





TIM McCOY
on the Tomahawk Trail

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The Horse Was High Spirited and Restless

TIM McCOY

ON THE TOMAHAWK TRAIL

CHAPTER I

ON THE TOMAHAWK TRAIL

The pinto horse was high spirited and restless. He would have preferred a fast gallop to the steady pace to which Tim McCoy held him; but the day was still young and the long ride from Fort McPherson to Buffalo Tail's village had only begun.

"Easy, old boy!" Tim murmured, tightening his grip on the snaffle rein. "You'll be plenty tired before sundown, without doing any fancy stepping on the way."

The pinto tossed his head. Then, with a suddenness that flung his rider clear of the saddle, he plunged forward in a complete somersault, to lie motionless with twisted neck.

With the vicious crack of a rifle shot still ringing in his ears, Tim



The Pinto Turned a Complete Somersault

rolled over and over, the instant his shoulder struck the ground. His movements were instinctive, incredibly swift but sure, using the very momentum of his fall to baffle the aim of his unseen attacker. No Indian fighter ever lived long if he had to pause and think in an emergency.

Tim's rolling stopped as he crashed into a tangle of woody sagebrush, but immediately he was on his feet, running in a tight U-shape



His Movements Were Instinctive

circle back to the body of his dead horse. He made its shelter in one final slide, just as another bullet flattened itself on the iron core of his saddle horn.

Savagely he jerked his rifle from its saddleboot, and threw a cartridge into the chamber, determined to avenge the pinto's death if it should be his last act. His own danger was forgotten in rage at the cowardly murder of his horse.

In the brief seconds of his race



He Jerked His Rifle From Its Saddleboot

back to the fallen animal, Tim had noted a quivering of the grass clumps at the crest of a little knoll some forty yards away. A small sign it was, but one that told its own story to his plainsman's eye. Behind those grass clumps lay the hidden enemy, waiting with ready rifle.

Tim's next move was like that of a striking rattlesnake. In the space of a single heartbeat, he raised his head, aimed, fired and dropped his



Tim McCoy's Rifle Cracked

twitching in full view. Tim had shot him square between the beady eyes!

For five minutes the scout lay still behind his horseflesh fort, venturing only once to peek over the poor beast's shoulder. For all he knew there might be a dozen more hidden Sioux waiting for a shot at him. At the end of that time, he raised his hat cautiously on the barrel of his Colts, imitating the movement of a man's head.



Tim Raised His Hat Cautiously

"If any more of these devils are hoping to ambush me," he muttered, "this trick will draw their fire, I reckon!"

When no further bullets blasted from the top of the grassy knoll, Tim got calmly to his feet, holding his reloaded rifle ready for instant shooting. Then, as it became evident that no danger threatened, he dropped his gaze to the sprawled body of his mount.

"Poor old friend!" he mourned.



He Held His Rifle Ready

"Ten minutes ago you were full of life and itching for a chance to stretch your legs. And now I've got to leave you for the coyotes. But your killer has paid the price; he's coyote meat, too!"

As if in answer to his words, a soft whinnying came from behind the little hill on which the dead savage lay.

Tim's head went up, as his eyes tried to pierce the distant grass-tops. That sound meant one or



Tim Heard a Familiar Sound

more horses close by, and horses might mean fresh enemies attracted by the gunfire!

But as no other sound broke the prairie silence, a thoughtful smile grew on the scout's sun-tanned face.

"It'll be the Sioux's pony, I guess; must have tied him behind that knoll," he decided. "Anyhow, it means that I'm not left here afoot, miles from nowhere. I'll take a look."



A Smile Grew on His Face

There was another surprise in store for Tim McCoy.

Arrived at the crest of the tiny hillock, he stopped short to feast his eyes on the sleek limbs and arching neck of a magnificent gray stallion. Well over sixteen hands high the splendid creature stood, the slope of his powerful rump, the slim pasterns, the swelling muscles of his broad chest speaking eloquently of speed and endurance. With great soft eyes aglow, the



He Saw a Magnificent Gray Stallion

horse looked up and whinnied again, as if in greeting.

"Gray Chief" breathed Tim, as he stepped slowly forward to stroke the stallion's velvet nose. "I've heard about you, time and again, my lad, but I never thought to own you! They say Tall Elk took you as a little colt, five years ago, so it must be him lying dead, the other side of this knoll"

Five minutes later, having transferred his own saddle equipment to



"Gray Chief" Breathed Tim

Gray Chief's back, Tim McCoy mounted the big stallion and set off at an easy lope toward Buffalo Tail's distant village.

Tim's mission permitted no delay, especially now that word of it had somehow reached the hostile Sioux. One attempt had been made to stop him. He knew there would be others.

Probably the trail from here on was already dotted with Sioux scouts under orders to prevent his



Tim Set Off at an Easy Lope

making contact with the Pawnee chieftain. But, thanks to the good fortune which had brought him this splendid mount, he could now take a different route and still reach Buffalo Tail's tepee ahead of schedule.

CHAPTER II

TIM SENDS A CHALLENGE

An hour before sunset, Tim rode into the Pawnee village, amid the furious barking of half-wild dogs and the squeals of copper-skinned youngsters who fled helter-skelter from the white stranger.

A dozen young warriors, who were sitting outside their buffalo skin tents, rose to regard the gray

stallion with admiring eyes as Tim drew rein, raising his right hand in the universal peace sign of the tribes.

"I come from the Great White Chief at Fort McPherson to speak with Buffalo Tail," he told them in the Pawnee dialect.

There was a moment's silence. Then a tall warrior, somewhat older than the others, motioned toward the largest tepee. As Tim dismounted another brave stepped



He Rode into the Pawnee Village

forward to take Gray Chief's rein. Then, escorted by the entire group, he approached the big tent.

Half an hour later, having exchanged formal compliments with the old chief and persuaded him to call a council of his best warriors, Tim came to the real point of his visit.

"My Pawnee brothers," he began, "are supposed to be at peace just now with the great Sioux nation; but the truth is that this so-



Tim Came to the Real Point of His Visit

called peace may become open warfare at any moment. Even now the fresh scalps of several Pawnee hunters are drying before the tepees of the Ogallala Sioux. Three warriors from your own village now wander in the Land of Spirits. Other Pawnee villages have lost brave men, ambushed and outnumbered by your enemies. They must be avenged!"

"Ugh! Ugh!"

A chorus of fierce grunts broke



"Fresh Scalps Are Drying."

from savage lips. Black eyes glittered in the light of the small council fire.

Shadows cast by the seated figures on the tepee walls wavered eerily, like the ghosts of dead braves, as Buffalo Tail made a sign for Tim to speak further.

"My Pawnee brothers are not the only ones to suffer from Sioux treachery," the scout went on. "Many white hunters and trappers have been slain in the past few



Shadows on the Walls Wavered Eerily

weeks, not to mention the wagon trains burned and looted, the cattle stolen from white ranchers, the women and children of my people murdered. Both Pawnee and white man face the same enemy.

"Why should they face him separately? Why should they not join forces and wipe out the Sioux raiders? Let the Great Chief Buffalo Tail answer freely!"

