

LORD OF THE DESERT

By PAUL de LANEY.

CHAPTER XIX.

Thieves "Fall Out."

Another morning finds the Indians holding their ground. They are well entrenched and the besieged in the Stone House can only remain cooped in until relief shall arrive from the fort.

If they are even spared this privilege they will feel thankful for it. It requires time to communicate with the military authorities and then soldiers move with deliberation and prepare before they move.

Old Egan's men are already sent out and his reinforcements are doubtless on the road. While soldiers are preparing "rations" and rolling their blankets and feeling to their equipments generally, Indian warriors are already in the saddle and riding night and day toward the seat of their campaign.

If the Indians should surmise that relief had been sent for they would hurry the final attack, and the besieged felt much alarmed for fear that they might discover the tracks of Metzger, who had borne the message to the trapper. There was also some fear of delay in communicating with the military post as the trapper was known to spend a great deal of his time away from home, working among his traps in the rimrocks. While it was considered best that the trapper should make the journey to the fort, yet Metzger had received instructions to go, should he be unable to find Hammersley.

The besieged determined to die rather than fall into the hands of the Snakes, for they knew that Old Egan would show no mercy now, having caught the Lord of the Desert in his treachery, and they guarded the loopholes with close scrutiny never failing to send a bullet at the slightest exposed portion of an Indian's body. They were well supplied with provisions, water and ammunition, and unless actually overpowered, would be able to withstand a siege indefinitely.

The Indians were likewise prepared for the siege. Besides the pure water that flowed from the mountains above the Stone House, they had the great meadows for their stock to graze upon and had the Lord's choicest bullocks to select from when they became hungry. To the starving warrior from the rimrocks and lava beds this life was truly a dream; plenty to eat and drink, only desultory guard duty—just exciting enough to stimulate their energy—Old Egan's braves were in their element. But summer cannot last always even with the savage. While his warriors were reveling in the luxury of a hazardous siege and the hope of an old time assault and a division of the rich booty, Old Egan was scanning the desert for his reinforcements. Intuition admonished him that delay would not help his cause; that the sooner he had taken his prey and vanished among the lava rocks of the far south, the better. He had never yet been overtaken by the "blue-birds" of the Great Father and had no desire to encounter these men of iron and lead under the command of General Crook. All who had met them so far had been routed or captured and Egan's sins had been too numerous for the wily chief to even think of falling into the hands of the government. He knew full well that his enemy was well equipped and that to attack him, armed and protected as he was, that he must meet with failure and a great loss, but when his horde of warriors and allies should arrive he expected the force of numbers and by a simultaneous attack from every direction to take the Stone House and its occupants and its treasures, without great loss. The known wealth of the place made it the most coveted place in the mind of the savages, and the western border. Arms and ammunition, provisions, "fire-water," gold, valuables of all kinds, were magnified in the Indian imagination until even the great wealth of Monte Cristo would not have compared with that of the Lord of the Desert.

The same humdrum precaution was preserved by the besieged and besiegers until about two o'clock in the afternoon when the Indians took on new energy and there was general confidence and activity in their ranks. The outlook who had been placed on the peak overlooking the desert, signaled Old Egan that reinforcements were coming.

The chief could not resist climbing to the summit of an adjoining foothill and looking for himself. He was rewarded by seeing a cloud of dust far out on the desert to the south that from its length along the plain, he knew a band of his warriors were coming in single file as rapidly as their steeds could bring them. A little later another cloud of dust from the southwest announced other reinforcements on the way, and though the Indians preserved a calm in the view of the occupants of the Stone House, they could not resist chanting their war songs in their concealment.

It was not until the first war party arrived that the whites fully realized their danger. They had felt uneasy while the enemy was so near, but their former strength until reinforcements could arrive from the fort, but now that he was reinforced he might be encouraged to attack and might succeed before succor could arrive for them.

