

THE WAR-TRAIL!

CHAPTER LV—(CONTINUED.)

We all drew bridle and listened. The sounds continued in the same confused chorus, but there was neither song nor joy in the accents. On the contrary, the night-wind carried upon its wings the voices of "lamentation and wailing."

"There are women in trouble," remarked one of my followers in a loud suggestive tone.

The remark caused all of us simultaneously to ply the spur and ride forward.

Before we had galloped a dozen lengths, a man appeared coming from the opposite direction, and advancing rapidly up the middle of the road. We saw it was the scout Garey; and, once more reining up, we awaited his approach.

As he came to the head of the little troop, and as the trapper drew near, I could see his face fall under the light of the moon. His expression was ominous of evil tidings.

He spoke not until he had laid his hand upon the pommel of my saddle, and then only in a subdued and saddened tone. His words were:

"That's ugly news, capt'n. O that terrible foreboding! News?—ill news!" I stammered out; "what, for Heaven's sake?—penk, Garey!"

"They been playin' the devil at the rancherie. Them ruffians hez behaved wuss than Indians would a done. But come forward, capt'n, and see for yourself. The women are close by hyar at the shanty. Rubie's a tryin' to pacify them, poor critters."

O that terrible foreboding! I made no response to Garey's last speech, but rode forward as fast as my horse would carry me.

A brace of minutes brought me to the ranch, and there I beheld a spectacle that caused the blood to curdle in my veins.

CHAPTER LV.

A CRUEL PROSCRIPTION.

The open space in front of the hotel was occupied by a group of women, most of them young girls. There were six or seven; I did not count them. There were two or three men, Mexicans, mixed up in the group. Rubie was in their midst, endeavoring in her broken Spanish, to give them consolation, and assurance of safety. Poor victims! they needed both.

The women were half-naked—some of them simply en chemise. Their long black hair fell loosely over their shoulders, looking tossed, wet, and draggled. There was blood upon it; there was blood upon their cheeks in seams had dried, but still dripping. The same horrid red mottled their necks and bosoms, and there was blood upon the hands that had wiped them. A red brown blotch appeared upon the foreheads of all. In the moonlight, it looked as if the skin had been burnt. I rode closer to one and examined it; it was a brand—the fire-stamp of red-hot iron. The skin around was scarlet, but in the midst of this halo of inflammation I could distinguish, from their darker hue, the outlines of the two letters I wore upon my button—the well known "U. S."

She who was nearest me raised her hands, and tossing back from her cheeks the thick clustered hair, cried out:

"Miralo, senor!"

O Heaven! my flesh crept as I looked upon the source of that crimson hemorrhage. Her ears had been clipped off—they were wanting!

I needed no further uplifting of their hair to satisfy me that the others had been served in like manner; the red stream still trickling down their necks was evidence enough. The men, too had been similarly abused. Two of them had suffered still further mutilation. They held up their right arms before my face—not their hands. There were no hands. I saw the hanging sleeve and the blood steeped bandage on the stump. Their hands had been chopped off at the wrists. Horrid sight!

Both men and women gathered around me, clasping my knees, and uttering prayers and entreaties. No doubt most of them were known to me by sight; but their features were now unrecognizable. They had been the friends and sweet-hearts of the corps, and my followers were already addressing them by name. The lovers of one or two were present, and embraced them.

One appeared more richly costumed than the rest, and upon her my eye had fallen as I first rode up. I almost despaired to approach her, as she stood a little apart; but no—it could not be—she was not tall enough; besides the ruffians would not dare—

"Your name, senorita?"

"Conchita, Senor—la hija del alcalde."

The tears burst from her eyes, mingling with blood as they ran down her cheeks. Oh, that I too could have wept! Poor Wheatley! he was not with us. He had had yet to receive the blow—it would soon fall.

My heart was on fire; so were those of my followers. They swore and foamed at the mouth. Some drew pistols and knives, calling me to lead them on. Never saw I men in such a frenzy of rage; the most cold-blooded among them seemed to have suddenly gone mad.

TO BE CONTINUED.

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Neuralgia, Sciatica, Lumbago, Backache, Soreness of the Chest, Croup, Quinsy, Sore Throat, Swellings and Sprains, Burns and Scalds, General Bodily Pains,

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Darnley Farm for Sale.

To be Sold by PUBLIC AUCTION, at Summerside, on WEDNESDAY, 19th April, at 12.30 p. m., (if not previously disposed of by private sale) either in one lot or divided to suit purchasers, that well known Darnley Farm, lately occupied by Hon. J. C. Pope.

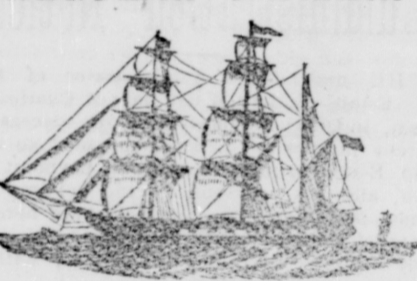
The farm consists of about 300 acres, all cleared, well fenced, and in good condition, watered by a spring and running brook, and with never failing wells of good water. There are on the farm a large and commodious dwelling house, with good barns and out-buildings of all kinds. On the shore fronts of the farm are abundant supplies of mussel and a large place.

Terms 25 per cent. of the purchase money, cash on execution of the deed; 50 per cent. may remain secured on the farm; for the remaining 25 per cent approved security on real estate will be taken.

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To take effect on the 1st Dec., 1881

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Table with 3 columns: STATIONS, MIXED, MIXED, MIXED. Rows include Charlottetown, Royalty, N. Wilts's, Hunter R'r, Brada's, Coby Line, Free-town, Kenning's, Summ'side, Wellington, Port Hill, O'Leary, Bloomfield, Alberton, Digby, Royalty, York, Bedford, Mt. Stewart, Cardigan, Georgetown, Mt. Stewart, Morell, St. Peter's, Bear River, Souris.

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