



[CONTINUED.]

CHAPTER XIII.



"Oh, God! My little ones!"

There was silence and anxiety in the long range of winter camps about the agency. The Twelfth were gone, nobody knew just where; but over to the north, over toward those frowning "Bad Lands"—all the more wild and treacherous now that the snow had filled every rift and crevice, for the jagged surface was one mass of pitfalls—other battalions of horse were also gone, and the vigilant watch over those Indians still clustering about their old haunts in the valley was redoubled. The heavier guns of the field battery commanded the smoky lodges, the lighter pieces were away with the cavalry. The infantry, muffled to their eyebrows, manned the rifle pits and guard line and threw their sheltering wings over the deserted camps. For good or for ill, the crisis was at hand. Whatsoever doubt had existed as to the almost universal hostility of the Sioux was banished by the events of the preceding week. The attempted ambush of Sergeant Ellis, of Berrien's advance guard, the attack upon the scouts and couriers at the Porcupine, and, lastly, the affair at the Wolf, in which Brewster a second time had gained distinction, all pointed unerringly to one conclusion: whatsoever might be their assurances to officials high in rank, to agents whose power would be at end were war to ensue, to self constituted framers of public opinion, every soldier on the spot knew, and well knew, that the Indians would be peaceable only in presence of a formidable force of bluecoats, but that nothing but ambush and massacre awaited the whites who ventured forth unguarded. Up to this moment, however, of all those gathered at the scene the only troops which had had actual collision with the Sioux were of Berrien's battalion.

only to gather up their ponies. The sight of the mules told them there must be an ambush staked somewhere in the drifts, and they were eagerly searching for it to render succor and aid when they were fired upon from ambush by the lieutenant and his men, and two of their ponies were killed and one young Indian shot through the leg. The Indians declare they could easily have killed Major Berrien, but merely strove to defend themselves and explain, and that had they been hostile they could have finished the lieutenant and his little squad at the Wolf creek crossing long before reinforcements came. Altogether, there is something so plausible in their statements that it is understood that the conduct both of the major and at least one of his subalterns will be made the subject of official investigation.

"Well, well, well!" said Kenyon. "Thank God I'm not serving a grateful nation in the heart of the Indian country. It's bad enough to be shot and worse to be lied about, and that is all the comfort there is in being a cavalryman, if I do say it who am nothing but a cross grained old crank of a doughboy. If this is what the Twelfth is to get for a mere affair of outposts, what the devil will be said of them if they should get into a regular pitched battle? Here, Mr. Adjutant, dump that paper in the fire, and don't let a woman at the post know anything about it. Know it already? How the mischief could they?"

"There were half a dozen of them, sir, at Mrs. Hazlett's reading another copy of that paper as I came down. And poor Mrs. Thorpe is crying her eyes out. She's been utterly upset since the news came that the Twelfth had been sent out. Good God, sir, she's coming in now!"

"I was indeed poor Mrs. Thorpe who entered, pallid, her eyelids swollen with weeping. Old Kenyon was on his feet in an instant and leading her to a chair. "My dear madam, my dear madam," he began, "you must not give way so. I assure you there is no cause for such dread and anxiety. Do strive to control yourself."

"I cannot, oh, Major Kenyon, I cannot! I have been through so much, such fearful scenes!" she sobbed, wringing her nervous hands, rocking to and fro in an agony of grief. "Oh, it is easy for those who have not lived the life we had to live in the old days to counsel patience, calmness. I was only a child then, kneeling at my mother's side when the news came in that widowed half the women in the post. I spent my girlhood in the regiment. How many are left of the officers who were so good to me then? Mother was only one of a dozen whose hearts were broken—broken as, oh, God! I feel mine is to be. They took my father long years ago, now they demand my husband, my babies' father, my all, their all! O God! O God!"

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NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION. Land Office at Oregon City, Oregon. Notice is hereby given, that the following named settler has filed notice of his intention to make final proof in support of his claim, and that said proof will be made before the register and receiver of the United States Land Office at Oregon City, Oregon, on December 28, 1902, viz: Jesse Hamner.

NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION. Land Office at Oregon City, Oregon. Notice is hereby given, that the following named settler has filed notice of his intention to make final proof in support of his claim, and that said proof will be made before the register and receiver of the United States Land Office at Oregon City, Oregon, on December 28, 1902, viz: Joseph Pansal.

NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION. Land Office at Oregon City, Oregon. Notice is hereby given, that the following named settler has filed notice of his intention to make final proof in support of his claim, and that said proof will be made before the register and receiver of the United States Land Office at Oregon City, Oregon, on December 14, 1902, viz: William F. Hodges.

NOTICE OF FINAL SETTLEMENT. In the matter of the estate of Wm. Wood, dec'd. Notice is hereby given that the following named settler has filed notice of his intention to make final proof in support of his claim, and that said proof will be made before the register and receiver of the United States Land Office at Oregon City, Oregon, on December 28, 1902, viz: C. A. Rossmore, Administrator.

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