

THE WAR-TRAIL!

CHAPTER LVIII—(CONTINUED.)

The consultation was a short one. They who formed that little party were all men of prairie or backwoods experience, and well versed in the ways of the wilderness.

Of course the latter was determined upon. It was yet early in the night; many hours must intervene before we should have the light of day.

"Ecoutez, mon capitaine!" cried Le Blanc, an old voyageur—"ecoutez! y me no ride back, et von lauterne bring from ze ville Mexicaine?"

"Je connais," he continued—"know I, pe gar! ze ver spot ou—vere—sont cachees—hid—les chandelles magnifiques—von, deux, tree big caudies—vax—vax."

"Wax candles?" "Oui—oui, messieurs! tres grand comme un baton; ze ver chose pour allumer la prairie."

"You know where they are? You could find them, Le Blanc?" "Oui, messieurs—je connais: les chandelles sont cachees dans l'eglise—zey are in ze church hid."

"Hail in the church?" "Oui, messieurs; c'est un grand sacrifice, mon Dieu! ver bad; main—importe cela. Eef mon capitaine permis, vill allow pour aller Monsieur Quack-bosh, he go chez moi; nous cherch erons; ve bring ze chandelles—pe gar we bring him!"

From the mixed gibberish of the voyageur, I could gather his meaning well enough. He knew of a depository of wax candles, and the church of the rancheria was the place in which they were kept.

The rest of us dismounted, and picketing our horses to the grass, lay down to await the return of the messengers.

CHAPTER LVX. TRAILING BY TORCH-LIGHT.

WHILE thus inactive, my mind yielded itself to the contemplation of painful probabilities. Horrid spectacles passed before my imagination.

I saw the white horse galloping over the plain, pursued by wolves, and shadowed by black vultures. To escape these hungry pursuers, I saw him dash into the thick chaparral.

To encounter the red panther or the fierce prowling bear—there to encounter the sharp thorns of the acacias, the barbed spines of the cactus, and the recurring claw-like armature of the wild aloes.

I could see the red blood streaming down his white flanks—rot his blood, but that of the helpless victim stretched prostrate along his back.

I could see the lacerated limbs—the ankles chafed and swollen—the garments torn to shreds—the drooping head—the long loose hair tossed and trailing to the earth—the white wan lips—the woe-bespoken eyes—Oh! I could bear my reflections no longer.

I sprang to my feet, and paced the prairie with the aimless, unsteady step of a madman.

Again the kind-hearted trapper approached, and renewed his efforts to console me.

"We could follow the trail," he said, "by torch or candle light, almost as fast as we could travel; we should be many miles along it before morning; maybe before then we should get sight of the steed. It would not be hard to surround and capture him; now that he was half-tamed, he might not run from us; if he did, he could be overtaken. Once in view, we would not lose sight of him again. The sayayora would be safe enough; there was nothing to hurt her: the wolves would not know the 'fix' she was in, neither 'bars' nor 'painters'.

We should be sure to come up with her before the next night, and would find her first rate: a little tired and hungry, no doubt, but nothing to hurt. We should relieve her, and rest would set us all right again."

Notwithstanding the rude phrase in which these consolatory remarks were made, I appreciated the kind intent.

Garey's speech had the effect of rendering me more hopeful; and in calmer mood, I awaited the return of Quack-boss and the Canadian.

TO BE CONTINUED.

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A. A. McLEAN, Administrator. Ch'town, 1st March, 1882.—3m law

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Table with 3 columns: STATIONS, MIXED, MIXED, MIXED. Rows include Ch'town, Royalty, N. Wilsh's, Hunter R'r, Bradalha, Co'ty Line, Freetown, Keasing'n, Summ' side, Wellington, Port Hill, O'Leary, Bloomfield, Alberton, Tignish, Royalty, York, Bedford, Mt. Stewart, Cardigan, Georgetown, Mt. Stewart, Morell, St. Peter's, Bear River, Souris.

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