

White Hand

A Tale of the Early Settlers of Louisiana.

BY AUSTIN C. BURDICK

CHAPTER XVI.—(Continued.)

And so, for the while, that darkest affliction was forgotten; but after Simon's wound had been properly dressed, it came back again, and the duel became only a passing cloud that was soon lost in the deeper cause of grief. The excitement was gone, and the soul remembered now to weep over the loss of its loved ones.

For several days Simon Lobo remained in his chamber, not showing himself at all, save to Peter, who waited upon him; and when he became able to go out, he seemed to take especial pains not to be seen by the uncle and his guest. As might be expected he cherished a bitter hatred towards Goupard, but yet he had a deep consolation in the remembrance of the heart-blow he had inflicted upon the youth. He knew Goupard's sensitive nature, and he knew how deep and abiding were his affections, and knowing this, he knew how keen must be the anguish of the disappointed lover.

And during all this time Goupard St. Denis was much alone, wandering about in the woods. Of course he had given up the idea of going for Louise. If she was married to Lobo, then the companionship he would necessarily have with her under such circumstances could only make him more miserable, and, perhaps, add new pangs to her grief.

At the end of eight days Simon set out on his return to New Orleans. He did not see St. Denis, for the youth had purposely withdrawn himself.

"You will bring my child home?" said the old man, in a broken, forced tone.

"Of course I shall, and I trust you will receive her kindly."

"Kindly! Alas, poor Louise! She will have need enough of kindness."

"What mean you now, sir?" uttered Simon, angrily.

"Nothing—nothing," groaned the marquis, covering his face with his hands. "Only let me see her once more. You will be kind to her, Simon?"

"Of course I shall be. How could I be otherwise?"

The old man gazed up into his nephew's face, but he made no reply; and when, a few moments later, that nephew had taken his departure, he bowed his head and wept.

CHAPTER XVII.

While the things just narrated were transpiring at the chateau, and at the distant metropolis, how fared White Hand and his dusky princess?

Gradually White Hand became used to the primitive fashions of the Natches, and though he had many hours of sorrow and grief, yet he showed only content to the warriors. But to his wife he was not so reserved of his true feelings. She sympathized with him in his sadness, and she even went so far as to assure him that if the honorable opportunity ever offered itself for his escape to his own people, she should not oppose his wishes.

Early one morning, the Great Sun received an invitation to visit the settlement of the white men, and taking with him an escort of his trusty warriors, he set out. It was past noon when he returned, and his brow was clouded, and his stout frame shaken by a powerful emotion. His first movement was to send for White Hand. The youth went, and found the Great Sun alone with Stung Serpent.

"White Hand," he said, overcoming all outward signs of his deep emotions, "you must fast and pray. The hour is dark, and evil comes upon us. The white man's heart is hard, and his soul is base. You remember your pledge. Will you pray?"

"I will," answered White Hand. And he was then dismissed.

As soon as the youth was gone, the Great Sun started up from his seat and leaped down. His brow grew dark again, and his hands were clenched.

"Stung Serpent," he said, "go and summon your council at once. Summon only the wise men and the tried warriors, for we want no women nor children now. Bid them attend me here."

Stung Serpent asked no questions, but with quick movements, he called up the men who were fit for deep counsel, and soon they were all collected in the place of council. They knew that something important had happened, for never were they thus called together save on occasions of emergency.

"Warriors of the Natches, listen!" commenced the Great Sun, speaking calmly and slowly, but with fearful emphasis. "You know how the white men have abused us—how they have trampled upon us, and how they have proved recreant to every trust we have reposed in them. But you do not yet know the most wicked thing of all. The white chief has demanded the beautiful village of the White Apple! Ay—he says the great chief in the big village away towards the salt water has demanded it. I told him he could not mean it, but he only laughed at me. I told him we had lived here in peace ever since we settled upon the banks of the mighty river—that our temple was here, and that here, in the quiet vale, we had laid away the bodies of our departed friends. And even at this he scoffed, and swore he would possess our village."

As the Great Sun sat down, a low murmur ran around the room, and angry gestures marked the movements of the dark warriors. Stung Serpent started to his feet, and in a moment all was silent. The towering chieftain gazed around with a flashing eye, and when he spoke his voice was like low thunder.

