

# White Hand

## A Tale of the Early Settlers of Louisiana.

BY AUSTIN C. BURDICK

### CHAPTER XIX.—(Continued.)

The old chief took the youth's hand, and having gazed into his face a few moments, he said:

"White Hand, you once gave me an oath, but from all oaths you have ever given me I now absolve you. Coqualla has told me all. She has told me how true you are in heart, and how yet you long for the home of your childhood. I do not think your father has fallen in this general massacre, for his place is strong, and the red men owe him no grudge. Yet he may have fallen with the rest. If he has, you may sometime find opportunity to reach your native land. But you are under no oath now. Of what has now happened I will not speak, only to say that you cannot see nor understand all that has led us to this fearful work. The story of the white man's rule is everywhere the same. Where a tribe, or a people, have made peace and accepted the friendship of the French, they have become weak and puny. White Hand, I have a strange love for thee, but I hate thy people. And that thy father almost hates them too has drawn my heart towards him. But we could not see our people being gradually swept away, and our homes torn from us, without striking this blow. Yet Stung Serpent has fallen. The bullet of the white man has found his life. But he dies content. The white man has fallen, too."

The old chieftain sank back exhausted as he ceased speaking, and for some moments he remained with his eyes closed. When he opened them again, White Hand spoke.

"My father," he said, "ere the hand of death has done its work upon thee, wilt thou not tell me why I was taken from my father's house? Surely you cannot object to tell me all now?"

"No, my child, I have no objections, for I never promised not to tell. And when I sent for thee now, I meant to tell thee all. Do you remember when your father met me in the woods near his dwelling?"

"Yes," returned White Hand, bending over with eager interest.

"Well, I had then been to see Simon Lobois. By some means he learned that I was down the river, and he sent for me. He had heard that I was a savage chieftain, and a lover of gold. I met him in the woods, and he proposed to me that I should seize St. Julien's son and slay him, and for this he offered to pay me a hundred pieces of gold. But I spurned the offer and left him. I came home, and told my brother what Lobois had said to me, and he pondered upon the subject in a new light. You know the Natchez often send messengers to the Great Spirit, and the Great Sun had wished to send a white messenger to the white man's God, even as we told you when you first came here. At length I fell in with his views, and I knew of no one whose spirit would be surer of admission to your God than the spirit of Louis St. Julien, for I knew him to be a good youth. So I returned to your father's house and saw Lobois again, and he told me he had hired a party of Chickasaws to kill you, but that you and your companion had killed them all—six of them. I then offered to do what he wished. But this time his wants had received an addition. He not only wanted the son killed, but he wanted the daughter captured and carried off towards New Orleans. I agreed to this; but I made him give me a written promise to pay me the money when the work should be done. He hesitated at first, but at length he wrote the pledge and signed it; and then it was arranged that Louise should be left upon the bank of Lake Pontchartrain, at the end of the middle trail, and I pledged myself to take you with me and kill you, for you know this had been my purpose in seeking you."

"But the paper—the pledge—you had of Lobois—where is it?" uttered White Hand.

"It is safe. Coqualla, go to my closet, and you will find it in the oaken casket."

The princess went, and in the box she found the paper, which she handed to her father. He took it, and having opened it, he handed it to White Hand, saying, as he did so:

"Here—it is yours. And now all I ask is, pardon."

"For all that you have done to me," murmured the youth, "I pardon you from the bottom of my soul; for you may have been an instrument in the hands of heaven for saving my life. Had you not taken me, another would, and I should not have lived. So I shall, after all, remember Stung Serpent with more of gratitude than of complaint or anger."

"Do you mean that?"

"I do."

Stung Serpent raised himself upon his elbow, and caught the youth by the hand.

"Coqualla," he whispered, "where art thou?"

"Here, my father."

"I have been kind to thee. If it lays in thy power, help White Hand to his people. Is it Coqualla I see?"

"Yes. Are you faint?"

"Faint? Stung Serpent faint? No! Up, warriors of the Natchez, and strike for your homes! Who shall fear the dastards now? My braves, remember the trophies you have won under Stung Serpent's lead. Strike—strike, now, for your honor, your homes, and for the tombs of your ancestors! Sink your blades to the pole, and leave not a man of them all to

tell their king the tale! Now! On—to the death!"

