mysterious mumbling going on near him, found himself already married, before any formal tender of the girl had been made by the parents. It was with difficulty that the fathers and mothers were made to understand that among white people a man was required by our laws to content himself with one partner at a time.

There were many references to the scouts in General Custer's letters, and the subject was an unfailing source of interest to me, so much romance attends the stories of these men's lives. Osage Indians were employed, being not only at peace with us, but imbittered against the Indians by the marauding of hostile tribes on their herds of ponies and their villages.

I find a few words about these friendly Indians in a letter General Custer wrote to a friend at that time: "Yesterday my twelve Osage guides joined me, and they are a splendid-

looking set of warriors, headed by one of their chiefs called 'Little Beaver'. They are painted and dressed for the war-path, and well armed with Springfield breech-loading guns. All are superb horsemen. We mounted them on good horses, and to show us how they can ride and shoot, they took a stick of ordinary cord - wood, threw it on the ground, and then, mounted on their green, untried horses, they rode at full speed and fired at the stick of wood as they flew by, and every shot struck the target."

1. Eliza was our colored cook who was with me at Fort Leaven-worth.
2. This cook was the only woman on the expedition. She had been a camp woman many years, and was tanned and toughened by roughing it. She was perfectly fearless, but the life had sadly affected her temper. Even her brave husband (that is, brave in battle) approached her guardedly if anything went wrong. When the expedition was attacked at one time, she was cooking by a camp-fire, and was heard to mutter when a bullet passed her by, Git out, ye red divils ye, and went on with her work as if nothing were happening.
3. When the earth becomes much trodden, and it is difficult to keep camp clean, it is customary to move on for a short distance to fresh ground.



CHAPTER III. WHITE SCOUTS.

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The scouts and friendly Indians were an independent command that winter, and afforded much interest and variety to the whole regiment. They each received seventy-five dollars a month and a ration, and whoever took the regiment to an Indian village was to receive one hundred dollars additional.

A half-breed Arapahoe boy was the beauty of the command. He was nineteen years old: his eyes, large soft, and lustrous, were shaded by long lashes. I had been amazed at the tiny feet of the Delawares the summer before, but this lad's feet were smaller, and the moccasin showed them to be perfect in shape. His hair was long and black. He was educated, but it was a disappointment to me

in hearing of him to find that he called himself Andrew Jackson Fitzpatrick. With the ardor of a novel reader, I should have preferred at that time that he should lift the fringes of his soulful eyes in response to a Claude or a Reginald. Indians not only lose their picturesqueness when they encounter the white man, but they choose the most prosaic names in place of their own musical appellations. Think how "Running Antelope", or the "Eagle that flies", or "Fall Leaf" would have suited this boy.

One of the scouts had a nickname that ought to have pleased the most romantic, but the trouble in his case was that he did not fit the name. His real name was Romero, for he was a Mexican, and the officers soon dropped into calling him Romeo. His short, stocky figure, swarthy skin, and coarse features made him a typical Greaser, and quite the replica of many we had seen in Texas; but Romeo had lived with the Indians and spoke Cheyenne.

Another scout was a New Yorker by birth, who emigrated to Michigan in 1836, thence to Texas, and finally to Kansas. He was over fifty, and gray-headed. It is surprising how wonderfully men no longer young endure the hardships of this life. There is something remarkably preservative about the air of the plains.

When we read now of the reunion of the Forty-niners, and learn what jovial hours they are capable of enjoying even after their years of privation, we are forced to conclude that a life sheltered from the rigors of climate and spared all deprivation is not the longest, and surely not the merriest. When a man's entire possessions are strapped in a small roll at the back of his saddle, and his horse and outfit constitute his fortune, he is not going to lie awake nights wondering what are safe investments for capital.