Just at nightfall another band of reinforcements arrived, and the Indians now becoming more bold, sent the air with their warwhoops. But the new arrivals were hungry and thirsty, and as darkness came on the Lord of the Desert beheld their campfires in every direction and he saw them busily engaged in cooking and feasting upon his choicest beavers, which had been fattened for his palates of a different race. Martin Lyle was not a coward. He was a villain and a thief and a drunkard, but with all of this he was a man of courage of the true Scotch stripe. When he saw his property being sacrificed, his home surrounded by an enemy, his life and that of his companions threatened, he rose from his big arm chair, dressed and armed himself for battle and took active command of his men.

His long bearded brain became active, his eyes flashed with the fire of excitement once more and his fondness for him the appearance of a "grizzly" in courage at least.

Dan Follett had been watching the proceedings with studious silence. He came to the conclusion that a crisis was at hand. Meeting the Lord of the Desert in the front yard he told him he would speak with him.

"Mr. Lyle," he said, "I think it high time for a settlement between us. I have performed all of my agreements with you and you have put me off from day to day, and now that I have no obligations remaining unfulfilled I demand that the deeds be signed and that you pay the balance due me."

"But, man, this is no time for settling business affairs, when our very scalps are quivering on our heads. There is plenty of time. Wait until we have repulsed this band of blood-thirsty savages, which your awkwardness has brought to our door, and then we will talk about settlement."

"But we must settle now!" demanded Follett. "You have thus put me off from time to time and I now must have a settlement without further delay."

"I am a man of few words, as you know, Follett," responded Lyle, "and I answer now, once and for all, wait until I am ready to settle."

"So am I a man of few words and also of quick action, your Lordship, a title for which you are indebted to me, and another moment's delay on your part will be the costliest act of your life!" said Follett in a low, determined tone.

Dan Follett was a man of action and of few words, as the reader is aware, and his conscience did not dictate moral means and ends. He was naturally inclined the other way. His



He gave her hand an assuring clasp.

spirit for revenge knew no bounds. He had already determined his course should the Lord delay settlement longer.

He had not been asleep all of these years either, in regard to the Lord's affairs. He went straight to the hiding place of Lyle's treasury and helped himself. Ten thousand dollars in gold and bank notes he took and secured safely in a belt already prepared and sewed into his body. Then like a coyote he skulked away, passing through the guard of exultant warriors, grown careless with confidence in superior numbers, and stealing one of their best horses rode away in the darkness. As their bloodthirsty war-whoops chimed in about the Stone House, he glanced back through the darkness and said:

"Devour them, Lord of the Desert and all, hungry pack, I will see that you are not molested in your work. Before Hammersley reaches the fort his tongue will be silenced forever, and Dan Follett, the half-breed, will be well on his way to where he will live the remainder of his days in luxury."

CHAPTER XX.

Mountain Lion and Desert Coyote.

There was no time for hesitation on the part of the trapper. Although he bore no concern for the safety of the Lord of the Desert, under ordinary circumstances, he would not have him slain by Indians at the present time. Besides, there were those in his employ who deserved the assistance of their fellowmen.

He announced his intention at once upon the arrival of Metzger of going to the fort but thought best to take a few hours sleep before starting out on so fatiguing a journey. Before lying down, however, all preparations were made so that upon his waking he would be able to start at once on his mission. It was his purpose to start before daylight that he might get beyond the rimrocks to the south before dawn so that the scouts of Egan should be watching the desert night discover him.

In the preparations for the journey he had an able assistant in the person of Bertha Lyle. Her companionship, however, was more valuable to the trapper than her assistance. He had grown accustomed to doing everything himself and did not feel safe in depending upon others. Everything done by Bertha was either supervised or inspected by him, to his satisfaction and generally to her embarrassment. Women think they know how to do things themselves, and Bertha was no exception.

But still they did not quarrel. The man of the desert knew how he wanted things arranged and the woman from Edinburg only desired to please him. While he was practically a child of the desert, yet he was intelligent and had not become one-sided in his views. He saw the value of woman's companionship, felt its influence and had often chided himself since Bertha's arrival for permitting his ambition to rise in certain directions.