One long, loud warcy followed this paroxysm, and as it ended in a low, gurgling sound, the chieftain sank back. Coqualla moved to his side and knelt over him, and in a moment more the loud cries of the women rent the air, for Stung Serpent was dead!

CHAPTER XX.

There was consternation for a while in the village of the White Apple when it was known that Stung Serpent was dead, for he had been an important man among the Natchez. At the end of four days, the body was made ready for the grave, and nine persons, with ropes about their necks, remained fasting by it.

"And are all these people to die?" asked White Hand, after he and Coqualla had retired to their own dwellings.

"Yes. And but for the intercessions of my father himself, many more would have died."

"It is a cruel practice," said the youth, sadly.

"Cruel?" repeated the princess, in surprise. "Why do you say so?"

"Because one death is enough. Why should so many be added?"

"Ah," answered Coqualla, ingenuously, "you do not understand. Your people have not such love for the departed as we have. It is a long, dark road which my father has now to travel, and surely it is fitting he should have company."

"And does this always happen when one of your people dies?"

"Certainly; though some have not so many companions; but all have one. When the last Great Sun died, there were one hundred who went to keep him company over the dark road."

"So many?"

"Yes—and of course they were happy, for with him they were at once admitted to the happy home where the Great Spirit is."

"But," queried White Hand, "Stung Serpent has been dead now four days, and these people will not die until tonight. How, then, shall they go together?"

"Ah," returned Coqualla, with a faint smile, which seemed to indicate a pity for her companion's ignorance, "my father's spirit will not start alone. It remains near the old body until the other spirits join it, and then they all go off together. Do you not understand?"

"Yes."

"And is it not right and proper?"

"It is, if you think so; but I should hardly dare give my voice in favor of it. Why, look, Coqualla, and tell me if this very thing has not already reduced your nation from a once powerful people to a mere handful."

"My father spoke of that ere he died," answered the princess, thoughtfully. "He said he wished only his few immediate companions to go with him beyond the grave, and even they must be old people."

"And he was right, Coqualla. I have heard that the Natchez were once a mighty race—a great nation, numbering their warriors by the many thousands, and now they have only a very few hundred. In a large community, under ordinary circumstances, the births will not much overrun the deaths by nature. But see here—not only do your people die off as do others, but for every one who dies naturally from one to a hundred more must be killed to keep them company."

"I know," said Coqualla, thoughtfully—"I know. But still it were cruel to send my father's spirit away over the dark, long trail alone. Your people do not think of this. They do not think of the loved spirit wandering away in the dark alone."

"Yes they do, Coqualla."

"They do?"

"Yes."

"And yet they send them no company."

"Ah, their company comes from the other way," spoke White Hand, softly and sweetly. "When a human soul departs, we, or I, believe that the loved ones who have gone before come down to lead the new-born spirit away to heaven. I have a mother there, Coqualla, and I think she will come down to earth when my spirit departs, and welcome me to the home of the blessed ones. Surely they know the way through the dark valley better than we could, or better than any others of earth."

Gradually the Indian girl's hands were brought together over her bosom, and her head was bowed. When she looked up there was a strange light in her eyes and a soft, hopeful expression dwelt upon her dusky features.

"White Hand," she whispered, "tell me that again."

"Is not the theme more pleasing than the strangling of helpless victims over the graves of the dead?" the youth asked, kindly.

"Yes—yes. But tell me more."

And White Hand went on and whispered into his companion's ear the whole of his own pure faith in God and the risen Saviour; and when he had done the princess murmured:

"It is sweet, and it is better than the faith I have been taught."

She bowed her head again, and this time she remained a long while thoughtful; and when she next looked up, a change had come over her countenance.

"White Hand," she said, "I promised my father that I would help you escape from here, if you wished. What have I to remain here for? My father is dead; I have no brother or sister, and the ways of my people are not pleasant to me. May I not go with you?"

The youth threw his arms about the fair speaker's neck and drew her upon his bosom.

