

White Hand

A Tale of the Early Settlers of Louisiana.

BY AUSTIN C. BURDICK

CHAPTER XVIII.

Chopart was a bold, reckless man, and cruel and avaricious. He had commenced his career as commander at the Natchez fort by cruelty to his own men, but one or two grave complaints made to Gov. Perier had come nigh causing his removal, and he let the whites be in peace, but expended his wrath upon the poor Indians. He was now much elated, for he was sure that the beautiful village of the White Apple would soon be his, and he meant to pocket much money in the transaction. One day he sat in his rude house, with some of his attendants about him, when a soldier demanded admittance.

"How now, sirrah?" he demanded, as the man entered.

"I have come with a warning," the soldier replied.

"Ha!—a warning! Speak out."

"An old woman passed my post this morning, monsieur, and she bade me tell the French to be on their guard, for danger threatened them."

"And from whom?"

"From the Indians. They will rise and butcher us all."

"Have you spoken of this before?"

"I have not."

"Then you shall not tell it to others!" cried Chopart, in anger. "Have you not seen enough of this idle fear? What ho!—without there!"

At this call, two soldiers entered, who usually stood in the passage to obey the commander's call.

"Take this fellow and lock him up in the prison," he ordered. "We'll soon have the red rats down upon us if they knew we lived in fear! They dare not offer us harm. Away with him!"

And for conveying this intelligence the poor man was cast into a strong dungeon, and there kept for several days with his feet in the stocks.

But this was not the only note of warning Chopart had. Four days afterwards, a soldier came to him and informed him that the Indians surely meditated the destruction of the fort, and of all its white inhabitants.

"Out, fool!" exclaimed Chopart, angrily. "The old hag who told you this only thinks to frighten us. She thinks that by exciting our fears she can frighten us into giving up our plan of taking their village of the White Apple. What! would ye show to the Indians that we feared them? Away with such idle foolery!"

Picked Arm was astounded at the intimation of the French commander, and as a last resort she went to Chopart's lieutenant, a man named Mace, who, she imagined, would have some influence with his superior. But even this proved abortive. She told Mace that destruction would surely fall upon them if they did not take some means to keep the Indians away from the fort. But on the very next day Chopart invited all the Indians to a banquet, and pledged his friendship to them anew.

With a feeling of utter consternation, Picked Arm returned to her lodge. One evening she sought White Hand's dwelling, for she had a faint idea working through her mind that the French youth might have some influence in all this. She knew that he had been originally doomed to death to go and intercede face to face with the white man's God, but she had never yet fully known why he was spared. She found White Hand alone. He gazed eagerly into her face, for he was anxious to know how her work progressed.

"White Hand," she said, speaking abruptly, "why were you spared from death when your first came here?"

"That I might marry Coqualla," replied the youth.

"But was there nothing else?" asked the old woman, looking him sharply in the face.

"Why, yes," returned White Hand, speaking with some diffidence, for the real reason seemed so foolish and ridiculous to him that he almost feared he should be laughed at for speaking of it.

"And what was that?"

"Why, I promised to pray to the white man's God that none of the wickedness of the French might succeed, and also to tell him how basely the red men had been wronged by the invaders; for I was of that people, and they supposed that I should have some influence with my Supreme Father."

"That's it!" the aged princess groaned, with her hands folded across her bosom.

"How?" asked the youth, in surprise.

"I knew that the Great Spirit had a hand in this work. The fort at Natchez is doomed past all hope!"

"No—not doomed!"

"It is. The last stick will be removed to-morrow, and then the blow must fall!"

"To-morrow?"

"No—the blow falls on the day after. The fatal sticks mark the intervening days."

"And must all fall?—all—all?"

"All at Natchez, but not elsewhere, for the others wait yet another week, and ere that time the whites will be warned. But what noise is that? Hark! There are shouts of welcome."

They both started for the door, where they were met by Stung Serpent, who caught the youth by the arm and forced him into the house again.

"White Hand," he said, speaking quickly and sternly, "remember your oath, for your salvation may now depend upon it. The white men have come to carouse in

the White Apple. Beware that you do not forget yourself! Shall we trust you? Mind—all is well with you if you are faithful!"