Silence descended on the ring of dark, hawk-nosed faces, as the



Wagon Trains Were Burned and Looted

council awaited their chief's reply.

"The white warrior speaks with a straight tongue, and his words are welcome! But this council cannot speak for the other villages of the Pawnees; neither will we join the soldiers of the Great White Father"—thus the Indians called the President of the United States—"unless all the Pawnee peoples come with us. The Sioux are indeed our ancient enemies, but they are powerful. Once open war is



Buffalo Tail Arise and Spoke

declared, there must be no division of forces. My white brother, Eagle Eye, knows this."

Tim McCoy nodded.

"Buffalo Tail is as wise as he is careful," he answered. "But will it be so hard to persuade the other chieftains of the Pawnees to join us? Do they not also see where the wind blows?"

A middle-aged warrior rose.

"Their eyes are blinded!" he growled, with a hint of passion in



A Middle-Aged Warrior Rose

his deep voice. "There is one among them, known as Wolf Jaw, whose clever tongue has deceived many. He even speaks of an alliance with the Sioux against the Whites, and no chief except Buffalo Tail dares to contradict him openly. The Pawnee nation will never trust the traitorous Sioux, or make alliance with them; but Wolf Jaw will keep them from joining forces with our white brothers as long as he remains in power!"



Wolf Jaw

Like a flash of light, understanding came to Tim as the old councillor resumed his seat—understanding of the one possible solution to a situation on which hung the lives of thousands, both red and white. He stood up.

"You, Buffalo Tail, and you subchieftains of the Pawnee," he cried. "Listen to me! Your people have always welcomed the judgment of single combat. They will accept it again!"



"Listen to Me!" Tim Cried

He paused briefly.

"Ugh! Let Eagle Eye speak on!" boomed the old chieftain.

Tim's white teeth flashed in the firelight.

"Take this word to Wolf Jaw, from Eagle Eye, Chief Scout of the white warriors:—'At sunrise on the fourth day from now, let Wolf Jaw meet me in single combat. For I accuse him of treachery to the Pawnee Nation! Like the rattlesnake he speaks with a forked



They Would Meet at Sunrise

tongue, planning to deliver his people by trickery into the power of their enemies, the Sioux! I will meet him either here or on his own ground, with whatever weapons he may choose, in the presence of his own warriors. And Buffalo Tail will stand by with his warriors to see fair play! I have spoken!"

Within forty-eight hours, news of Tim's challenge had spread the length and breadth of the Pawnee Nation; and within that same two



"I Will Meet Him Here!"

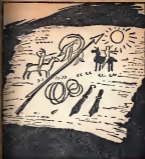
days other messengers had set out bearing Wolf Jaw's reply.

The smooth-tongued chief had not dared to refuse the test of single combat. As a matter of fact he rather welcomed the chance to increase his influence over the tribes by killing the Chief Scout of the white soldiers in a public duel. Being a tricky and dangerous fighter, he considered himself already the victor, and boasted of it in jeering terms.



Messengers Set Out on Swift Horses

Wolf Jaw had elected to fight on horseback. According to his reply, a long spear, a shield of buffalo hide, a rawhide lariat and a pair of knives for throwing or stabbing would complete each champion's equipment. This was quite satisfactory to Tim McCoy; but he himself planned to use no shield, trusting simply in his own skill and the quickness of his horse, Gray Chief, to parry the savage's attack.



Wolf Jaw's Reply

CHAPTER III

A SAVAGE DUEL

Sunrise of the fourth day revealed a dense crowd of spectators packed around the dueling ground—an oval depression in the sand hills just outside Wolf Jaw's village. At either end of the natural arena, and about a hundred yards apart, the two champions sat on their horses, awaiting



The Two Champions Faced Each Other

the signal that would open their fight to the death.

Tim, whom the Pawnees called Eagle Eye, was dressed as usual, from spurred boots to broad-brimmed Stetson hat. Motionless as though carved from steel, he waited, his long lance gripped lightly, a confident eagerness in every line of his supple body.

Facing him, Wolf Jaw sat astride a tall, black warhorse, his bare, hard-muscled torso streaked with



Eagle Eye Waited for the Signal

yellow paint, his face darkly menacing beneath a huge, feathered warbonnet, as he shouted threats and insults across the arena.

He was showing off in true savage style, but the cluster of dried scalps at his belt gave sinister force to his boasting.

There was sudden silence, as Buffalo Tail raised his hand in a swift gesture. Then, as he dropped it, the two horsemen, white and red, darted forward.



The Two Horsemen Darted Forward

They reached the center of the arena, but there was no shock of meeting, no splintering of lances, as when the armored knights of old fought in the lists. Though just as deadly, this savage fighting depended more on skill and quickness than on solid weight to give the advantage.

Ten yards apart, the two champions began a rapid circling for position, their battle-wise mounts leaping in and out, obedient to



The Champions Circled for Position

their riders' touch. In the first few seconds of this fast sparring, any clumsiness in man or horse would have been revealed to the enemy. But there was none.

All at once, Wolf Jaw jumped his tall charger sidewise. His right hand flashed up and back. Then forward like a striking serpent his long spear drove straight at Gray Chief's throat. But at the same instant Tim's lance-butt whirled down, parrying the cowardly blow.



Wolf Jaw Flung the Spear

There was a sharp, splintering crack, and the head of Wolf Jaw's spear flew through the air, followed by the savage's yelp of rage.

"You dirty trickster!" gritted Tim, as he wheeled Gray Chief about to meet Wolf Jaw's next maneuver. "I could spear you now, as easy as sticking a pig. But I don't play that way There! Now we're even!"

As he spoke, he hurled his own lance into the sand, where it stuck



Tim Hurled His Spear into the Sand

upright, a few yards away.

There was a gasp from the ranks of savage spectators. This was a kind of fair play seldom witnessed by a Pawnee audience. Even to Buffalo Tail it seemed little short of foolhardiness, and Wolf Jaw's sneering laugh, as he reached for his lariat, implied something even worse.

Tim's own rawhide loop was whirling above his head, ready for the throw, as his opponent again



Tim Was Ready for the Throw

approached in short, zigzag bounds. The scout, knowing himself a match for any savage with the long rista, bided his time, waiting to see what his enemy would do.

But Wolf Jaw's treachery was deeper than Tim imagined. The Indian's rapid dodging brought him, as if accidentally, close to the spot where Tim's spear thrust its long shaft above the sand; and with a lightning-like movement,



Wolf Jaw Snatched Tim's Spear

Wolf Jaw reached it. His lean arm had raised and hurled the sharp weapon before the quickest of the spectators glimpsed his purpose.

But Tim's hair-trigger nerves had reacted a split second sooner. His lithe body swayed sidewise. There was a ripping sound as the lance point tore a long rent in Tim's left sleeve. Then with a crash Gray Chief's lunging shoulder caught Wolf Jaw's mount square in the ribs.



The Lance Tore Through His Shirt

Nothing on four legs could have withstood that blow. With a grunt the black horse went down—riderless! For, at the moment of impact, Tim's hard clenched fist had caught the Pawnee's chin with such force as to lift the savage clear. Six feet away he fell, to roll over and over on the sand.

