

THE WAR-TRAIL!

CHAPTER LVII. TAKING THE TRAIL.

I HAD merely swooned. My nerves and frame were still weak from the blood letting I had received in the combat of yesterday. The shock of the horrid news was too much for my powers of endurance.

I was insensible only for a short while; the cold water revived me.

When consciousness returned, I was by the fountain, my back leaning against its parapet edge; Rube, Garey, and others were around me. From my dripping garments, I perceived that they had drenched me, and one was pouring a fiery spirit down my throat. There were men on horseback, who had ridden into the patio—the iron hoofs causing the court to ring. There were rangers, but not those who had left camp in my company. Some had arrived since, and others were still galloping up. Those girls had reached the ranger camp, and told their tale. The men had not waited for orders or even for one another, but rushing to their horses, took the road in twos and threes. Every moment, a horseman, or several together, came riding forward in hot haste, carrying their rifles as if ready for action, and uttering loud cries of indignation.

Wheatley had arrived among the foremost. Poor fellow! his habitual buoyancy had departed; the gay smile was gone from his lips. His eyes were on fire, and his teeth set in the stern expression of heart-consuming vengeance.

Amidst the hoarse shouting of the men, I heard screaming in the shriller voices of women. It came from without.

I rose hastily, and ran towards the spot: I saw several of the wretched captives stripped to the waist, and men in the act of flogging them, with mule-quirts and pieces of raw hide rope.

I had heard it was worse; I had feared that their captors were inflicting upon them a retaliation in kind. But I was angry as were my followers, they had not proceeded to such a fiendish extremity.

It required all the authority of a command to put an end to this distressing spectacle. They desisted at length, and the screaming and afflicted wretches were permitted to take themselves away—all disappearing rapidly beyond the light of the fire.

At this crisis, a shout was raised: "To the rancheria, to the rancheria!" and instantly a party, with Wheatley and Holingsworth at its head, rode off for the village. Pedro went along with them.

I waited not for their return; I had formed a plan of action for myself, that would admit of no delay in its execution.

At first, stunned by the blow, and the distraction of my swooning senses, I had not been able to think; as soon as the confusion passed, and I could reflect more clearly, the course I ought to pursue was at once apparent. Vengeance I had felt as the first impulse, and a strong desire to follow up the fiend Jurra—night and day to follow him—through the pursuit should lead me into the heart of the hostile ground.

This was a momentary impulse: vengeance must be stifled for the time. A path was to be taken that widely diverged from that of the retreating guerrilla—the trail of the white steed.

Mourning Cyprio, and choosing from my band half a dozen of the best trackers, we were in the saddle; and descending the hill, we plunged rapidly through the stream, crossed the skirting timber, and soon reached the open prairie.

Under Cyprio's guidance, we found the spot desecrated by that cruel display. The ground was trampled by many hoofs; fragments of paper—powder blackened—broken rocket-sticks, and half burnt fuses, strewed the sward—the pyrotechnic reliquia of the fiendish spectacle.

We halted not there. By the aid of our guide and the moonlight, we rode clear of the confusion; and taking up the trail of the horse, struck off upon it, and were soon far out upon the prairie.

For more than a mile we advanced at a gallop. Time was everything. Trusting to the intelligence of the Mexican boy, we scarcely scrutinized the track, but made directly for the point where the horse had been seen last.

Cyprio's information did not deceive us. A mottle of timber had served him as a mark: the steed had passed close to its edge. Beyond it, he had seen him no more.

Beyond it, we found the tracks, easily recognizable by Rube, Garey, and myself. There was a peculiarity by which we were prevented from mistaking them: three of the prints were clearly cut in the turf—almost perfect circles—the curve of the fourth—of the fore-foot—was interrupted by a slight indentation, where a piece had been broken from the hoof. It had been done in that terrible leap upon the rocky bed of the barranca. Taking the trail again, we kept on—now advancing at a slower pace, and with a greater degree of caution. Late rains had moistened the prairie-trail, and we could perceive the tracks without dismounting. At intervals there were stretches of drier surface, where the hoofs had scarcely left its impression. In such places, one leaped from the saddle, and led the way on foot. Rube or

Garey usually performed this office; and so rapidly did they move along the trail, that our horses were seldom in a walk. With bodies half bent, and eyes gliding along the ground, they pressed forward like hounds running by the scent, but, unlike these, the trackers made no noise. Not a word was spoken by any one. I had no list for speed; my agony was too intense for utterance.