"Fear not, my father," spoke the youth, unable to repress the trembling that seized his limbs.

"Then you may conduct Coqualla to the revelry."

It was a calm, warm night, and in the center of the great square were built two fires of pitch-wood to serve as torches, and here the white men and the red were gathered in social confab and amusement. There were over a hundred white men there, and at their head was Chopart himself. Louis recognized him at once as a brutal man whom he had once seen at New Orleans flogging an Indian girl. Most of the whites were decent looking men; but before the night had passed away, White Hand shrank away to his lodge, and as he laid his aching head upon his pillow he drew Coqualla close to him, and in a sinking tone he murmured:

"Alas! I am ashamed of my own people. With all their advantages of birth and education—with the enlightenment of ages as their heritage, they are but savages still!"

The next day found some dozen of the Frenchmen still at the Indian village. But the Great Sun himself, with a few of his warriors, accompanied them to the town, and there the dark monarch promised Chopart that, in consideration of his kindness in allowing them to remain so long in their village, they would bring more than the quantity of corn promised.

"On the morrow," he said, "we will come with our tribute of corn, double what we promised, and on the next day we shall leave the village of the White Apple."

"But stay," cried Chopart, "we will have one more carousal ere we part. This night you shall bring your warriors here, and we'll cheer our souls."

"Our white brother speaks kindly," returned the Great Sun; "but will he not be wroth at the rudeness of my people?"

"No. Bring them, and we'll pledge friendship."

"Thy red brother will come."

"And his braves with him?"

"It shall be so."

And that night saw the scene of carousal changed to Natchez. And there they sat—the doomer and the doomed! And they pledged eternal friendship! The white man had planned to rob the red man of his birthright—to drive him from his home, profane his temple, and plow up his fathers' graves! The red man had planned to keep his home, to maintain sacred his temple, to guard well his fathers' graves, and that this should be done, the invader was to be swept away! It was a strange pledge, but the white man was the first to offer it.

It was after midnight when they separated, and the stars lighted the Natchez to their homes. When they reached their village, the Great Sun, in company with his chiefs and nobles, went to the temple and entered. They approached the place where the sticks had hung, but there were none there now. The leathern thongs hung against the wall, but there was nothing in them.

"Chiefs, nobles and warriors of the once powerful Natchez, may not this be the eve of our re-awakening? The day is past—the morn cometh! Shall not the Natchez once more stand at the head of nations? To-morrow we open the path, and henceforth from that time let our enemies beware! The Great Spirit is with us, while the white man's God has forsaken him. What shall we fear? Sleep now, but sleep not too soundly nor too long. Let the sun find us ready to bid him welcome—so shall we do honor to the parent of our great first king!"

Thus spoke the Great Sun, and as he closed, he moved slowly towards the door, and his chiefs followed him; and ere long afterwards the village of the White Apple was wrapped in silence; but there were two there who slept not. White Hand still prayed that the coming death blow might not extend to his father, and the wish kept sleep from his eyes. And he who watched the sacred fire now felt his duty doubly binding, and sleep came not to him, as he still kept up his tireless vigils.

CHAPTER XIX.

At an early hour the Great Sun and Stung Serpent were astir, and when the first rays of the morning sun darted into the beautiful vale, they rested upon all the warriors of the Natchez there assembled. Such as had pistols carefully loaded them, and hid them away with their hunting knives in their bosoms. Their tomahawks were sharpened and slung to their belts, and all took their guns. Then each man of the common class went and got his bag of corn, and having set it down, they commenced their war dance. But they made not such hideous noise as usual—only enough to propitiate the Great Spirit, and make him acquainted with their intent.

It was well in the morning when they set out, and by the middle of the forenoon they reached Natchez. They entered the place dancing and singing, and straightway carried their corn to the fort. Then the red men began to separate—some this way and some that. Every house had one or more visitors, according to the number of people in it. Some begged for milk, some asked to buy powder and shot, for which they promised to pay in corn at some future day. A richly stored barge lay at the pier, which had come up the day before, and on board this a number of Indians crowded. Into the fort they crept by different ways, presenting themselves wherever there was a white man, until at length they were distributed wherever there was a blow to be struck.

