

cocked, and, turning quickly round, he saw Luke carefully examining his (Jack's) missing revolver; another minute or two passed, when with a startling distinctness, that sent a thrill of horror through the boy's frame, came the answering signal, "woo-oo-ooo."

He kept his eyes fixed upon the two cowboys, who, in spite of the nearness of the danger, preserved a calm, deadly sort of coolness, seen in men, the circumstances of whose every-day existence in this world are so precarious and so little worth having, that they look with indifference—not to say complacency—at the chance of being transported to another. Luke, noticing the young herder's agonized look of inquiry, said quietly:

"We'll let 'em get a bit closer first. I might put a hole through one of the brutes then."

Another period of silence passed, and Luke crept out of the cabin, panther-like, on hands and knees.

A second more, and the loud report of the pistol rang out on the still night. Another and another followed. The other two men crouched near the door, knife in hand, listening for an answer from the Indians. But Luke reappeared immediately and reloaded the revolver, cursing his ill luck at having hit no one. He then stepped outside again and listened intently, with his ear close to the ground. Apparently satisfying himself that the Indians had abandoned the attack, he quieted the startled sheep, and, coming briskly back into the cabin, said, with a sigh of relief:

"Well, boys, I guess that foolery's over for to-night. There won't be any more of 'em scootin' round for the next twenty-four hours anyhow, so we can jest naterally turn in and sleep like overworked niggers. Let's have a share of that Californy blanket, will you, cap'n?" turning to Jack. "I'm not goin' to keep awake any longer for all the Indians from here to the Gulf of Mexico. Good night."

So saying, the young man spread Jack's blanket so as to make room for them both, and in two minutes was sound asleep. Needless to say that Jack found it impossible to follow this good example. He tossed and turned, grew hot and cold alternately, and fancied every minute that he could hear again the ominous signals of the Indian scouts. At last the night came to an end, and the bright morning sun seemed to carry away the weight of apprehension that had oppressed our herder so heavily only a few hours before. The three men rolled out of bed, Jack to prepare breakfast, and the other two to see after their horses—staked out close to camp the night before. Luke soon returned, and at once took charge of the cooking department, frying slices of bacon and baking bread with the dexterity of an old hand. Jim, meanwhile, herded the sheep until the preparations were concluded, when he was recalled to camp by a stentorian "Texan yell" from his comrade.

Breakfast over, Jack's visitors brought up their horses and prepared to depart. Jim, the man of few words, merely gave Jack's hand a hard grip, and mounting his pony, with a simple "Adios" struck off at a brisk walk toward the nearest frontier town. Luke, however, stepped

up, and laying his hand on Jack's shoulder, gave him this parting advice:

"Well, lad, I am afraid you'll have a tough time of it; those red devils will come to have a peep at you mor'n once; on moonlight nights you will never be certain that they ain't around. You keep that six-shooter of yours handy, and pop off when coyotes and owls begins to git troublesome. But, mind this, Jack," he said, in conclusion, fixing his eyes upon the boy's face, and speaking with that slow, distinct, drawing delivery used by the Western man when he wishes particularly to press something upon your attention; "mind this, I say, if those 'ere Ute Indians should crowd you some fine night, through you, by bad luck, oversleeping yourself, mind you are not taken alive. Do you hear? *Mind you're not taken alive.* Have your butcher knife in bed with you *always.* Keep it close, with the pint in this *direction*"—pointing to his breast—"and when the first red-skin sticks his nose inside that door, drive it straight in, up to the hilt, that's all. It will come to the same thing in the end, and probably save you a three hours' wriggle over a slow fire. Well, take care of yourself; see you again some day. Adios!"

With these cheering farewell words the cowboy threw himself on his horse, and giving the bridle a shake, galloped after his retreating companion. Jack turned after the flock, his newly recovered spirits considerably dampened by Luke Remington's warning. But being of a buoyant disposition, his fears soon vanished, and, as he traversed the familiar paths, the terrors of the past night seemed like a dream. However, evening came again, and by sundown the memory of the Indians began to recur vividly, and made him correspondingly uncomfortable. Supper was over, the ashes of the nocturnal pipe knocked out, and the darkness and silence were again supreme.

As yet, however, he felt nothing worse than a rather unpleasant twinge of the dumb sort of misery experienced on the first night in camp. Luke had assured him that there was nothing to fear from the Indians until the moon rose. That would not be for at least three hours, so Jack rolled himself in his blankets and tried to compose himself to sleep. He did not expect to be able to do so, for those ominous words, "never be taken alive," kept eternally ringing in his ears, as if spoken only a few minutes before. But the loss of sleep the night before had its effect, and, notwithstanding his fears, a great drowsiness crept upon him, and he was soon as fast asleep as a dormouse. Some three or four hours passed, the silence only broken by the heavy breathing of the sleeper. Suddenly Jack gave a violent start, and in a moment was wide awake. Why was it? He was unconscious of any cause for this agitation. He could see nothing—hear nothing. "Stay, what is that? Woo-oo-ooo. The prairie owl signal! O God! The Indians have come. But wait a minute; after all it may be really the bird." With a cold perspiration of terror breaking out all over him, Jack held his breath, listening for the answering call.

An hour seemed to pass—in reality a few seconds—and the young herder was just drawing a deep breath of