"Calm, my boy," he would say. "You are only a trapper—make your living in roaming the desert and climbing the rimrocks and trapping wild animals and skinning them. She is refined. She is wealthy. While she is thrown in your company under most unfortunate circumstances, she could not be otherwise that grateful, will always be grateful—will regard you as a preserver and friend, but nothing more, my boy. Do not build up false hopes, young man. Remain within your bounds and you will not come to grief. So let the matter drop."

Thus would reason this man of the frontier when nature awakened his heart to love.

After making preparations for the trip he had given instructions to his companions concerning their action in his absence. He suspected that Indian scouts might visit his abode and impressed upon his friends the importance of not being discovered. "I think this period of isolation is drawing near to a close," he said. "I expect in the visit of General Crook and his men not only to put a stop to Egan's devilry in this country but to see the Lord of the Desert reduced to a commoner, and see the real lord and the lady in-

Science and Invention

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The largest pendulum ever made is that with which Messrs. Berbet and Flammarion have been demonstrating the earth's rotation in Paris. A lead ball of fifty-six pounds is attached to a fine piano wire about 210 feet long. The oscillation lasts sixteen seconds.

The explosion motor holds the palm for lightness. The best electric motor with its storage battery is stated to weigh nearly one hundred pounds to the horse power, and the Scerpillet steam engine, flashing water into steam from a coil boiler, about four pounds.

Does a coyote ever attack a lion? A mountain lion? Inquired Bertha.

"No," replied the trapper, "not single handed; a pack might attack one under proper conditions—if they were cornered, or hungry and they thought they might benefit by it without too much risk."

"It was a foolish dream, I know," she said, "but I will be brief: I saw a mountain lion, such as you caught in your trap, on a long journey. It climbed among the rimrocks, then passed along through canyons, and then crossed stretches of the plains. It seemed to be very tired, but it was intent on its trip, and plodded on. Behind it came a coyote—just like the coyotes you capture, except its hair was dark; it was almost black. It would trail along the rocks behind the lion and then cut across a near way and lie in wait for the lion; then it would skulk away on the approach of the lion, and follow him. It kept this up all through the day. But at night it grew more bold and it again hid behind the rocks on the trail. As the lion approached, tired and leg-weary, the coyote attacked it from the rear and the lion turned and a great fight ensued, and in the end, the lion—I know it is foolish, but it was so exciting—my heart leaped into my throat and I awakened—the mountain lion changed into your own person and the desert coyote assumed the form of Dan Follett, and you and he were in desperate combat among the rocks and cliffs of the far away desert."

"Never fear little Ber—Miss Lyle, Dan Follett is surrounded in the Stone House by Indians and I will be on my guard against all enemies to mankind that roam the desert," and buckling his revolvers about his waist, and throwing the other equipments of his journey across his shoulder, he took his hand and giving it an assuring clasp, stepped out into the darkness, taking a course to the southward.

Bertha looked forward with alarm and dread. She imagined that something terrible would happen. But under the theory of modern intelligence she would try to disabuse her mind of evil omens and imagine that all would come out right.

The trapper looked upon the matter differently. He thought more about the dream than the dream. As he picked his way over the plains and among the rocks, her form became more beautiful to him and her words of friendship echoed and re-echoed in his mind. While he did not believe that there was any significance in dreams, yet he did not forget the warning of the fair friend, and kept a more guarded lookout for his safety than ever before.

His trip so far had been an uneventful one. Night and day he pushed on, only sleeping a few hours at a time and stopping a few minutes to lunch. The distance now did not divide him far from the fort. It was the last evening of his journey when he discovered fresh tracks of a horse which had preceded him on the trail. The tracks led toward the fort and he concluded that it was made by someone going to the fort. There

was no shoes on the animal's feet, but the soldiers frequently pressed the ground with their feet and there was no reason to suspect anything out of the ordinary from a mere horse's track.

But, as the reader knows, Hammersley was beset by one of the most ubiquitous villains of the plains. The trapper had only used ordinary care on his trip from home, while Follett had been on the scene like a hungry wolf. Although compelled to go long distances out of his way on account of being mounted, to get around the numerous walls of rimrocks, he had gotten the trapper's course and was determined to head him off ere he should reach the fort, and kill him to prevent the Lord of the Desert from receiving aid. He had no hatred for Hammersley, but he would have sacrificed a blood-friend to gratify his revengeful spirit.