For a moment Wolf Jaw lay stunned, as howls of derisive laughter rose from the massed watchers. To the red tribesmen, a



The Black Horse Went Down—Riderless

chief slapped from his horse by a bare fist was no longer even a warrior, but an object of scorn so long as his enemy lived.

To this bitter realization Wolf Jaw awoke, just as a score of braves were leading an enthusiastic rush across the arena, to congratulate the victor. The fallen savage stumbled unnoticed to his feet, his dark features twisted with pain and rage. His hand fumbled briefly for his belt-knife.



Steel Flashed Through the Air

Steel flashed through the air two inches from Tim's throat, and hurtled past to lodge with a thud in the chest of the nearest brave. A shout of dismay burst from his companions; but it was echoed by a still wilder cry from the milling crowd behind them.

Hard upon the screams of terrified squaws and children came the hair-raising warwhoop of the Ogallala Sioux!



The Ogallala Sioux Charged

CHAPTER IV

WHITE MEDICINE

The massed thousands of Pawnees were caught at the worst possible disadvantage. Squaws, children, and warriors were hopelessly mixed in a howling, screeching mob without power to resist the attacking horsemen who ravened like a wolf pack in a herd of sheep. Most of the Pawnee braves were



A Wholesale Massacre Threatened

armed, but in the confusion they had little chance to use their weapons.

A wholesale massacre threatened.

And massacre it would have been, except for the fighting brain of Tim McCoy, and the courage of his great warhorse, Gray Chief.

Crossing his stirrups over the saddle, Tim rose and balanced himself erect, standing a man's full height above the crowd. One long



Tim Rose and Studied the Fight

moment he stood there studying the fight, while the arrows of Sioux marksmen grazed his unprotected body. Then he dropped low in his saddle and gave Gray Chief the rein.

"On, boy! On!" he cried. "We've got to break through!"

Like a hattering ram, the big stallion charged through the press of human bodies, until he reached the soldier ranks of Buffalo Tail's own braves. There, with shouts



Tim Broke Through the Fighting Indians

and swift signs, Tim gave the old chieftain his plan.

The Pawnee grinned fiercely in understanding, yelled orders to his men. Then, lance in hand, he leaped onto Gray Chief's back behind the scout.

A warrior thrust another lance into Tim's hand; two heavily armed savages grasped a stirrup each; the close ranks parted to let them through.

An instant later the great horse



The Stallion Charged Like a Battering Ram

with his burden of four fighting men charged deep into the press of attacking Sioux, while after him, like the shaft of a hard-driven spearhead, came a hundred grim Pawnee warriors.

The Sioux were split as by a giant wedge, and before they could rally again, Tim's fighting column had turned and plowed another bloody furrow through their mass. The two braves who had clung to Gray Chief's stirrups had died in



The Sioux Were Split

the first swift charge, but the gallant horse had no need of their protection.

Lashing out with lightning hoofs and terrible, crushing jaws, shouldering aside the lighter Sioux ponies, he drove on like a living spearhead. Time and again, enemy horsemen tried to reach him with spear or tomahawk; but Tim and old Buffalo Tail were always quicker with their long Pawnee lances. And behind them raged what was



He Drove Through Like a Living Spearhead

left of Buffalo Tail's picked warriors.

In the end, of course, it would have been a losing fight, for a hundred men on foot and one battling stallion cannot hold out forever against a thousand. But Tim McCoy's strategy had given the other hundreds of Pawnee braves time to rally from the fleeing crowd and reach their own ponies.

Just as the Sioux were gathering for a final, overwhelming rush



The Pawnee Braves Reached Their Ponies

upon Tim's die-hards, five hundred Pawnee throats sent up a yell that halted the Ogallala army.

"They come, Eagle Eye!" Buffalo Tail's answering whoop rang in Tim's ear. "See, White Brother, my people attack from their own side! The Sioux are breaking! They are running like women. My people are riding them down. After them, Eagle Eye! The Pawnees will dance many scalps to-night!"



"The Sioux Are Breaking!"

The Sioux cavalry, already split up by Tim's flying column, were no match for the massed charge of infuriated Pawnees. Instead of the easy slaughter they had expected, they were now taking more of their own medicine than they liked.

The result was a rout. Eight hundred panic-stricken Ogallalas fled helter-skelter over the desert at the best pace their tired ponies could manage. Two hundred more lay dead or dying among the bodies



Two Hundred Lay Dead or Dying

of Pawnee men, women, and children killed in the first attack.

It was three hours later before the last of the Pawnee riders had returned from their pursuit of the scattered Sioux, and an accurate count could be made of the dead, wounded, and missing.

"It's the missing ones I'm interested in," Tim McCoy told each of the tribal chiefs in turn. "We know now that Wolf Jaw betrayed his people and arranged for the Sioux



Some of the Warriors Were Missing

attack in case I should beat him in the duel. He escaped during the battle. But there may be others who fled with him. We must make a careful check and bring it to council before the hour of noon!"

It was a worried council of chieftains which gathered at noon before Buffalo Tail's tepee to learn that not only the greater part of Wolf Jaw's tribe, but also nearly a hundred warriors from other villages with their wives and



A Worried Council of Chieftains

children, had decamped during the general confusion of the fight.

The absence of these deserters marked them openly as allies of the powerful Sioux nation, and that was bad enough. But worse still was the likelihood that many more Sioux sympathizers were still mixed with the remaining Pawnee tribesmen.

More suspicion was felt because the people of only two villages (Buffalo Tail's and that of another



Wives and Children Had Decamped

Sioux-hating chief, Raven Wing) had been attacked by the raiding horsemen. Black looks passed around the council ring, as each savage chief in turn silently accused his neighbor.

"If I don't stop this war of suspicions, pretty quick," Tim told himself, "my work will go for nothing! The villages will be scattered. They'll get to fear one another and be at the mercy of the bloody Sioux. As allies of the white set-



Each Silently Accused His Neighbor

tlers, they'll be worse than useless."

He rose to his feet.

"O Chiefs of the Pawnee!" he said. "Wolf Jaw and his dupes have spread a sickness of false words among your people. As yet only a few have caught the disease, but it will spread like the plague unless you use strong medicine to stamp it out.

"There is only one medicine that will work," Tim continued impres-



Tim Addressed the Pawnee Chiefs

sively. "And that is the medicine of the Great White Father in Washington! He offers the Pawnee nation a war alliance against the people of the Sioux. His soldiers at Fort McPherson elsewhere will fight for you, if you will ride with them against the common foe. It is the only way you can win."

Eagle Eye paused.

"Listen, warriors of the Pawnee! You have much to avenge already, and here is your chance!



Tim Made Them a Proposition

But if you wait too long, the chance will be gone," he urged. "The Sioux will raid your villages. They will steal your women and your horses whenever it pleases them, because you are scattered and weak. Think well, O Chieftains! I await your answer!"

The scout turned to take his seat, but in doing so caught sight of a staggering, breech-clouted figure approaching the circle of skin tents.