"Let the souls of the Natches be firm

now, and let the hearts of her warriors be strong!" were his first words. "The white man came to us, and we gave him a home. He asked us for land, and out of our abundance we gave him much. He asked us for friendship, and we gave him our whole hearts. But how has he repaid us for all our kindness? Where now is our peace? The white man calls the Indian a secret foe. Why is it so? Because the pale faces are not to be trusted; because they speak fair when they cheat us. Look around; look to your homes, to your sacred temple, and to the graves of your ancestors. Will you give all up? I can read your answers in your looks as well as in your words. Once more, and I am done. Let the white men be exterminated! Let them be swept from our land at once and forever!"

On the next day messengers came from Chopart, the commander of the French fort, to learn what the Natches had agreed upon. They were informed that they had not yet been able to agree upon a place to which to move, and the Great Sun asked two months in which to prepare, promising, meantime, to pay a new tribute of corn to the French. This message was conveyed to Chopart, and he agreed to the terms, fondly believing that in another spring his people should share the rich land spoils of this fairest Natches village.

And now the work went on slowly but surely. Word was sent to every tribe, and all were solemnly pledged. The day was fixed upon which the fatal blow was to be struck; and that there should be no mistake, a bundle of sticks was prepared for each village, corresponding in number to the days that must elapse before the death stroke. These bundles were placed in their respective temples, and each day the chief was to go in and take one stick away. And when they were all gone—on the day that saw the last stick removed—the avengers were to strike.

From the shores of the Mexican gulf to the Yanoos, and from the waters of the Tombecbee to the Sabines, every warrior was armed for the occasion, and eagerly waiting the coming of the fatal moment. The whites were watched at every step, and each red man had his victim marked. Slowly, one by one, as each succeeding sun rolled over, those fatal sticks were removed, and Chopart only waited patiently for his rich prize.

One of the wives of the Great Sun was called "Bras Pique," or Pricked Arm, from the many strange devices which she had marked upon her arms. Pricked Arm loved the French, and she failed not to serve them on every occasion when she could. She saw these secret meetings of the warriors, and her suspicions were aroused. She knew of the demand that had been made for the village of the White Apple, and she knew that these meetings of the council were touching that matter. She noticed the fierce looks of the men, their angry gestures, and their vengeful glances towards the French fort, and she feared that some calamity was to befall her white friends.

Pricked Arm made up her mind to save the French if possible, not only at Natches, but at all other points; and to this end she must not only put Chopart on his guard, but she must cause the Natches to give a premature alarm, and thus the whites in other sections would take warning, for she dared not attempt to convey intelligence to other stations for fear of being detected by her own people. Her first movement was to make her way to the temple, but she could not gain access there, no woman ever being allowed within the sacred building. Two nights in succession she skulked about the place, but the warriors within, who watched the holy fire, were too vigilant for her. In this extremity she thought of White Hand, and late one night she went to him and called him out.

"White Hand," she said, when they had reached the very tree under which the Great Sun had once before spoken with the youth, "have you the courage of a warrior?"

"I have the courage of a man," he replied, in astonishment.

"Then can you keep an oath?"

"If it may be kept with honor."

"The oath which I require may, but I will not ask it of you, for your own safety will hold you. Know, then, that there is a plot on foot for the massacre—for the entire extermination—of every white man, woman and child in the country. And mark me—this plot is deep and well founded, and it moves on to its consummation as surely as the now absent sun moves on towards the morning."

"All—every one?" uttered White Hand, in alarm.

"Yes. Every tribe has the signal, and the one fatal day is set. It is to be on the day when our people pay their tribute of corn. Every white man is marked, and unless something be done to thwart the red men, the terrible blow must fall."

Louis clasped his hands, for his thoughts were of his father and of his sister and of his friend St. Denis.

"Can there be no stop to this?" he asked.

"Yes—if you have courage."

"Then put me to it."

"Listen. I can warn the people at Natches, but that will not save the others. In the temple there is a bundle of cypress sticks. They are hung by two thongs of bearskin back of the altar. In that bundle there are as many sticks as there are days between now and the fatal blow; could we remove seven of those sticks, the Natches would make a premature attack. The people at the fort would be prepared. In other places down the river, and on the great salt lake, the red men will mistrust nothing, and while they wait eagerly for the passing of the next seven days, the alarm can be spread. Do you understand?"