He had already discovered the trapper's approach and had preceded him to a point near the fort where he expected to hide among the boulders and stop the trapper forever from the desert trail. Hiding his horse in a gulch in the background he secreted himself near the trail and waited the approach of the trapper.

When he was within a few paces Follett leveled his revolver and when the trapper approached within a few feet of him the scoundrel pulled the trigger. But fortunately the percussion cap did not explode. Drawing his knife hurriedly the wretched assassin rushed upon his intended victim from behind like an infuriated tiger. The noise of the hammer of the revolver had aroused the trapper from his meditation and when Follett rushed upon him he dropped the bundle from his shoulder and turning received his assailant in an unexpected manner. He seized the half-breed by the updrawn wrist with one hand and by the throat with the other and then a hand-to-hand struggle between two of the most determined men of the desert followed.

Quite a Patriarch.

Age is a matter which seems dependent upon one's point of view. A New Yorker imprisoned in a "tonorial studio" fell victim to the garrulousness of the "artist" executioner, and was informed that the latter, recently married, was about to set forth on a visit to the old country. "I suppose you'll take your wife along," suggested the victim, hopelessly. "No, sir, I'm not going for pleasure this time. I want to see my father before he dies." "Isn't he well?" "Oh, he's well enough; but one never can tell what may happen. He's getting along in years." "How old is he?" "Forty-nine."

"Took It" Literally.

Once upon a time a very nervous man called on his physician and asked him for medical advice.

"Take a tonic, and dismiss from your mind all that tends to worry you," said the doctor.

Several months afterward the patient received a bill from the physician asking him to remit \$18, and answered it thus:

"Dear doctor, I have taken a tonic and your advice. Your bill tends to worry me, and so I dismiss it from my mind."

Moral—Advice sometimes defeats its giver.—Medical Talk.

A Back-Handed Compliment.

Cinderella had just put on the crystal slipper. "Do you think it makes my foot look smaller?" she asked, with charming naivete.

"Perhaps," replied the prince; "but I can see right through it."

Disconcerted by this back-handed compliment, the poor girl blushed, but as colonial buckles and open-work stockings had not yet arrived she had to content with her deceptive footgear.—Judge.

Not Well Received.

Ida—Why are you pointing, dear?

May—Why, Harry said he believed he could learn to love me.

Ida—I don't see anything awful in that.

May—Yes; the idea of him having to learn.

Some marriages are failures because the woman in the case is suspicious and some are failures because she isn't.

When a man compliments a woman, she isn't satisfied unless she can induce him to repeat it at least seven times.

Hammersley discovers a fresh track.

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NEGROES GROW RICH FAST.

Many of Those Living in the Creek Nation Are Well-to-Do.

It is not in the South that the richest negroes are found, although many in that region have amassed a goodly store of property since the war. Doubtless the wealthiest community of colored people in the world is found among the Creek Indians in Indian Territory. There are about 7,000 of them, and they are worth on an average \$5,000 each. The wealth of the more industrious foots up ever higher, certain individuals being the owners of from \$10,000 to \$15,000 worth of land each.

These negroes are the descendants of slaves of the Creek tribe of Indians and are known as Creek negroes. They are entitled to a share in the division of Creek Indian lands, also a part of the trust funds. Together the 7,000 negroes own 22,000,000 acres of land. And yet their education is far from complete. Their social environments are crude in the extreme and progress goes slowly amid their huts and fields.

Unlike the other Indians of the rich five civilized tribes, the Creeks insist upon freeing their slaves to give them an equal share in their lands and money. At that time there were few slaves, but the number grew through descendants, until now fully 7,000 have had successful claim to a "head right" on the Creek rolls of citizenship. They have their own representatives in the Creek Indian Legislature, their own schools and their own churches. Everything bids fair to make them the model community of negroes in the United States when Indian territory is recovering from the tangle wilderness of reconstruction, its laws made uniform and itself a State of the Union.