A Staggering Figure Approached

CHAPTER V

EAGLE EYE SPEAKS BIG WORDS

The newcomer was one of the Pawnee warriors who had been listed among the missing, and he seemed to be in the last stage of exhaustion. His flesh was cruelly torn and bruised from head to foot. Ten feet from where Buffalo Tail sat, he stumbled and would have fallen had not Tim caught him.



Tim Caught Him as He Stumbled

"Bad news, O Chief!" he gasped through swollen lips. "The Sioux have captured your youngest daughter, Singing Brook. They took me also, and beat me and sent me back with this word:

"Crowsfoot, Chief of the Ogalalas, will return your daughter if you will send him the white dog, Eagle Eye, bound hand and foot. If you do not deliver him within three days, Crowsfoot will give Singing Brook to the meanest and



"Your Daughter Has Been Captured."

oldest of his squaws for a slave!"

Buffalo Tail was on his feet, his blanket fallen to the ground. Breath came and went in stertorous snorts through his nostrils. His eyes glared.

"Singing Brook!" he muttered. "I thought she was with the other squaws, tending the wounded. And now — little Singing Brook — a slave!"

The old chief lifted his head.

"Bring me," he shouted, "one of



"Singing Brook—a Slave!" He Muttered

those Sioux dogs we captured sneaking away! Bring him, that I may send him back with this word to the Carrion Crow of the Ogallalas: 'Buffalo Tail will not betray his white brother. On the contrary, he dares you to meet him in single fight before three days are past. Old as he is, he will tear out your black heart and spit on it, and take Singing Brook back to his own Tepee!' Bring the messenger!"



Buffalo Tail Gave His Answer

The old man was magnificent in his wrath, and the heart of every warrior present, including Tim's, swelled in sympathy. But the scout knew well how useless was such a challenge.

Crowsfoot, if he did not dismiss the word of Buffalo Tail with another sneering insult, would only make sport of the old chief on the dueling ground, and kill him surely in the end. For Buffalo Tail would be no match in hand-to-hand



He Was Magnificent in His Wrath

fighting with the far younger and stronger savage.

Tim McCoy waited until the Sioux messenger had received his instructions and gone, for no man must interfere in a challenge between chieftains. But as Buffalo Tail resumed his place in the council, the scout spoke up.

"Thanks, O Chief of the Pawnees!" he said simply. "You have given Crowfoot three days. It is not much, but in that time certain



Buffalo Tail Joined the Council

things must be done. First, we must find out if Crowsfoot tells the truth in saying that he holds Singing Brook captive in his lodge. She may already be in the land of ghosts. But if not, I may find a way to steal her back for you. Also, I should like to scout the main encampment for the Sioux and lay a plan for a surprise attack on them by the white soldiers at Fort McPherson. It may be that Crowsfoot will sing a different song when



"I May Find a Way to Get Her Back."

he sees his young men running from the sabers of the United States Cavalry!"

A tall, dark-faced chief arose, dropping his blanket to his waist.

"Eagle Eye speaks big words!" he said bluntly. "But his deeds must speak louder still before the Pawnee will make a war alliance with his people. Let Eagle Eye first rescue the daughter of Buffalo Tail from the Ogallala, and let his white soldiers scatter the Sioux



"Eagle Eye Speaks Big Words!"

raiders that now threaten our villages. Then we shall know that the warriors of the Great White Father are as strong in battle as they are free with promises. I have spoken!"

This was plain talk—a lot plainer than Tim had expected. Yet he knew that it expressed the minds of all present except Buffalo Tail, whose loyalty was beyond question. With all odds against success, the Pawnees' demands must



"First Rescue the Daughters," He Said

he met, or else the United States Cavalry forces might whistle in vain for Indian allies.

Gravely Tim met the questioning eyes of the council.

"Eagle Eye accepts the word of his Pawnee brothers," he told them. "Within three days either you shall hear of his success, or his scalp will be drying before the tepee of the Ogallala! I ask no help as yet, except for one messenger to bring back my news."



The Pawnees' Demands Must Be Met

But the messenger problem was unexpectedly solved, as Tim left the council to find and saddle Gray Chief. On the outskirts of the admiring crowd that still surrounded the big stallion, stood the nearest thing to a human hairpin the West had ever produced. He was a tall, gangling cowboy, topped by a battered ten-gallon hat, supported by legs that bent outward like parentheses, and known familiarly by the name of "Calipers." But for



"Calipers"

all his laughable appearance, Calipers was Fort McPherson's best scout, next to Tim McCoy.

As Tim approached, he raised a whoop like a steam whistle.

"Yowie! Yuh ol' curly wolf, how are yuh? By the Great Horn Spoon, Tim, I shore figgered that some dirty Sioux was dancin' yore scalp by now! Yuh been away four days now, and nary a word from yuh; so General Blaine set me on yore trail."



He Raised a Whoop Like a Steam Whistle

Tim laughed, as he yanked the other's hat down over his homely face.

"No time to explain now, Calipers," he answered. "We're riding, in about two shakes of a bull's hind hoof. All I can say right now is that I've never been gladder to see any man. Tell Buffalo Tail I said to give you a fresh horse, and hurry! We can talk on the way."



Tim Yanked His Hat Down

DANGEROUS SCOUTING

Calipers controlled his curiosity until he and Tim had left the Pawnee camp out of sight. Then, twisting his long face into a comical scowl, he urged his pony abreast of Gray Chief.

"Wot's all this about yore fight-in' Wolf Jaw with knives and toad-stickers this mornin'?" he com-



Tim and Calipers Left the Pawnee Camp

plained. "Couldn't you of sent me word of it ahead o' time, so we could of made it a double-barreled scrap? 'Tain't fair, Tim! Yuh jest wanted to hog it all fer yoreself!"

Tim chuckled.

"So the Injuns told you all about it, did they, Hairpin? Well, it wasn't much of a show, after all. I just bopped that big noise on the chin, and he fell off his horse. You wouldn't have been interested."



Calipers Had Heard About the Fight

"Yeah?" retorted Calipera. "Well, I heard different, but we won't argufy about it. I'd shore appreciate it, though, if Mr. Daredevil McCoy would tell me what crazy scrape we're headin' into right now. Whenever yo're in such an awful hurry to go places, I got a queer feelin' that things is gettin' ready to pop. I suppose hekin' a thousand Sioux before breakfast wasn't enough to even whet yore appetite?"



"Things Is Gettin' Ready to Pop!"

"Speaking of breakfast," replied Tim, "I reckon a pan of Army beans and bacon would taste pretty good; but we'll have to eat later. No time now. Just listen to me for a minute, cowboy, and I'll explain how short three days is to do all the work that's cut out for us!"

Rapidly Tim outlined the plan that was already taking shape in his mind, to trap the Sioux army and insure a crushing victory for the United States troops.



Tim Outlined the Plan

"Whether it works or not," he added, "will depend chiefly on the sort of country where the Sioux happen to be camped tomorrow night. I have a general idea where the main body of them is located, and we ought to get pretty close to it tonight if luck is with us."