At length a sort of solemn stillness reigned over the devoted town, as though the death-angel had hushed all hearts. But hark! What is that horrid yell that comes from the fort—a yell that makes the very blood freeze, and causes the hair to stand on end? What are those fearful cries—those maniac shouts—and those despairing groans?

The general assassination of the French took so little time that the execution of the deed and the preceding signals were almost one and the same thing. One single discharge closed the whole affair. It cost the Natchez only twelve men to destroy two hundred and fifty, through the fault of the commanding officer, who alone deserved the fate which was shared by his unfortunate companions.

Some half dozen Frenchmen escaped, as by a miracle, this general massacre, and made their way to New Orleans in safety. The women and children of the whites were mostly saved to be kept as prisoners.

Of course the Natchez supposed that all the whites in the country were now dead. Not one of them dreamed that they had been deceived into striking a week too early. So they caroused in the town all night, and on the next morning they started for their village. They had spared two men whom they retained as prisoners, and who escaped from them after having served them some weeks. One was a wagoner, named Mayeux, who was kept to transport the goods of the French to the Indian village; and the other was a tailor named Lebeau, whose services they wanted in fashioning the French garments to their own use.

On the next morning, White Hand was startled by the return of the Natchez. He went out, but his heart sickened at the scene he was destined to witness. Two hundred and fifty human heads—

But those who know the Indian character can imagine the horrid orgies they might hold when fired with revenge and flushed with victory. Even the historian, who deals only with stubborn facts, lays down his pen in silent horror when he finds himself in the midst of Lebeau's narrative of what he saw in the Indian village, and bids his readers spare him the recital.

White Hand crept back to his lodge, and Coqualla found him there pale and faint. She bathed his temples and brow, and after a while he revived, but he dared not venture out.

"Alas, my companion!" murmured the princess, "they make horrid pomp over their victory, but it has cost them dear, though they realize it not now. My people are now blind, but they shall awake to sense and sight and know that the best man of them all is gone!"

"Coqualla!" uttered the youth, starting up. It was a mere interrogative.

"My father is wounded, even unto death." And as the maiden thus spoke she bowed her head and the big tears trickled down between her fingers.

"When? How?" asked White Hand, forgetting for the moment the deep terror of his own soul in the grief of his companion.

"He received a bullet in his bosom yesterday. But he sent me for you. Come."

White Hand arose and followed Coqualla from the lodge. In the center of the great square, before the temple, there was a fire kindled, but the youth dared not look towards it. He knew its terrible purpose, and with quickened steps he hurried, stopping his ears with his fingers to shut out the sounds that fell upon his ears. But fortunately he had not far to go. When he entered Stung Serpent's dwelling, he found the women there crying and yelling in despair. Upon his bed of bearskins lay Stung Serpent, breathing heavily, and ever and anon raising his head to listen to the sounds that came from the square. When his eyes rested upon White Hand, he beckoned the youth forward, at the same time bidding the others stand back.

"Sit thee down by my side," he said, "for I have much to say to thee."

Quickly the youth sat down, for he hoped he should now know some things that were only his at present by suspicion.

(To be continued.)

VERSATILE MR. HILL

Railroad Magnate Who Knew How to Handle a Derailed Engine.

James J. Hill's wonderful versatility and grasp upon the multitude of details of practical railroad management have been a source of much comment among railroad men in recent years. While on a tour over the Great Northern road, his train, which was going down a steep grade, became derailed. Running at a low rate of speed as the train was, no damage was sustained by the officials further than a general shaking up. Mr. Hill was the first man to alight when the train stopped after running several rods along the ties. He found that the locomotive had been thrown from the rails, and stood watching the ineffectual efforts of the train crew to place the engine back on the track. Jackscrews were used, but the men did not seem to thoroughly understand the work.

"That won't do," said Mr. Hill. "Your jacks won't lift it when in that position."

But the men applied the levers, thinking they would show the president that they knew their business. The jacks slipped, letting the ponderous machine down on the ties with a bump.