There is little culture among the Creek negroes. They have a social set all their own, to which not even the Indians are invited. Their characteristics are in a great measure different from the negro of the South or the North. It is a mixture of both, with additional peculiarities.

Like the Indians, these negroes have their dances in the open, which have come to be a sort of religion with them. And, following in the footsteps of the Southern Negro, they have barbecues, "possum bunts" and the like. As a Northern type of the negro they are more industrious and independent of the whites, know how to work hard and save their money, and, like the type from the city, are well-dressed, but at the same time wearing expensive clothes.

These 7,000 Creek negroes live in a tract of rich land called the Canadian River bottoms, and Okmulgee is their town and trading point. Okmulgee is the capital of the Creek Indian nation, and has been for years a negro town. Recently, however, white people flocked in and have taken possession. The negroes are starting their own towns along the branch of the Frisco Railroad.

Notwithstanding that many of these Creek negroes are industrious, there are some among them who rent out their estates and lounge in idleness about the railway stations. It is a common sight to see a 500-acre tract of rich land in the Canadian bottoms being tilled by a white man. Invariably, upon inquiry as to his landlord, he will refer to the negro owner in no complimentary terms. Meanwhile one will find the owner shooting craps or enjoying himself eating turkey and "possum" in a neighboring village.

When the Creeks freed their negroes in 1864 the two fraternized for a time, but it is averred that some of the all passed now. In accordance with the terms granting their freedom, the Creek negroes are allowed a voice in the tribal government, and so they have their own members in the Council, have their own schools and all that; but the Creek Indian feels about the Creek negro and refuses to associate with him.

VICTIM OF WOMAN'S WHIMS.

The Fate of a Hungry Composer on a Fashion Plate.

He was a tramp composer down on his luck and he had not had a square meal for a fortnight.

In desperation he applied for work on a fashion magazine and was taken on as a "sub." The copy with which he was furnished read something like this:

"Terrapin green with garnitures of lemon white lace and champagne colored velvet constituted the lovely gown on our cover page."

"Brown bread is a fashionable color in crepe, and harmonizes well with butter colored lace."

"A gown of tomato red was delightfully contrasted with lettuce green velvet and oyster white applique."

"Vegetable silk braid is one of the new trimmings."

"A charming breakfast gown is shown in beet red cashmere."

"Egg blue and melon green are delightful new tints."

"Claret silk makes a charming waist."

"All shades of brown are popular, including chocolate, butternut, chestnut and hazel and the biscuit shades are also prominent."

"A coffee colored dinner gown had sleeves of cream mousseline in soufflé style."

"Prune color promises to have a great run."

"Apricot, orange and banana are the newest shades of yellow."

"A gown of tomato red appears on a wine colored broadcloth gown, and motifs of pistache velvet were introduced for contrast. Crushed strawbery has given way to the grape shades, and mulberry to bon-bon pink."

"Tobacco is one of the most becoming shades of brown."

His fellow printers noticed that he acted strangely and groaned at times, but before they became aware of the seriousness of the case he fell to the floor and expired. The coroner's jury rendered a verdict of "Acute dyspepsia, superinduced by overeating."

New York Sun.

Enforced Athletics.

"Joe is a great walker."

"Indeed? How long has he been walking?"

"Lemme see. I believe the twins are 5 months old."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

The female bookkeeper is entitled to the title of countess.

SERMONS OF THE WEEK

The World's Life.—Christ is the world's life.—Rev. F. E. Taylor, Baptist, Brooklyn, N. Y.

True Means.—The religious element is the true means of settling disputes.—Archbishop Ryan, Roman Catholic, Philadelphia, Pa.

The Nation.—The nation will always be just as good and as safe as the individuals composing it.—Rev. P. Barr, New Bedford, Mass.

As the Master Bids.—If one love God as the Master bids he can grasp every hand offered in the same love.—Rev. Dr. Byrd, Methodist, Atlanta, Ga.

Downward.—The man who continues downward only accelerates his own movement, and return becomes more and more difficult.—Rev. J. C. Smith, Indianapolis, Ind.