"We'll do better than that, Tim," said Calipers, pulling his pony to a stop. "Yuh see whar the ground rises up to mebber a thousand feet, over thar to the west? Wal, I did



"Yuh See Whar the Ground Rises?"

a little scoutin' on my way to find yuh, and I located a village of around five thousand Sioux, jest the other side of that young mountain. They're hid in a husby ravine with plenty of water and game near by; an' I guess they're the bunch yo're lookin' fer, all right. We kin reach 'em afore sundown, easy."

"That sure is good news, Calipers!" exclaimed Tim heartily. "But how about that country



Calipers Had Seen a Village of Sioux

round about that camp? Is it broken enough for my scheme to work?"

"Couldn't be better," nodded the lank cowboy. "An' yore plan orter work as slick as a frawg's hair. Thar's a little steep-walled canyon not two miles away from the Sioux hide-out, open at both ends an' with good, smooth goin' along the bottom. Yuh'll see for yoreself when we git thar."

Five hours later, the two scouts



The Scouts Ride Along the North Rim

were riding along the north rim of the canyon Calipers had described, and peering down into its shadowed depths wherever the trail approached close enough. There was a smile on Tim's face as he checked up its advantages as a setting for the final act of his plot.

"Now for a quick scouting of the big camp!" he told his companion. "We'll have just enough time before sundown to get the lay of the land. Then, after dark, I may find



They Peered Over the Rim

some way to get in touch with Buffalo Tail's girl, who's supposed to be held captive by Crowsfoot, Chief of the Ogallala Sioux. I'm pretty sure Crowsfoot has joined this encampment lately and is using it as headquarters for his raids."

"Uh-huh, so'm I!" Callpers grunted. "An' I'm jest as sure that yo're gonna stick yore head into trouble afore yo're many hours older. Anyhow, I'll be there to give what's left of yuh a decent



They Checked the Canyon's Advantages

burial! Do yuh intend to ride straight up to Crowsfoot's lodge an' tell him yuh've just called to take the gal out for a walk?"

"Not quite, Calipers," Tim laughed softly. "But I'm counting on the Sioux feeling pretty confident and perhaps a little careless, since they know there's no enemy near by, not even the regiment at Fort McPherson, strong enough to attack their main camp. They'll probably make Singing



A Plan Was Forming in Tim's Mind

Brook work with the rest of the squaws, carrying water from the river, getting firewood, and so forth; and they won't keep a very close guard. But we'll see, perhaps in a few minutes. The camp is just below this rim rock, I take it?"

"Yep!" replied the cowboy, lowering his voice. "An' that's a way down on foot to some thick bushes that grow beside the waterhole. I watched them squaws goin' that



"Is the Camp Below This Rim Rock?"

way with their jugs yestiddy. But what are yuh gonna do if the gal does come?"

Without answering, Tim slid off Gray Chief's back and slipped the bridle reins over a dead tree stub. Then, removing hat and boots, he beckoned his friend close.

"You stay here with the horses, Calipers," he whispered. "I'm doing a sneak down this ravine wall right now, and I'll try to get placed in those bushes before the women



Tim Slid Off Gray Chief's Back

come for the night's supply of water. It's now half an hour before sunset. If you hear any fuss down there, or if I don't get back in an hour, you clear out to the Fort and tell General Blaine about the plan I had. It ought to work, whether I'm there or not."

"No, consarn 'it, Tim!" yelped the homely scout, regardless of keen-eared Sioux sentinels. "If yo're gonna risk yore scalp, I'm comin' too."



"If You Hear Any Fuss Down There—"

"Orders!" snapped Tim McCoy, his gray eyes blazing. "I'm your superior officer, Calipers, and I order you to wait here for an hour only. In time of war, duty comes even before friendship. If I don't return, you must take my message to the Fort!"

With the last word, he turned and slid silently over the ravine's bushy rim.



He Slid Silently Over

CHAPTER VII

THE WATERHOLE

Ten minutes later he was safely hidden in a thicket of box elders on the other side of the stream that wound through the Sioux encampment. Here, upstream from the trampling horse herds, the river deepened between low rock walls, forming a deep pool. Judging by the trails that led to the



The River Formed a Deep Pool

pool's edge, it was used to draw water for the entire village.

As the shadows deepened in the ravine, Tim began to fear that even if Singing Brook should come with the other squaws for the evening's water supply, it would be too dark to make out her features. He had only seen the girl once, a year ago, and there would be nothing left of her bright necklaces or fine clothing to mark her as a chief's daughter. Jealous Sioux



Tim Waited for the Squaws to Appear

squaws would have stripped her of all valuables.

Just as he was beginning to wonder if he had come too late after all, his ears caught the sound of many moccasined feet pattering on the dusty path from the village. The next moment, a score of dark-skinned women, carrying jugs and water skins, came into view around Tim's thicket and stopped by the water hole for a few minutes' gossip.



A Score of Indian Women Came into View

The squaws were of all ages, from sixteen to sixty, but the older ones seemed to have most to say. Tim's ears caught certain phrases in the Sioux dialect:

Scouts bring word of a white wagon train, two days' march away There will be much plunder! I hope Red Horse will bring me a white squaw's dress, with ribbons Have you heard that in two days we break camp? The buffalo are



The Older Ones Had the Most to Say

migrating south, and Crowfoot has ordered more arrows made Some of the young men are planning another raid on the Pawnee."

"Is that true? Ha, ha! The Pawnees are all women. We have taken the horses of Wolf Jaw's deserters and made slaves of their young girls! Yes. But they spend more time weeping than working, like Buffalo Tail's brat, over there!"



The Old Squaw Pointed to a Young Girl

With a start, Tim followed the old squaw's pointing finger. Not ten feet sway from his hiding place a young girl stood with drooping head, her finger plucking at the empty waterskin she carried. Her face was hidden, but Tim took a chance.

"Singing Brook?" he whispered.

A shock went through the girl's slim figure. Then quickly she knelt on the ground, pretending to tighten a thong on her waterskin.



Her Face Was Hidden

"Who speaks my name?" her clear whisper came back.

"Eagle Eye, the friend of Buffalo Tail. In what part of the camp is the tepee you occupy, and how can I tell it from the others?"

"I hear you, Eagle Eye. I sleep with four old squaws in the big tepee with a white patch on it, next to Crowfoot's lodge, at the north end of the village. When will you come?"

"Day after tomorrow, half an



"Who Speaks My Name?" She Whispered

hour before dawn. Are the old squaws good sleepers?"

Singing Brook's little fists clenched on the waterskin.

"They will give no alarm," she answered. "I shall be ready when the white warrior comes!"

At that moment, one of the old squaws hobbled over to the kneeling girl and shook her to her feet.

"Stop whispering to yourself, you lazy good-for-nothing!" she shrieked. "Get over to the pool!"



"Get Over to the Pool!"

and fill your waterskin, or I'll beat you black and blue. Pawnee brat!"

Still muttering viciously, the old harridan picked up her own jug and led the procession back to the village, much to Tim's relief.

"Lucky for me," he reflected, "that the old witch didn't catch on to what the whispering was about. The whole business was a crazy risk, I guess, but the results were worth it."