After the campaign I saw the scouts, and though the winter of 1866 was the time of California Joe's first appearance among us, it was not long before I was introduced to him. It was not my privilege to hear him talk

for some time, as he was as bashful before a woman as a school-boy. The general arranged a little plan one day by which I could hear him. I was sent into the rear tent and specially charged to keep quiet, as Joe could not talk without interlarding his sentences with oaths, many of them of his own invention, and consequently all the more terrible to me because so unfamiliar. A new oath seems much more profane and vastly more startling than those one hears commonly about the streets. At the time I listened to him surreptitiously he had been called to attend court at the capital of Kansas, and had made his first journey on a railroad. He complained bitterly of the hardships of railway travel. The car was too small, too warm, too fast, too everything to suit him. The officer who encountered him at Topeka said that Joe seized upon him with ardor, as being a link with his real life, and that he "never wanted to board them air keers agin, and was durned sorry he hadn't fetched his mule; he would a heap sight ruther go back on the old critter." He was too much dissatisfied with civilization for any one to doubt for one moment that he would willingly have taken the four hundred miles on horseback in preference to "them air wheezing, racing, red-hot boxes they shet a man in." After his return he came to our tent dressed in what the officers call "cit's" clothes, which he termed "store clothes." His long, flowing hair and shaggy beard were shorn, and his picturesqueness gone. One cheek was rounded out with his beloved "terbaccy", and he told the general he had "took his last journey on them pesky keers"; and when asked if he didn't like the States, said, "D——n a country where you have to wear a shirt-collar." He told us that he had been West forty years, and much of the time beyond the Rockies. He considered Kansas so far East that he "reckoned his folks would be thinking he was on his way home if they heard of him in there." At that time we were in the midst of such a wilderness it did not seem to us sufficiently far eastward to induce any one to think we were

anywhere but on the stepping-off place. It was only to show off that he came in his travelling costume. The buckskin and flannel shirt soon appeared, but it took some time before his hair and beard grew out long enough to make him look natural.



When California Joe first joined the general in the Washita country he studied him pretty thoroughly. In his rough vernacular, he wanted to "size him up", and see if he was really soldier enough for him to "foller." The contrast between a plainsman's independence and the deference and respect for rank that is instilled into a soldier is very marked. The enlisted man rarely speaks to his superior unless spoken to, and he usually addresses an officer in the third person. The scout, on the contrary, owns the plains, according to his views, and he addresses the stranger or the military man with an air of perfect equality; but long

acquaintance with their ways taught me that at heart these men were just as full of deference for any brave man they served as is the soldier. In coming to an understanding with the general regarding his giving his services as scout, Joe asked his commander a few pointed questions about himself. He wished to know how he intended to hunt Indians. There had been some officers whom he had known who had gone to war in a wagon; the troopers called them "feather-bed soldiers." So Joe said: "S'pose you're after Injuns, and really want to hev a tussle with 'em, would ye start after 'em on hoss back, or would ye climb into an ambulance and be hauled after 'em? That's the pint I'm headin' for." After putting the general through such a catechism, he decided to let himself be employed, as it was evident from his own impressions, and from what he had heard, that there was not much doubt that the chief was, in his own language, "spilin' for a fight" just as much as he himself was.

Joe was made the chief of scouts at once; but honors did not sit easily upon him, for in celebrating his advancement he made night hideous with his yells. The scout gets drunk just as he does everything else—with all his might. Living all his life beyond the region of law and its enforcement; being a perfect shot, he is able, usually, to carry out his spree according to his own wishes. He tells the man who might express a wish for a peaceful, quiet night that he had better not tackle him, and emphasizes his remark by drawing out of the small arsenal that encircles his body a pistol, which, pointed accurately, renders the average man quick to say, "It's of no consequence", and retire. I do not even like to say that the scouts were ever drunk, for they were profoundly sober when they went off on their perilous journeys with despatches; and when I think how all our lives were in their hands when they were sent for succor, and how often they took messages across country to put troops or settlements on their guard, or of a hundred other daring deeds of theirs,