"Perfectly," returned White Hand.

"And will you do it?"

"I will try, even to the death."

"Good. But let it be soon."

By different paths the two returned to the village, Pricked Arm retiring to her own dwelling, while the youth spent some time in walking thoughtfully about the great square. When he at length entered his own dwelling he found—his wife

asleep, but he did not join her. He spent some time in walking up and down the place, and his face betrayed the deep anxiety that moved within him. He had marked the stern, angry looks of the stout warriors, and he had noticed their frequent councils, but he did not dream that such a dreadful plan had occupied their thoughts. He fancied they were, at most, only planning some means for self-defense. But now the truth was apparent. His father was in danger—all his countrymen were in danger. Thus he was walking up and down the apartment, when his wife awoke and looked for him.

"White Hand," she said, sitting up in the bed, "why walk you thus when the night is waning?"

"I was thinking of my home, Coqualla."

The princess arose and approached her husband.

"And thou art sad," she murmured, looking up into his face.

"Yes, Coqualla—very sad. I would go into the temple and pray."

"Then why go you not in?"

"Because I cannot gain admittance there. I am not a warrior, and none but warriors are admitted there."

"But thou art by marriage a Little Sun of the Natches, and as such, thou canst demand admission there, and none shall dare refuse thee. Take thy offering of walnut wood and go. Say to the guardians there, 'I come as a Sun of the Natches, and I would pray to the Great Spirit. Accept my offering, and open to me the way.' They will not dare refuse thee."

As Coqualla spoke she went to the fireplace, and from the wood there piled up she selected ten sticks of walnut, from which she removed the bark. It was a religious law, given by the first Great Sun, that only walnut wood should be used for the sacred fire of the temple, and that the bark must be carefully removed before it was carried in. White Hand took the wood in his arm and went to the temple, and when he reached the door, he demanded admission as a Little Sun of the Natches, and after some questions he was admitted. He carried his offering to the altar, and one of the priests placed some of it upon the fire.

After White Hand had deposited his offering, his next movement was to step towards the back part of the temple and kneel down. The warrior-priest whose turn it was now to watch, stood and gazed upon the youth for awhile, and then turned his attention to his fire. Still kneeling, White Hand looked about him, and does to him, against the wall, he saw the bundle of cypress sticks. Seven of the watchers slept, and only one was awake. Slowly the youth worked his way to the wall, still on his knees. The sticks hung loosely in the thongs; he could reach them where he was. He cast his eyes towards the watcher, and that individual was poking up the fire. Quickly the youth raised his hand and counted out seven sticks. His heart beat quick, but he thought of his father, and his nerves were strong. Silently he withdrew the fatal time-tellers, and hid them behind him. The watcher still worked upon the fire. With a quiet movement, White Hand placed the ends of the sticks in his bosom, and forced them down within the clothing until they lay along his side, reaching from the arm-pit to the knee. Then he arose, and having walked about a few moments with as careless an air as he could assume, he left the temple.

After breakfast the next morning Stung Serpent came in, as was his wont. He lighted his pipe, and after smoking for some time in silence, he looked up. His brow was clouded, and his countenance wore a sad, moody expression.

"White Hand," he said, "are the French a very forbearing people in their own country?"

The youth imagined he saw the old chief's drift, and after a moment's thought, he replied: "Not under wrong, my father."

"I thought not. But suppose another people should come upon their soil, seize the homes of their subjects, steal their cattle, rob them of their rights and desecrate their temples?"

"Then the French would drive them off," answered the youth, quickly.

"And they would drive them off with the sword and gun, eh?"

"Yes."

"And put all to death they could find?"

"No, my father—only such as held out in resistance."

"But have not the French put whole great villages to the sword, as they call it, and murdered all?"

With a shudder, the youth answered in the affirmative. Stung Serpent gazed sharply into White Hand's face, but he could see no mark of suspicion there. He smoked away awhile longer in silence, and then he arose and left.

"What does he mean?" asked Coqualla, after her father had gone.

"I do not know, unless he desires to know how much consistency my people have," returned White Hand.

"I fear our warriors meditate some revenge upon the whites. But you need not fear, dearest one, for no harm shall come to you."

