

THE WAR-TRAIL!

CHAPTER LXV.—(CONTINUED.)

For some moments he kept the ground, as if bewildered by the sudden scattering of his assailants; but he too must have heard the shots, and perhaps alone divined something of what had caused those singular noises. In the loud concussion, he recognized the voice of his greatest enemy; and yet he stirred not from the spot.

Was he going to await our approach? Had he become tamed?—reconciled to captivity? or was it that we had rescued him from his angry rivals—that he was grateful, and no longer feared us?

Such odd ideas rushed rapidly through my mind as I hurried forward. I had begun to deem it probable that he would stay our approach, and suffer us quietly to recapture him. Alas! I was soon undeceived. I was still a long way off—many hundred yards—when I saw him rear upward, wheel round upon his hind feet as on a pivot, and then bound off in determined flight. His shrill scream, pealing back upon the breeze, fell upon my ears like the taunt of some deadly foe. It seemed the intimation of mockery and revenge: mockery at the impotence of my pursuit; revenge that I had once made him my captive.

I obeyed the only impulse I could have at such a moment, and galloped off, as fast as my horse could go. I stayed for no consultation with my companions; I had already forged far ahead of them. They were too distant for speech.

I needed not their wisdom to guide me. No plan required conception or deliberation; the course was clear: by speed only could the horse be taken, and his rider saved from destruction—if yet safe.

Oh, the fearfulness of the last reflection! the agony of the doubt!

It was not the hour to indulge in idle anguish; I repressed the emotion, and bent myself earnestly upon the pursuit. I spoke to my brave steed, addressing him by name; I urged him with hands and knees; only at intervals did I inflict the cruel steel upon his ribs.

I soon perceived that he was flagging; I perceived it with increased apprehension for the result. He had worn his saddle too long on the day before, and the wet weary night had jaded him. He had been over-wrought, and I felt his weariness, as he galloped with feeble stroke. The prairie-steed must have been fresh in comparison.

But life and death were upon the issue. Her life—perhaps my own, I cared not to survive her. She must be saved. The spur must be plied without remorse: the steed must be overtaken, even if Moro should die!

It was a rolling prairie over which the chase led—a surface that undulated like the billows of the ocean. We galloped transversely to the direction of the "swells," that rose one after the other in rapid succession. Perhaps the rapidity with which we were crossing them brought them nearer to each other. To me there appeared no level ground between these land-billows. Up hill and down hill in quick alternation was the manner of our progress—a severe trial upon the girths—a hard killing gallop for my poor horse. But life and death were upon the issue, and the spur must be plied without remorse.

A long cruel gallop—would it never come to an end? would the steed never tire? would he never stop? Surely in time he must become weary? Surely Moro was his equal in strength as in speed?—superior to him in both?

Ah! the prairie horse possessed a double advantage—he had started fresh—he was on his native ground.

I kept my eyes fixed upon him; not for one moment did I withdraw my glance. A mysterious apprehension was upon me, I feared to look around, lest he should disappear. The souvenirs of the former chase still haunted me; weird remembrances clung to my spirit. I was once more in the region of the supernatural.

I looked neither to the right nor left, but straight before me—straight at the object of my pursuit, and the distance that lay between us. This last I continuously scanned, now with fresh hope, and now again with doubt. It seemed to vary with the ground. At one time, I was nearer, as the descending slope gave me the advantage; but the moment after, the steep declivity retarded the speed of my horse, and increased the intervening distance.

It was with joy I crossed the last swell of the rolling prairie, and beheld a level plain stretching before us. It was with joy I perceived that upon the new ground I was rapidly gaining upon the steed!

And rapidly I continued to gain upon him, until scarcely three hundred yards were between us. So near was I, that I could trace the outlines of her form—her prostrate limbs—still lashed to the croup—her garments loose and torn—her ankles—her long dark hair, dishevelled and trailing to the ground—even her pallid cheek I could perceive, as at intervals the steed tossed back his head to utter his wild taunting neigh.

I was near enough to be heard. I shouted in my loudest voice; I called her by name. I kept my eyes upon her, and with throbbing anxiety listened for a response. I fancied that her head was raised, as though she understood and would have answered me. I could hear no voice, but her

feeble cry might have been drowned by the clatter of the hoofs.

Again I called aloud—again and again pronouncing her name.

Surely I heard a cry; surely her head was raised from the withers of the horse. I could not be mistaken.

"Thank Heaven, she lives!" I had scarcely uttered the prayer, when I felt my steed yield beneath me as though he was sinking into the bosom of the earth. I was hurled out of the saddle, and flung head foremost upon the plain. My horse had broke through the barrow of the prairie marmot, and the false step had brought him with violence to the ground.

I was neither stunned nor entangled by the fall; and in a few seconds had regained my feet, my bridle and saddle. But as I headed my horse once more toward the chase, the white steed and his rider passed out of sight.

TO BE CONTINUED.

Fashion Notes.

Flounces are wider. Short suits are shorter. Moires will remain in fashion. Spanish lace grenadines are new. San Satin is a new glossy woolen stuff.

Lengthwise pleats are stitched like tuques. The stylish pale shade is Havana brown.

Geometrical designs are on new dry goods. Brass ball buttons are used for flannel suits.

Blue grenadine veils have white polka dots. New bonnet pins have hammered gold heads.

Faille ribbons trim bonnets for early spring. Linen-gingham is an old fabric just revived.

Red straw hats will be popular next season. Metal buttons have Watteau scenes upon them.

Very long ribbon streamers hang from bouquets. Silver jewelry is worn with black Lenten dresses.

Esthetic pen-wipers represent a Lily or a snowflower. The Jersey jacket supersedes the English walking coat.

New passementeries resemble applique embroidery. Wool goods are combined with the new cotton satines.

Cheviot cloaks for children are imported for spring. Natural flowers are fastened on peacock feather fans.

Transparent sleeves of lace or of beads remain in favor. Turquoise blue beaded lace bonnets are worn by blondes.

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L. B. ARCHIBALD, Superintendent. Railway Office Charlottetown, Nov. 29, 1881 [1/2] wkly

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