TO BE CONTINUED. Just So.

The New Market Era, an old time Reform paper, says, on the Budget speech, that to the unprejudiced and thoughtful mind, the result of the fiscal policy of the Government, as presented by the Finance Minister, will carry conviction that there is more in the National Policy than anti-protectionists are prepared to admit or concede. That the country has made wonderful strides in the development of manufactures under a protective tariff—that its trade energies have been quickened, and commercial confidence strengthened and increased, facts are too patent to admit of denial; but how far the trade policy of the country has brought about this result, of course, is one of the problems on which politicians differ. Mr. Tilley's speech, however, is well calculated to clear up much that heretofore has been regarded rather speculative, and to remove disputed theories from the realm of doubt. Although not making any effort at brilliant oratorical display, it possesses the merit of presenting facts and figures intelligently, and offering logical reasoning that commends itself to the common sense of the great mass of the people.—Berlin Times.

Confidence in Self.

Rely on yourself, take it for granted that you can accomplish your plans. Never say "I can't"—they are ignoble words. He who does not feel within himself the power to conquer fails, is not a man in the true sense of the word. Of course it is a misfortune for him since he can never be any benefit to himself or anybody else. Heaven help the woman who marries him! Somebody says, "Oh I don't like these self-conceited folks!" My friend, self-conceit and self-confidence are two qualities as different as light and darkness; and though the self-conceited man may not be the most agreeable of companions, we infinitely prefer him to the creeping, cringing, craven-spirited fellow who is never ready for an emergency, and who, like Uriah Heep, spends his life in trying to be "umble." The man who says "I will do it!"—who says it from his heart and means it too—who bends his whole energy to work, almost always accomplishes it; and then people call him lucky and successful, and all that sort of thing, when, in fact, his luck has been brought about by his own persevering efforts, and by his confidence in himself. Fortune detests cowardice; and the man who will not be conquered by trifles is his prime favorite.

Two bees—a honey and a drone—sighted, towards sunset, upon the trunk of a tree. Muttered the drone to the busy bee, which was laden with honey, "I have been looking for you all over the place. I am starving, and you might help me with a little of your substance." "Why so?" asked the other. "I have had the pleasure of toiling all day for it. Add the virtue of independence to the dignity of labour and gather for yourself." "Say so," rejoined the drone, "then I must take it by force." But as the drone had no sting, the struggle was vain; and he soon lay legs uppermost, a helpless victim for a watchful robin. Moral.—The lazy and the loafing will waste as much time and energy over scheming how not to do it as would suffice to gain an honest living, and come to a troublesome end for their pains.

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TIME TABLE NO. 17. WINTER ARRANGEMENT. To take effect on the 1st Dec. 1881.

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Table with columns: STATIONS, MIXED, MIXED, MIXED. Rows include Ch'town, Royalty, N. Wiltch's, Hunter R'r, Bradales's, Co'ty Line, Freetown, Kensington, Summ'side, Wellington, Port Hill, O'Leary, Bloomfield, Alberton, Tignish, Royalty, York, Bedford, Mt. Stew't, Cardigan, Georgetown, Mt. Stew't, St. Peter's, Bear River, Souris.

TRAINS INWARD.

Table with columns: STATIONS, MIXED, MIXED, MIXED. Rows include Ch'town, Royalty, N. Wiltch's, Hunter R'r, Bradales's, Co'ty Line, Freetown, Kensington, Summ'side, Wellington, Port Hill, O'Leary, Bloomfield, Alberton, Tignish, Royalty, York, Bedford, Mt. Stew't, Cardigan, Georgetown, Mt. Stew't, St. Peter's, Bear River, Souris.

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