

dangerous, and the descent required nearly an hour to accomplish. While the train was on the way down the mountain a very exciting episode occurred, which came near resulting in bloodshed, and might have led to the massacre of the entire party. A young, haughty chief (of whose sudden and untimely fate further mention will subsequently be made), glorying in a profusion of brilliant paints, and bedecked with feathers, beads and savage toggery, happened to see a young lady in one of the hindmost wagons of the train. She was a very handsome girl, and, at first glance, the young sachem seemed to fall desperately in love with her. He determined to possess her at once and at all hazards. Calling some ten or a dozen young braves to assist him, he stopped the team and insisted on the girl immediately getting out. Terrified beyond measure, she clung desperately to her mother, and called loudly for help. Seeing the team surrounded and the lusty brave offering violence to the girl, half a dozen resolute men, well armed, ran back. The young chief-lover was very roughly handled, and finally knocked down before he would desist from his purpose. Bows and spears were drawn and bright knives gleamed in the sunlight, and bloodshed seemed imminent for a moment. Our men did not flinch, but, with cocked rifles and pistols, ordered the Indians to stand back and allow the team to proceed. Seeing the white men could not be frightened, the Indians sullenly slunk away, and the team moved forward down the mountain.

Several hundred Indians had assembled about the centre of the village awaiting the arrival of the train. They were mostly seated in the form of a crescent—regular Indian council fashion. They occupied the road and filled the ground for some distance on either side, thus completely blocking the passage. Here, seated in royal state, was the head chief of the tribe. On each side stood his sub-chiefs, and a little behind the interpreter. The head chief was a magnificent specimen of a savage. He stood six feet in his moccasins, straight as a pine, and must have weighed over two hundred pounds. There was not an ounce of superfluous adipose about his giant frame. He had the muscular grace and sinewy strength of a panther, and the dark, piercing eye of an eagle. This chief was dressed in a superb suit of fine broadcloth, that fitted him like a kid glove, and displayed to splendid advantage his lithe, muscular form. Encircling his waist was a wide belt, to which was suspended a fine broadsword. His Atlas-like shoulders were ornamented with gold epaulettes, and a wide-brimmed beaver hat covered his head. About his ears, from which depended large golden ornaments, and over his brawny shoulders streamed a profusion of long, black, snaky locks, shining with grease. Both sub-chiefs, erect, tigerish, dignified-looking red men—were dressed in native costumes, elaborate and strikingly picturesque. The interpreter, who looked like a half Indian and Spaniard, was dressed in a plain, ordinary citizen's suit. When the foremost team approached the spot where the chief and his tribe were collected, suddenly some eight or a dozen warriors, at a signal, sprang forward into the middle of

the road. They drew their bows and leveled their sharp, formidable-looking spears at the teams and drivers. Instantly a halt was called, but not a word spoken. With a majestic wave of his hand and a loud grunt, the chief rose slowly from his bearskin seat. Slowly removing his hat, and making several low bows, he commenced a characteristic Indian harangue. He spoke for a few minutes in a loud, clear, ringing voice, and then quietly resumed his seat. All the Indians removed their fantastic head-dresses when the chief arose, and paid the strictest heed to his words.

The interpreter advanced and addressed the leader of the train, who, with most of the men, had gathered in front of the chief. He spoke English quite plainly. He told the immigrants that the chief demanded tribute from them; that they were traveling through territory which belonged to the Arrapaho tribe. He reminded the emigrants that it was only by sufferance they were permitted to pass unmolested through the country. They were required to pay for this great privilege in provisions. Every family, the interpreter spoke, was required to contribute. Our leader, who was a dauntless fellow and a fluent talker, spoke at length in response. He strongly remonstrated against this enforced levy. A long, tedious powwow followed. The head chief harangued again, the sub-chiefs were heard, and several of our leading men addressed the council. Our people alternately pleaded and remonstrated against the gross outrage and robbery. Faithfully the interpreter translated the words spoken. But it was all in vain. The savages were deaf to plea and invincible to remonstrance. From each family was demanded a certain proportion of their provisions. No expostulation could divert them from their fixed and greedy purpose.

Finally, with the mock dignity of a monarch, the chief declared the council dissolved. The result was that each family was compelled to submit to the toll exacted by these dusky-hided highwaymen. Flour, bacon, sugar, coffee, tea and other provisions were measured or weighed out, and piled in a heap on blankets and skins spread out on the ground. The savages greedily demanded "More, more," but finally the emigrants refused to be robbed any further. Fully four hours had been consumed in these unpleasant negotiations and in adjusting the proportions of the enforced levy.

It was near five o'clock when the chief, with a kingly wave of his hand, ordered his warriors to move aside and permit the train to proceed. As the sun was setting the wagons left the smoky, squalid precincts of the Arrapaho village and crowded forward toward North Platte. By ten o'clock that night the welcome destination was reached. Here nearly two thousand emigrants were collected. Among them were about six hundred men capable of bearing and using arms.

Early the following morning a sort of formal meeting was held, when it became generally known to what a high-handed outrage our people had been subjected. Over five hundred men participated. At first the feeling of retaliation predominated; and there was a strong dis-