"Let me set that jack," said Mr. Hill. "I don't think it will slip then." And, grabbing the screw, he set it at an incline to his own satisfaction, and, after throwing a little sand on the top and bottom, he exclaimed, "Now go ahead."

The train men were a little dubious at first, but they applied the levers, and the huge machine slowly lifted itself into place and slid quietly onto the rails. The delay was only twenty minutes.—New York Times.

From Habit.

Mr. Brown—Good morning, Mr. Jones; how's your wife?

Mr. Jones (who is deaf and didn't quite understand)—Very blustering and disagreeable again this morning.

THREE ARMY DIVISIONS.

Military Department to Be Placed Under Separate Heads.

Washington, April 21.—A movement has been started to re-establish military divisions in this country, with several departments included in each. It has received the endorsement of high army officials, and it will no doubt be taken up and considered at an early day, probably after the return of Secretary Root and Major General Corbin from St. Louis.

As far as the scheme has proceeded, and according to some recommendations made, there are to be three divisions—the Atlantic, the Middle and the Pacific. Each will be in command of a major general of the army. The Atlantic division will be composed of the present department of the East, divided into two two departments, the old department of the Gulf to be re-established, with headquarters at Atlanta, Ga. The Middle division is to be composed of the present departments of the Lakes, Missouri, Dakota and Texas, while the Pacific division will be composed of the departments of California, Columbia and Colorado. Probably different geographical lines of departments will be made in order to secure the best result.

NEW ROUTE FOR CHINESE.

May Come to New Orleans and Mobile from Costa Rica.

Mobile, Ala., April 21.—The suspicion of government officials has been aroused by the numerous arrivals here of late of Chinese from Bocas del Toro, Costa Rica and other southern ports, and an investigation has been ordered. Several weeks ago half a dozen Chinese arrived in Mobile from Bocas del Toro, destined for New Orleans. They were promptly gathered in by the custom officials and lodged in jail, pending a hearing before the local United States commissioner.

It is the opinion of government officials that there is a company in New Orleans engaged in bringing Chinese to this country from Bocas del Toro and that Mobile, as well as New Orleans, is used as a port of entry. Within the past two months there has been no less than a dozen deported.

STAND FOR FIREWORKS.

Room for 31,000 People—St. Louis Wants to Keep Monitor.

St. Louis, April 21.—One of the largest grandstands ever built in the United States has been erected on the world's fair grounds for the fireworks display during the dedication ceremonies. The stand is 800 feet long by 183 feet wide and, it is estimated, will accommodate 31,000 people.

The United States monitor Arkansas, now on her way up the river to take part in the ceremonies, is expected to arrive here on April 26. A movement has been started favorable to the retention of the monitor here for several months. Mayor Wells and President Francis, of the exposition, held a conference today with reference to what steps shall be taken to gain the consent of the government to the proposition. A party of prominent citizens will meet the Arkansas and escort her to St. Louis.

FIGHT ON CANAL TREATY.

Herran Says Opposition Is Strong in Colombian Congress.

Washington, April 20.—Dr. Herran, the Colombian Charge d'Affaires here, said today with reference to the prospects of the ratification of the Panama Canal treaty by the Colombian Congress:

"The advices I receive from Bogota through private sources are quite contradictory. They show the opposition to the treaty to be quite strong, but do not state who are leading the opposition. I have received no official information to indicate what are the prospects for the success or failure of the treaty, and at this distance I am unable to form an opinion as to the relative strength of the friends and opponents of the treaty. I am still without information as to the exact date when congress will be convened, except that contained in earlier advices that it would be assembled about May 1."

Castro Pays Germany.

Caracas, April 21.—Venezuela, carrying out the provisions of the protocols signed by Minister Bowen with the allies, has met the payment due to Germany on March 15. Thirty per cent of the customs will be delivered to the Caracas branch of the Bank of England, and the payment due to Italy on April 1 is ready. This is in spite of the fact that all of the Venezuelan merchant vessels have not yet been returned, and that those that had been returned had no cargo aboard, having been looted by their captors.

Glass Factories Close.