"Coqualla, speak but the word, and I'll die in thy service, if necessary, to lead you to my father's home. O, we will not be separated."

The burial was over. Stung Serpent reposed in his grave, and by his side lay the bodies of those who had, in obedience to the cruel faith and custom, given up their lives that they might keep their loved chief company in his dark journey. And once more the Natchez commenced

their mad orgies over their victory, for they were not yet satiated.

Late at night, while the warriors were dancing and howling in the square, Fricked Arm came to White Hand's lodge and called him out. The youth could not see her face in the gloom, but from the manner of her breathing, he could tell that she was deeply moved by something.

"White Hand," she said, "our plot has worked exceedingly well. Not a blow has been struck save here at Natchez; so the great mass of the French are saved. But thou art in danger here. The moment the Natchez find that their plan has failed they will suspect thee, for it has been whispered that you visited the temple, and the Great Sun, when he looked towards the west for the moon last night and saw it not, was perplexed. This night they saw the new moon for the first time, and they remembered, for the first time, too, that the moon ought to have been a week old. Amid their mad joy they have not thought of this before. But they think of it now, and fear has already seized upon some of them, though those few keep it to themselves. Now you can judge how much risk you run."

"And will they suspect me?" the youth uttered, tremulously.

"They will be likely to; for you are of the hated people, and your powerful friend is dead. Dark, angry eyes have been bent upon you, because you have shown your loathing of the cruelties you have witnessed. And, again, the French will soon be on the Natchez trail. The future is dark for us all, but you may escape. Can you not remember the trail by which you came?"

"I fear not."

"But you can follow it part way from here?"

"Yes, for it is broad towards the village."

"There you can take the river. You know the southern trail. You went it once hunting with Stung Serpent."

"Yes—I remember that."

"Then all is safe. Follow that trail to the right, and it will bring you out upon the river fifteen miles below here. Among a clump of brakes there you will find a canoe. It is mine. Take it and float down the river. Still retain your present garb, and let the waist stain be upon your face. In that way you may escape the Natchez, should any of them meet you, and by your speech you could quickly convince the French. I can do no more for you. I would have saved all the French if I could, for I loved them; yet I must follow the fortunes of my own people."

White Hand thanked the old princess for her kindness, and with a thoughtful step he returned to his lodge. Coqualla asked him what Fricked Arm had wanted, and he sat down and told her all.

"And will you go?" the princess asked.

"Yes, I must. But, Coqualla, have you changed your mind?"

"Only to be more strongly bound to thee. And yet," she added, putting her arms about her husband's neck, "speak but one word—simply whisper to me—that thou wouldst rather go free from care or thought of me, and—"

"Hush, Coqualla! You wrong me now. O, I should never sleep in peace again, did I think thou remainedst here when thy wish was with me. But we must flee to-night."

"I am all ready, dearest."

"But we need provisions."

"I have such all prepared as we can carry."

"Then you have thought of this?"

"Yes. But O, speak the truth, my love. If within thy inmost soul there dwells a thought—"

"It is all of love for thee, Coqualla," interrupted the youth, seeing at once her drift. "So let me hear no more of it. Now let us prepare."

"Bless thee," murmured the fair girl, sinking upon her companion's bosom. "O, since we first spoke of this, my heart has sunk deep down in its darkest mood when the thought of staying here has dwelt with me. Those sweet words you whispered to me have been with me ever since, and they have wrought a wonderful change in my feelings. When we get to our new home we will talk more about it, and you shall teach me to read the great book wherein these precious truths are written."

"I will," promised White Hand. "But the night comes on; the morning will be speedily approaching. Come—we will talk on the way."

Just as the first gray streaks of dawn appeared in the east, the fugitives reached the great river, and without much trouble they found the brake and the canoe. They easily pulled the light craft from its nest and dragged it to the river. It was a smooth, beautifully finished boat, fashioned from a huge log of yellow pine, and seasoned without crack or check. Into this the adventurers put their little store, and then, with hopeful hearts, they entered and pushed out into the broad stream.

(To be continued.)

An Australian Fish Story.