As the bright-eyed princess thus spoke, she threw her arms about her husband's neck. He kissed her, but he dared not whisper the terrible thing he knew—not that he would trust her, but he had sworn that he would not.

(To be continued.)

Qualified.

"But, mamma," said the beautiful South American heiress, "do you believe I will have any trouble in being received in society in the United States?"

"I don't see why," answered her mother. "You have plenty of money and you can make the best of them look like small change when it comes to being a daughter of the revolution."

Following the Route.

Hammatorre—Yes. I always take a short walk after the show.

Mr. Knowlitt—To the next town?—Baltimore American.

CANAL AT RAPIDS

BOARD OF ENGINEERS TO MEET AT PORTLAND MAY 11.

Decision on Plans Will Then Be Reached—May Modify Harts Plan to Keep Within Limit—Will Also Examine Route—Scheme for Continuous Canal From Big Eddy to Celilo.

Washington, April 15.—Representative Moody, before leaving Washington, had a final conference with the members of the Board of Engineers having under consideration the opening of the Columbia River from The Dalles to Celilo, and was informed that the Board will meet in Portland May 11 to consider more fully all data that has recently been collected by Major Langfitt regarding the portion of the river to be improved.

Mr. Moody says that, while it is impossible to say what the Board will finally report, its conclusion will largely depend upon calculations to be based on data that has been compiled by Major Langfitt, bearing on the several modifications or substitution for the Harts' project.

Mr. Moody also had under consideration with the engineers the removal of one of the reefs at Ten-Mile Rapids, with a view to facilitating steamboat navigation up to the lower end of the proposed state portage road. That proposition will be considered by the Board when it meets. The Board will probably visit the obstructions in the river and will determine for itself the need of blasting on this reef. Having viewed the river during the summer, the Board at its coming meeting will have opportunity to see the stream at the high stage of the water and form a better idea of the volume of water to be controlled.

The Board will make an extraordinary effort to devise a practical plan that can be carried out at a cost not exceeding Captain Harts' estimate for his original scheme, and there is some hope that such a plan may eventually be found. In the light of data that has been collected by Major Langfitt, the Board will be able closely to estimate the cost of the several modifications of the Harts' project that have been proposed and will also be able to estimate the cost of other schemes that have been brought forward by other engineers.

Mr. Moody has urged that if the Harts' plan in an amended form is not agreed upon, the Board seriously consider the proposition of a continuous canal from the Big Eddy to Celilo, and determine whether or not such a canal can be built by making use of natural channels through the rocks to the south of the river, at a cost not greater than Harts' estimate. This suggestion will be investigated and, if it proves feasible at reasonable cost, may be accepted, as the advantages of a continuous canal are recognized by many of the officers.

ENGINES CRASH HEAD-ON.

Four Are Killed and Two More Will Die—Details Meager.

Halifax, N. S., April 15.—Four persons killed, two fatally hurt, at least one missing, and several others slightly injured in the record of a head-on collision on the Inter-Colonial Railway which occurred just before midnight last night near Windsor Junction, 17 miles from Halifax.

The poles and telegraph line along the roadside were wrecked, and this city was cut off from communication with the outside world for hours.

The trains in collision were the Canadian Pacific Railway express from Montreal and Boston for Halifax, and a fast freight from Halifax for Montreal. The conductor and driver of the freight had orders to take the siding at Windsor Junction and let the express cross, but, for some unknown reason, Driver Copeland, of the freight, ran past the Junction on the main line and met the express two miles beyond.

It is thought that Copeland may have lost control of his train, which was made up of 75 cars. The freight was running 25 miles an hour, and the express, which was two hours late, was traveling about 45 miles an hour. Both trains were hauled by new and powerful locomotives, and they crashed together on a level piece of road skirting a lake.

Proposed Treaty With Cuba.

Havana, April 15.—Minister Squires today outlines to President Palma and Foreign Secretary Haldó the details of the permanent treaty between Cuba and the United States in accordance with the proposition prepared at Washington. The naval stations agreement, the ratification of which is now pending in the Senate, will not be reopened, but it is understood that ownership of the stations is covered in the treaty, in addition to the Isle of Pines and the Platt amendment features. There is no doubt that a permanent treaty will be concluded soon.

Coal Mine Explosion.