Hartford City, Ind., April 21.—Every window glass factory in the United States has gone out of blast and 20,000 skilled laborers leave the factories with no idea when they will return to work. The impression among the workers is that the wage scale adopted for the next blast will be on a basis close to a 50 per cent reduction in wages.

WARNING IS GIVEN

RUSSIA AND AUSTRIA WANT PEACE IN THE BALKANS.

Tell Turkey to Hurry Reforms and Bulgaria to Suppress Macedonian Rebels

—Trouble Will Follow Failure to Comply—Austria Is Anxious to Show Her Loyalty to Russia.

Vienna, April 20.—Russia and Austria-Hungary tomorrow will present new notes to the governments at Sofia and Constantinople regarding the unsatisfactory condition of the reform measures in Macedonia. Turkey will be informed that the Albanian disturbance must be effectively and speedily suppressed, while Bulgarians will be warned not to encourage in any way the Macedonian movement.

The powers manifestly are dissatisfied regarding the present state of affairs. Though they believe that Turkey is endeavoring to carry out the administrative part of the reforms, they believe that the Porte failed to adopt sufficiently prompt and energetic measures against the Albanians.

With regard to Bulgaria, it is asserted that the old connections between Sofia and the revolutionary bands have not entirely ceased, and the notes are intended as a warning to both governments to take a more serious view of their responsibilities.

The presentation of these demands at this particular juncture is connected, doubtless, with anticipations of disturbances at the Greek Easter tide, concerning which period there is a growing uneasiness. It is suggested that Austria welcomes the opportunity of thus showing her loyalty to Russia, as the new note is mainly directed against the Albanians, for whom the Russian organs accuse Austria of entertaining friendliness.

GREAT STEEL DRYDOCK.

Largest Structure of the Kind Will Be Towed to Manila.

Washington, April 20.—A contract to build the largest steel floating drydock in the world, to float the largest battleships, and one that is to be towed 13,000 miles to the Philippine Islands, has been awarded the Maryland Steel Company by the Navy Department. The dock is to be 500 feet long and of extra strength and weight, weighing 10,000 tons, principally to enable her to stand a voyage half way round the world. The dock will cost \$1,124,000 and will be 27 months in building. The builders are to deliver the great structure on the Atlantic coast and the Navy Department will take up the task of getting the dock to its destination.

The dock will have to be towed across the Atlantic, through the Mediterranean sea, down the Suez canal and Red sea, across the Indian ocean and up the China sea to Manila. If she makes four knots an hour she will travel 86 miles a day, and it will require 151 days for the voyage if she made the passage without stopping, which will be impossible, owing to the towing ships having to recalc or wait for good weather. The tow will be the largest and longest in history.

TO BLUFF GUATEMALA.

Allies Threatened Same Tactics as Succeeded in Venezuela.

Washington, April 20.—An interesting account of the action taken by certain of the foreign powers in the matter of claims against Guatemala is given in a communication written by James G. Bailey, Charge for the United States at Guatemala City, which appears in the forthcoming volume of "Foreign Relations of the United States." Mr. Bailey says: "Very reliable information discloses the fact that collective coercive pressure was resorted to by the respective diplomatic representatives here of England, France, Germany and Belgium in order to bring about a payment of their claims. It appears that they had, as a body, notified this government (Guatemala) that, if arrangements were not made to satisfy their respective creditors on a specific date, a man-of-war would take possession of the Port of Guatemala."

Machinists Strike in Navy Yard.

New York, April 20.—Following the attempts of the Housesmiths' and Bridgeworkers' Union to tie up work on the crane for the battle-ship Connecticut at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, 15 union machinists in the main power house at the navy yard, employees of the Quincy Engine Company, of Quincy, Ill., have gone on strike. The men left work in compliance with orders from the National Machinists' Union. The strike is purely in sympathy with a strike now in progress against the engine company in Quincy.

Pays for Stolen Gold Bar.

Salt Lake City, Utah, April 20.—The Pacific Express Company has made good the loss of the bar of gold bullion that was stolen from the company at Detroit a few weeks ago, while being shipped from this city to the Subtreasury at New York. Today a local mining company received from the general offices of the express company in St. Louis a check for \$23,100, which was the value of the bar. No trace of the missing gold has been found.