As he made his way in the grove-



The Procession Filed Back to the Village

ing darkness back to where Calipers was waiting, his quick mind was already laying new plans based on the squaw-talk he had overheard at the pool. The proposed attack on the white immigrants' wagon train must be reported to General Blaine, of course. But more important to Tim's present scheme was knowledge of the treatment that Wolf Jaw's deserting Pawnees had suffered.

These robbed and disgruntled



Tim Made His Way Back

warriors would be camped by themselves, though probably within sight of the main Sioux village. If they could be secretly provided with horses and weapons, they would doubtless fight like wildcats against those who had betrayed them.

And when the Pawnee nation learned of this latest act of Sioux treachery, it would be a strong argument for alliance with the United States Army!



The Deserters Were Camped by Themselves

"Poor old Wolf Jaw!" chuckled Tim, as he tackled the last few yards of his climb up the ravine's bushy slope. "That Injun's name is certainly mud now, with the braves who took his say-so about deserting! And after his getting slapped off his horse this morning, even the Sioux won't have any use for him. I wonder where he's keeping himself now?"

Tim grasped a projecting tree-root and swung along confidently.



Tim Swung Along Confidently

But just as he pulled himself up over the last and highest ledge, he glimpsed the form of a tall savage outlined against the evening sky. The Indian was in the act of rising to his feet, with his back toward Tim.

In the twinkling of an eye, the scout sensed what was up. Some prowling brave from the Sioux village had located the two horses and was stalking Calipers from behind!



He Was Stalking Calipers From Behind!

CHAPTER VIII

TIM RIDES AGAINST TIME

Tim's fingers fumbled on the dark ground, touched a jagged lump of stone, about the size of his fist. Swinging hard, he hurled it and heard the redskin's grunt as it struck his shoulder. The next instant there came a violent crashing in the bushes; and the hoarse-drawn breathing of fighting men.



There Was a Struggle in the Bushes

"Calipers!" he called, as loudly as he dared.

There was another deep-chested grunt, as the sounds of struggle suddenly ceased. Then a hatless figure rose up on two grotesquely bowed legs.

"Got him, Tim!" the cowboy answered between panting breaths. "It was knife against tomahawk, and for a minute I had all I could do. But he's a good Injun now, I reckon. He's dead."



"Got Him, Tim!" the Cowboy Answered

"In a fair fight, too, Calipers!" the chief scout remarked. "He was getting fixed to tomahawk you from behind, when I fired a rock at him. I didn't dare yell to you for fear of rousing the camp."

"Hub! So that's what made him snort an' give me warnin'! But, say, Tim—there was somethin' kinda familiar about his voice. I'm gonna strike a match an' take a look."

The match flared briefly in Cali-



"I Didn't Dare Yell."

pers' cupped hands. One glimpse of the dark, hate-twisted face was sufficient.

"Wolf Jaw, hy gum! Wal, he won't be makin' no more fool speeches to the Pawnees! Prob'ly he losted Gray Chief back thar, an' took me fer you, Tim. By killin' yuh, he'd have saved his face with the Sioux."

"And saved the Sioux another little surprise I'm fixin' to spring on them!" added Tim. "I picked



"Wolf Jaw, Hy Gum!"

up some right valuable information down there in the valley, Calipera. Let's get back a little distance where we can make a supper fire, and I'll tell you about it."

"Yuh'd better!" grumbled the lank cowhoy, as he followed his chief back to the horses. "Yuh was gone long enough to make a scout of the hull camp, an' my curiosity is gettin' right painful!"

Two hours later, with his curiosity and his stomach both as satis-



"I'll Tell You About It."

fied as they ever could be, Calipers eyed Tim across the embers of their tiny cooking fire.

"So that's the job yuh've wished on me?" he sighed. "All I gotta do is bamboozle a couple of Pawnee chiefs into attackin' a village of five thousand Sioux, while all that Chief Scout McCoy does is to go invite Gin'ral Blaine to come along an' watch the fun. Now, if it was t'other way around —"

"You'd kick just as hard, and



"So That's the Job."

not mean a word of it!" finished Tim, laughing. "But seriously, Calipers, I reckon my job will be the hardest. General Blaine won't be so easy to persuade as you think. My plan will use nearly all his troops, and he won't like to leave the Fort under-garrisoned. All the same, we've got to have a full cavalry regiment down here before sunrise, day after tomorrow."

"Yuh mean yuh HOPE we'll



"Yuh Mean Yuh HOPE We'll Have It!"

have it!" snorted Callpera.

"I mean I'm starting this minute for Fort McPherson!" Tim retorted, jumping to his feet. "Maybe Gray Chief and I will get a few hours rest before we make the back trip, and maybe we won't. But anyhow, I'll meet you at the east end of the canyon tomorrow night, say two hours before dawn. That'll give us just about time to pull our bag of tricks. So long, cowboy! And tell Buffalo Tail I



"So Long, Cowboy!"

sim to get his daughter back to him, or lose my scalp trying!"

As the long dark miles unrolled under Gray Chief's easy gait, Tim marveled at the big stallion's iron endurance. After the terrific strain of the morning's battle, with a long ride already added, the splendid animal appeared as fresh as ever. Not once did he stumble, or so much as falter, in the rough and broken country through which their way led that night.



Tim Started Out for Fort McPherson

Only once did they stop for a short rest, where a clear creek flowed between alder thickets. There, after both man and beast had drunk, Tim dipped bunches of grass in the cool water, and bathed Gray Chief's back and legs.

"You sure are a thoroughbred, old boy!" he murmured, as the stallion nuzzled him gratefully. "I know you're just as tired as I am, but you're too proud to show it. You're a man's horse all right!"



They Stopped for a Short Rest

It was eight o'clock by the sun when they rode through the stockade gate at Fort McPherson, both horse and rider desperately weary. Tim McCoy put Gray Chief's reins in the hands of the stable sergeant who ran to meet him.

"Sergeant O'Hara, you will put this horse in the biggest and cleanest stall you've got," he said. "And after he's had an hour's rest, give him all the boiled mash he can eat. He's done four horses' work



The Stable Sergeant Ran to Meet Him

in the last thirty hours, and he's got to do it over again before to-morrow!"

"An' I belave he means ut, too!" muttered the sergeant, as Tim hurried away to General Blaine's office. "Glory! I never did see such a foine, great horse! But 'tis the well-known luck of Tim McCoy!"

CHAPTER IX

"TWILL BE A BONNIE FIGHT"

However, as Tim ended his story and faced the General's heavy frown, his "well-known luck" seemed to have taken a vacation.

"You're asking something quite impossible, McCoy," growled the officer. "In the first place, I have less than a full regiment here at the Fort, and to send anywhere

near the number of troops you request would leave the place empty. If you'd come twenty-four hours ago, I might have considered your plan, but not now!"

Tired as he was, Tim controlled his disappointment.

"What happened yesterday, General?" he asked calmly. "When I left here, five days ago, there were upwards of six hundred soldiers inside the stockade."