The Outward Visage.—The kind of life one leads even leaves its marks upon the outward visage. The body we wear is self's externalization.—Rev. R. M. Black, Episcopal, Brooklyn, N. Y.

Deathless Hope.—Christ emancipated the soul from the thralldom of self and sin, and supplied us with energy for victory by giving us with the might of deathless hope.—Rev. J. D. Freeman, Baptist, Toronto, Canada.

Good of Humanity.—It is good to feel the heart beat stronger in anticipation of some object when that object embraces not alone our little selves but the great good of humanity.—Rev. Dr. Blaise, Universalist, Boston, Mass.

Church Stronger.—The church is stronger to-day than ever before, and what gives the church its present power is the fact that it has proved to be the greatest agency under God for the elevation of the race.—Rev. C. J. Hall, Denver, Colo.

Fundamental Thing.—If the spirit of honor and righteousness is not present among men we cannot expect the laws to work well, for the fundamental thing is the kind of men behind the laws.—Rev. F. Phalen, Unitarian, Worcester, Mass.

For Eternity.—It is well to live for to-day, but he who lives his best for to-day lives also for eternity. Heredity is a fact that reaches down to generations.—Rev. Dr. Burrell, New York.

In the Best Sense.—A man may be great in many senses, but he cannot be great in the best sense unless he recognizes somewhat of the divine in his own life and regards himself as being led by the Almighty.—Rev. Dr. Wrigley, Episcopal, Brooklyn, N. Y.

A Good Thing.—It is a good thing for both capital and labor that the whole country is a little chillier. Conscience is being stirred, new laws will be enacted, both capital and labor will see their mutual relations more clearly.—Rev. Dr. McClester, Detroit, Mich.

Close Up Her Ranks.—If the church of Jesus Christ ever does the work which her divine Lord has asked her to do, she must close up her ranks. A church divided into sects and denominations is not the church which he organized.—Rev. Dr. Harlan, Omaha, Neb.

Christian Life.—What men need to make them Christians is not to be better convinced of Christian truth, but to fall in love with Christian life. The world is not reading the Bible much; it is reading the lives of those who profess to believe it.—Rev. P. Plinch, Congregationalist, Chicago, Ill.

The Future.—The future has never saved any man. If he is saved at all, it was in the present—now. We have no lease on the future; so it is dangerous to trust the soul's salvation to the deceptive future. To-day the Savior calls; not to-morrow or some time in the future, but now.—Rev. J. F. Blair, Baptist, Brooklyn, N. Y.

Material Good.—Make it your first business to be right, to do right, to live according to all the commandments of God, and the question of material good will settle itself naturally. The laws of God have to do with the body, as well as the soul, and make work as truly a religious duty as prayer.—Rev. Dr. Raymond, Schenectady, N. Y.

A Larger Scope.—The church of the future has a larger scope and a larger mission than the church of the past. Christianity is becoming more intense and more practical. At this time, when the commercial spirit is leeching with such away, it will require the assistance of conscientious, consecrated manhood to counteract this spirit.—Rev. F. T. McWhirter, Presbyterian, Indianapolis, Ind.

A False Impression.—It is a false impression that God hates a sinner and that his son gave up his life to make him love him. The opposite of this is true. Every sectarian god is cold and distant. The Bible holds up a God of genuine love and kindness. "He so loved the world that he gave up his only begotten Son."—Rev. Dr. Crawford, Methodist, Akron, Ohio.

Separate and Distinct.—The state has nothing to do with the church, and the church has nothing to do with the state. They are separate and distinct. And yet the state is doing the work of the church by appropriating money to support the poor members of the church. The state has to do this because the church will not do it. Shame on the church!—Rev. A. R. Holderby, Presbyterian, Atlanta, Ga.

We were recently compelled to quit a book in the middle of it, and have been wondering ever since how it came out. Three women, all good and handsome, loved the same man. Two men, both rich and handsome, loved the same woman, and one woman, lovely character, didn't love her husband, but did love another man who was very fond of his wife. Now, how did they straighten it out?

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