Kansas City, April 15.—A special to the Journal from South McAllister, I. T., says: Five men were killed and two severely burned today by a gas explosion in Mine 77 of the Kansas & Texas Coal Company at Carbon, I. T. The cause of the explosion is unknown. Seventy-five men were in the mine, but all escaped injury except the seven who were working in the chamber where the explosion occurred.

EXPLOSION ON THE IOWA.

Shell Bursts Big Gun and Kills Three Men—All Horribly Mangled.

Pensacola, Fla., April 11.—A disastrous explosion occurred on the battleship Iowa today while the vessel was at target practice in the Gulf. The forward port 12-inch gun burst from a premature explosion of a shell, 12 feet of the outside turret being demolished. Three men were killed and five injured, two seriously.

The men killed and injured were on the second or gun deck at mess. Three pieces of the exploded gun, each weighing over a ton, passed downward through the spar deck, falling upon the men at mess, instantly killing three of them. All of the men were horribly mutilated. The heavy missiles, after passing through the gun deck, continued down to the third deck, where they came in contact with the armored deck, the heavy steel bringing them to a stop, thus saving the engineers and firemen who were at work below. Although the upper decks were covered with men, none were seriously injured.

The explosion occurred just as the mess had been sounded. The firing was to have ceased after the shot for the dinner hour. The range had been set, and the Iowa was steaming along at the speed of 12 knots an hour when the officer in charge gave orders to load and fire. The time fuse was set, the piece charged, the breech closed and the word given to fire. Following the report of the gun there was a smothered noise as the shell exploded midway in the gun and pieces of the burst gun and shell were scattered broadcast. Three great holes were torn through the deck.

The Massachusetts, six miles distant, was signaled for aid, and one of the cutters put off with a surgeon and assistant surgeon. The injured men were taken to the hospital and their injuries dressed. The dead were brought to Pensacola.

Some claim the explosion was caused by a defective shell, and others think that the frequent firing of the piece at Culebra during the winter, added to the work done here during the past ten days, so strained the piece that the force of the charge burst the gun.

CANADA STUDIES RECORDS.

Preparing Alaska Boundary Case—America Depends on Grammar.

New York, April 11.—The American embassy is closely watching the Alaskan boundary dispute, cables the London representative of the Tribune, but is not taking any active part in the preparation of the case. It does not have access to the archives of the foreign office, and cannot compete with the Canadian commission in making the exhaustive study of the documentary evidence relating to the treaty of 1825.

The new counsel appointed for the United States are expected to work up the case at Washington, and depend mainly upon the literal interpretation of the text of the treaty and especially upon the words "windings or sinuosities of the coast" in determining the method of measuring ten marine leagues. Minister Sifton and his Canadian associates are working quietly, but with the hearty co-operation of the British foreign office.

CREVASSE OPEN AGAIN.

Flood at Hymella Bursts Its Bounds and Work is Abandoned.

New Orleans, April 11.—Hope of closing the Hymella crevasse was practically abandoned today. All day a terrific current swept around the broken ends of the cribbing and through the great 700-foot gap in the levee, undermining the light piling which it had taken 13 days and nights to build.

A delegation from the crevasse commission came to the city early today and made a purchase of piling, which will be sent forward tomorrow. It is considered, however, that not one chance in a thousand to close the crevasse remains. The levee board has practically reached the end of its resources, and planters are calling away their hands in order to build protecting levees about their places.

Bullets for Moorish Fanatics.

Madrid, April 11.—A dispatch from Melilla, Morocco, gives details of the fighting at Frajales. It says that 5,000 insurgents made a desperate attack on the fortress of Frajales April 9. After the customary prayers the tribesmen advanced with a wild rush, to the accompaniment of religious exhortations. Twice they attempted to carry the fortress by assault, but were repulsed by well directed fusillades, which killed numbers of the insurgents. During the attack the powder supply of the tribesmen exploded, killing many of them.

Passed Anti-Strike Bill.

The Hague, April 11.—The second chamber of the Netherlands parliament today adopted the anti-strike bill by 81 to 14. The Socialists and Liberal Democrats voted with the minority. The punishment clause of the bill was adopted, 78 to 15. The chamber also authorized the formation of the proposed military railroad brigade to work on the railroads during strikes and adjourned sine die.