"Six hundred and fifty-four, to



"You're Asking for Something Impossible."

be exact!" replied the officer. "But yesterday noon a big wagon train, with a flock of women and children included, was reported threatened by hostiles at a point about sixty miles east of here. I sent two companies of troops under Major Greene to meet the train and escort it to the Fort."

Chin in hand, Tim thought deeply for a moment. Then he looked up.

"General," he said, "I have a



Tim Thought Deeply for a Moment

hunch we could still pull the trick I mentioned to you, with a slight change of plans. Just how many troopers could you spare me right now?"

The older man shook his head.

"I don't understand, Tim. Your idea was to have Buffalo Tall's Pawnees run off a few Sioux ponies and get the whole camp to chase them through that narrow canyon two miles beyond. Then you'd planned to plug both ends of



"How Many Troopers Could You Spare?"

the canyon with heavy-armed cavalry and squeeze the Sioux until they give up. But you'd need at least a regiment for that job. Crowsfoot's Ogallalas are tough customers, especially when cornered!"

"Well, General, we licked them yesterday morning," grinned Tim; "and that's what makes me think we can do it again. If you can let me have two hundred and fifty soldiers to plug one end of that



"We Licked Them Yesterday," Tim Grinned

canyon, I'm willing to bet on the Pawnees under Buffalo Tail and Raven Wing for the rest of the job. But to make sure of that, we'd better arm those braves with good rifles from the Fort arsenal."

Tim paused to let his words sink in.

"And don't forget that bunch of deserters that went over to the Sioux with Wolf Jaw!" he added. "Right now, they're so sore at Crowsfoot, for the way he's treat-



Tim Talked Up His Scheme for Victory

ed them, that they'll do anything to get revenge. Give them a rifle apiece, and you'll see"

For another half hour Tim talked up his scheme for a smashing victory; and gradually an eager light kindled in the General's face.

"I'm with you, Tim!" he said at last. "It's worth risking three companies of cavalry and a few hundred rifles, if we win the whole Pawnee nation as allies. When do you want to start?"



"I'm With You, Tim!" He Said at Last

"Just as soon as I've had a meal and a bit of sleep, General," Tim answered drowsily. "If we start by two o'clock this afternoon, I reckon there'll be time enough to get our little trap set and baited for the Sioux, besides keeping a certain promise I made to Buffalo Tail yesterday. Good day, sir."

Promptly at two o'clock, the three companies of hard-bitten cavalymen were drawn up in double rank outside the Fort stockade.



"Good Day, Sir."

and standing at their head beside Gray Chief's stirrup, Tim McCoy received General Blaine's final instructions.

"I'm trusting you not to run unnecessary risks, Tim," warned the C. O. sternly. "If those Pawnees don't play the game, you'll have to retreat. I've sent word to Major Greene that you will fall back on his command if you get into difficulties—his wagon train will be within a few miles of your posi-



Tim McCoy Received Final Instructions

tion by tomorrow morning. But don't try any crazy Charge of the Light Brigade with the odds against you! I've told Captain Burns the same thing. Now, good-bye and good luck!"

"Thank you, sir!" Tim responded heartily. "The only thing I'm worrying about now is that some roving Sioux may sight our column before dark and get suspicious. But I'll try to avoid that by taking a roundabout route."



"Good-Bye and Good Luck!"

General Blaine turned, with a wave of his hand, and the mounted ranks swung in columns of fours, with a clanking of sabers and a merry jingle of curb chains. Swinging into the saddle, Tim McCoy quickly took his place in the lead beside Captain Burns. The long march had begun.

"We'll head due east for the next few hours, Captain," he said. "In that way we'll fool any Sioux scouts that may see us. They'll



The Mounted Ranks Ride Off

think we're on our way to support Major Greene's command. At sunset we can stop to eat cold rations and rest the horses, and afterward make directly for the canyon under cover of darkness. With your permission, I'll ride on ahead, now, and pick out the best route to save us time."

Captain Burns nodded, his gray Scotch eyes narrowing shrewdly.

"Aye, laddie," he agreed, "I'm thinking we'll need plenty of time



"I'll Ride on Ahead," Tim Suggested

to hide these two hundred troopers among the rocks. It'll be unco' dark in that canyon, but I understand ye've got it a' planned oot for us. If nothing gaes wrong 'twill be a bonnie fight, come mornin'!"

CHAPTER X

TIM WAITS FOR THE DAWN

As Captain Burns had predicted, it was "unco' dark" at 3 a. m. when Tim, riding ahead of the troops, halted at the canyon's northern end and gave the signal he had arranged with Calipers—the sharp yap-yap of a hunting coyote.

Immediately the answer came, not fifty yards distant, and a mo-

ment later three horsemen loomed out of the thick night.

"Tim, yuh ol' ranahan!" drawled Calipers' welcome voice. "I knowed yuh'd make it on time! Here's Buffalo Tail an' ol' Raven Wing with me, jest to prove what a good persuader I am. An' we collected twice as many Pawnee braves as we'd reckoned on—four hundred of 'em in all! I s'pose yuh got that cavalry regiment somewheres up the trail?"



Tim Rode into the Canyon

"Better than that, cowboy!" retorted Tim; then, breaking into guttural Pawnee dialect:

"Greetings from the Great White Chief at Fort McPherson to his Pawnee brothers, Buffalo Tail and Raven Wing! He has heard how you whipped the Sioux two days ago at Wolf Jaw's village. It has proved to him that such brave warriors do not need others to do all their fighting for them. Therefore he sends only two hundred white



"Greetings From the Great White Chief"

soldiers to help you trap the bloody Sioux; but with these he sends the gift of a new rifle for each Pawnee brave who swears to do his part in the coming fight. There are five hundred extra guns with ammunition now coming down the trail. Four hundred are yours, if you agree. . . ."

"Huh!"

"Ugh!"

Tim's grunts of surprise and pleasure left no doubt as to the



Tim Promised Them Rifles

chieftains' willingness. Calpers' husky cheer followed like an echo.

"By gum, Tim! Sendin' them guns is the brightest idee yet. It shines! They ain't nawthin' that an Injan won't do for a new rifle, an' when the other Pawnees hack home hear of it, they'll all want to fine up!"

"I hope so, Calpers; and I hope those deserters down by the Ogulala camp will see it the same way! Tell me, were you and Buffalo Tail



Tim and Calpers Went Over the Pass

able to contact them?"

"We was?" answered the lanky scout. "An' they shore are desperate enough to risk 'most anythin' so long as they got a whack at the Sioux tonight. I reckon the hundred extry rifles is fer them?"

"Right you are," said Tim crisply. "Listen, Calipers! I just heard the clink of horseshoes and that means the cavalry will be here in a couple of minutes. I'll leave you to get the rifles distributed and the



"I Just Heard the Clink of Horseshoes."

troopers hidden at the south end of this canyon—half of them on each side, behind the rocks. You know the rest of the plan, don't you?"