Writing from Bunbury, West Australia, to a brother in London, Reginald Shaw relates the following amazing incident, which, he states, happened to one of his party when fishing from the Jetty:

His friend had baited his hook with a large whiting, hoping to catch a kingfish, when a shark about seven feet long swallowed it. The angler gently brought the shark to the surface of the water, while a man working on the Jetty came to his assistance with a big iron hook and after several ineffectual attempts to jab the hook into the shark's mouth the latter got away.

On pulling up his line the fisherman found that he had lost the whiting bait, but had hooked two large ribs of beef from the stomach of the shark. Then, to the amusement of the crowd, one of whom remarked, "Well, exchange is no robbery," he landed the beef safely on the Jetty.—London Mail.

RUSSIA SHOWS HER HAND.

Demands Cession of Manchuria by China—Japanese Send Warships.

Pekin, April 25.—Russia has demanded that China sign an agreement practically ceding to her sovereignty of Manchuria and excluding other nations from that country. The Russian charge d'affaires, M. Planchon, has informed Prince Ching, president of the foreign office, that no further steps in the evacuation of Manchuria will be taken until this agreement is signed.

Prince Ching refused the Russian terms, but his refusal probably pleases Russia as well as his acceptance would have done, because either alternative means the relinquishment of Chinese sovereignty in Manchuria.

The Russian demands are as follows: First—No more Manchurian ports or towns are to be opened. Second—No more foreign consuls are to be admitted into Manchuria. Third—No foreigners except Russians are to be employed in the public service of Manchuria. Fourth—The present status of the administration of Manchuria is to remain unchanged. Fifth—The customs receipts at the port of Niu Chwang are to be given to the Russo-Chinese bank. Sixth—A sanitary commission is to be organized under Russian control. Seventh—Russia is entitled to attach the telegraph wires and poles of all Chinese lines in Manchuria, and, Eighth—no territory in Manchuria is to be alienated to any other power.

No explanation has been given to the Chinese of the Russian interpretation of the fourth demand. Chinese officials are greatly disturbed, but they are powerless. While the foregoing demands were before the Chinese for consideration, M. Planchon assured his colleagues explicitly that the only reason for the delay in restoring the government of Niu Chwang to the Chinese was the organization of a sanitary commission.

There has been much feeling in British circles over the appointment of a Russian commissioner in Niu Chwang, but this revelation of Russia's determination to retain control of Manchuria and close the door there robs this appointment of importance.

The Chinese court returned to the Forbidden city today with a spectacular procession from the hunting park.

Yokohama, April 25.—Three Japanese warships have been ordered to Niu Chwang. Marquis Ito has held a secret conference with the leading Japanese statesmen. The Russian demands for privileges in Manchuria have excited the Japanese press, which insists on vigorous action, confident that the United States as well as Great Britain will support Japan. An arrangement has been reached by which the political crisis has been averted, but the government's naval increment proposals remain unchanged.

Snap at United States.

London, April 25.—The Peking correspondent of the Times describes the first article of the Russian demands on China, namely, that no more Manchurian ports or towns be opened, as a snap in the face for the United States, this country having proposed the opening of Moukden and Takushan as treaty ports.

UNCLE SAM'S NEW ISLANDS.

Some in Southern Philippines Which Have Never Been Charted.

Washington, April 25.—Official advice received at the navy department from the Philippines record the finding of a number of valuable islands in the southern part of the archipelago, which are not on any of the charts in the possession of the government. So far as known, no foreign government as yet has laid claim to this territory, and to preclude the presentation of such claims, Secretary Moody has taken steps to have the islands properly charted as the property of the United States, after first having every effort made to learn if any government has ground for claim to the new islands.

A naval vessel will probably be ordered to the southern part of the archipelago to prepare the necessary charts.

Cuts Out Butte.

Butte, Mont., April 25.—Acting upon instructions from Superintendent McMichael at Minneapolis, Manager Wild closed the local office of the Western Union telegraph company at midnight and announced that business through the company's office in this city would be entirely suspended until further notice. This order, Manager Wild stated, applies to all leased wires leading into Butte. The trouble arises out of a strike of messenger boys, and followed an unsuccessful attempt to deliver its messages yesterday.

Bowen Not Ready to Sign.

Washington, April 25.—The British ambassador today asked Mr. Bowen to join the representatives of the allies in signing a protocol for the settlement of the claims to be adjusted by the commissions which are to meet in Caracas. The Venezuelan plenipotentiary, while ready to draw up such a convention at the proper time, declined to do so until The Hague protocol, providing for the determination of the question of preferential treatment, had been duly signed and sealed.

REPORT BY MILES

TELLS WAR DEPARTMENT WHAT HE SAW IN PHILIPPINES.

Refers to Misconduct of Officers and Soldiers in the Islands—Report Has Been Asked for Several Times, but Secretary Regarded it as Confidential—Old Story Retold.

Washington, April 29.—The war department has made public that portion of the report of General Miles which refers to misconduct of officers and soldiers in the Philippines. Secretary Root has received several requests for this report, some of them from persons in Boston, who stated that it contains much matter that never had been brought out in the investigations. The secretary has held that such reports were confidential in order that the officer making them might be free to make such comments as he desired, but as it was learned that General Miles had no objection to the publication of the report, it has been made public with a brief comment by General Davis, judge advocate general, who has charge of all matters pertaining to the subjects referred to in this portion of the report. The statements made by General Miles are the result of his tour of inspection in the Philippines last autumn and winter.

General Miles' report on his Philippine observations is dated February 19, 1903, and is addressed to the secretary of war. In brief, it states:

"That the people complained of the administration of the water cure and that one man was burned to death; that they were concentrated in towns and suffered great indignities. That 600 people were crowded into one small building and some of them were suffocated. He tells again the story of the killing of the guides in Cebu, of which Major Glenn has been acquitted by court martial. He says three men in Samar were subjected to the water cure. He states that Major Glenn and a party known as 'Genn's brigade' were moved from place to place to extort statements by torture. He has annulled all military orders which seem to encourage cruelty. He condemns the sale of rice by the military authorities to the natives. In reply to General Miles' report, Adjutant General Davis says all the cases of alleged cruelty have been subjects of investigation and that the rice sales were a military necessity."

SUCCESSOR TO TYNER.

Charles H. Robb, of Vermont, Gets the Vacant Office.

Washington, April 29.—Charles H. Robb, assistant attorney for the department of justice, has been appointed assistant attorney general for the post-office to fill the place vacated by James N. Tyner, who was dismissed. Mr. Robb has assumed the new position.

Mr. Robb, who is from Vermont, is on leave of absence from the department of justice, to which he will return as soon as the investigation of the post-office is closed, and the postmaster general has time to choose a permanent assistant attorney general.

Postmaster General Payne has granted Mr. Christianity an indefinite leave of absence.

The charges recently formulated by the Central labor union, of this city, against the mail equipment bureau have been filed.

Mr. Payne today forwarded to Attorney General Knox additional information regarding the abstraction of papers from the assistant attorney general's office by Mrs. Tyner last week. In his letter of transmission he says:

"I am unable to conclude that no other papers were taken than those submitted and returned. Inasmuch as it clearly appears that certain papers of the government were taken, and since, in my opinion, all of the facts presented tend to show a willful violation of law, I recommend that the matter be referred to the United States attorney for this district, with instructions to submit the case to the grand jury, as decided in our recent interview."

Counterfeiters Caught at Posen.

Berlin, April 29.—Seven counterfeiters have been arrested in a body at Posen. The men counterfeited various coins, the coupons of government bonds and foreign coins, including those of the United States. They are said to have had American connections. Direct inquiry at the court at Posen for information and details concerning their American connection brought the reply that the court could not answer the query for several days, pending examination of the prisoners.

Five Burned with Molten Metal.

Lancaster, Pa., April 29.—By an explosion of molten metal five men were horribly burned, two of them probably fatally, at Vesta furnace, Marietta, early today. The men were engaged at the cupola preparatory to a cast, when the accident occurred, and were literally showered with molten metal. The accident was caused by a wet projectile being shot into the cupola.