"Yep, I savvy, Tim!" came the chuckling response. "An' it orter work as smooth as grease. The Pawnees sneak up on the Sioux camp and wait till yuh give the signal, which is two shots from yer forty-five. Then they run off a few horses an' raise so much hob gen-



Tim Told Calipers to Distribute the Hides

erly that the hull Sioux outfit climbs on the rest of their ponies an' chases 'em. That'll be jest about crack o' dawn. An' when the hostiles is all strung up an' down this canyon Buffalo Tail's bunch will turn on 'em, and we'll charge with the sodjers from the other end. Then the real fun will commence!"

"Correct, old scout!" said Tim, swinging down from his saddle. "Now you take Gray Chief and



"You Take Gray Chief and Meet Me."

meet me at the place I told you of before sun-up. If my luck holds good, I'll have Singing Brook with me, but we'll have to ride in a hurry!"

The scout grinned and nodded.

"Now, just one more question, Calipers:—How many Sioux do you reckon there are in that camp? I mean fighting men, of course."

"Glory be, Tim! . I almost fergot to tell yuh!" gasped the other. "About five hundred braves rode



"How Many Sioux Are There?"

out tonight because they'd got word of a wagon train comin' from the east and it sounded like rich pickin'a. Seems there was another bunch of Sioux follerin' that train, but they was scared to attack without help. So that leaves us only a thousand or so fightin' hostiles to tackle, not countin' any women or children."

"Well, that's plenty anyhow, especially when they'll be fighting like wolves in a trap," replied Tim



Calipers Told Tim All He Knew

soberly. "And now, wish me luck, cowboy! If all goes well, I'll meet you in two hours."

Tim's plan for stealing back the captive Pawnee girl from Crow-foot's own bailiwick was risky in the extreme. Probably no other scout in the country would have stood an even chance of success. But Tim McCoy counted on three things to carry him through: his skill in stalking, his knowledge of the Sioux language, and luck.



"Wish Me Luck, Cowboy."

Approaching a small bunch of horses which he had located at the northern edge of the hostile camp, he stopped frequently to test the direction of the night breeze.

"Got to have the wind blowing toward me instead of toward them," he reminded himself. "Injun ponies sometimes make a fuss when they smell a white man; and one of the braves who're guarding them might get suspicious. I'm getting pretty close now!"



He Tested the Direction of the Wind

Dropping to his knees, he crept forward with the stealth of a hunting cougar, until the scent of warm horseflesh told him that the animals were only a few yards away in the darkness. This far his task had been easy; but now came the more difficult matter of locating the Sioux horse guards. He would have to wait until one of them should start moving about, or otherwise betray his presence.

But again luck was with him.



Tim Crept Forward Stealthily

Suddenly, so near as to send a quiver through even Tim's steel nerves, a voice began crooning a low melody. One of the guards was murmuring a Sioux love song, to help pass the dark hour before dawn!

Invisible against the black ground, Tim crawled closer.

All at once there was a slight scuffling—a sound that would have meant nothing to any other listener in the night. It was made



Tim Crawled Closer

by the struggling limbs of the savage whom Tim was choking into helplessness, as he held him clear of the ground.

Second by second, the brave's kicks grew weaker, until with a last spasm they stopped. A moment longer Tim held the unconscious man, then lowered him silently to the ground.

After the terrific effort required by his feat of strength, he could barely control his own panting



The Brave's Kicks Grew Weaker

breath, but his fingers worked rapidly. One slicing motion of his keen knife cut off the savage's long, braided hair, which he quickly stuck to his own scalp with a daub of pitch. Next he picked up the warrior's blanket and moccasins, and finally their owner himself.

Two hundred yards away, Tim bound and gagged the still unconscious Indian, after which he turned back toward the sleeping camp.



Tim's Fingers Worked Rapidly

"I could wish for a sweeter-smelling disguise," he muttered, as the odors of unwashed Sioux reeked up from the coarse blanket about his shoulders. "But if the camp dogs should get a scent of white man, they'd raise a howl and spoil everything. This way, I can go anywhere, until the light grows too strong. I've got to wait for the first streak of dawn to find the girl's tepee, and that cuts the time pretty close!"



Camp Dogs

RESCUE OF A CHIEF'S DAUGHTER

Slowly a pale suspicion of light appeared against the black curtain of the eastern sky. Tim measured its growth impatiently as the long minutes passed; but not until vague shapes of trees and bushes became visible did he venture forward toward the village's outlying tepals.



A Pale Suspicion of Light Appeared

"The girl said that Crowsfoot's tents were close to this end of the camp," he recalled. "I'll bet they are those two big ones over to the left. Yes, sure enough! I can just make out a white patch on one of 'em. That'll be where she's waiting. But I'm kind of worried about those four old squaws with her Anyhow, here goes."

This time the scout tried no concealment except silence. If any early-waking Indians should see



There Was a White Patch on One Tent

him in that dim light, they would see nothing suspicious in a blanket-ed figure walking erect; but if he crouched and dodged from tent to tent he would only advertise himself as an enemy.

Fortunately, he thought, there was no one else in sight as he reached the rear wall of the squaws' tepee. With a cautious finger, he scratched lightly on the new, white patch, and waited.

For two seconds nothing hap-



He Scratched Lightly on the Patch

pened. Then a long knife blade thrust suddenly through the buffalo hide where his finger had touched it. A long slit appeared, lengthening till it reached the ground. A slender hand and wrist pushed through, still holding the knife, and a soft whisper followed it.

"Eagle Eye?"

"Yea. Come quickly!" he answered, bending close to the half-open slit.



A Slender Hand Pushed Through

The knife disappeared, and a moment later Singing Brook slipped through the opening to stand beside him.

"The squaws . . . ?" he muttered, breaking off as he saw the girl's eyes go wide with horror.

Tim whirled, flinging himself to one side just as a tomahawk's keen blade cut the air where his head had been. And before his attacker could recover his missed balance, the scout's heavy revolver butt



The Indian Sagged to the Ground

struck back, once—twice!

With only a deep sigh, the Indian sagged to the ground and lay stunned, his face turned up to the graying sky.

"It's Crowsfoot himself!" Tim whispered. "He'd have got me, too, if you hadn't seen him first, Singing Brook. And now we must hurry, before the whole camp starts to wake up!"

Like two soundless shadows, man and girl crept past the last of



They Crept Away Silently

the tepees and melted into the bushes beyond. Ten minutes later they had reached the northern end of the ravine. There, sided by growing dawn, Tim's sharp eyes picked out two sleepy sentries.

"They can't see us yet," he murmured in the girl's ear. "But neither can we get past them without being spotted. The bushes stop ten feet beyond us, and the ground's as clear as a floor from there on. Looks like it's a case of



Tim Spied Two Sleepy Sentries

"Of course not!" Singing Brook tossed her head proudly. "A chief's daughter does not kill weak old women! I simply choked them quiet, one by one, as they came into the tepees last night, and tied them up."

Tim McCoy drew a breath of relief, only to stiffen as a wild yell broke out suddenly from the Sioux encampment.

"Watch those sentries!" he snapped. "They're starting back to see



She Tossed Her Head Proudly

what's happened at the village, and they'll pass us if we lie quiet, I think. Crowsfoot must have waked up and raised that howl. S-s-s-st! Here they come!"

With a pad-pad of moccasined feet, the sentries passed them so closely that the two in hiding could have grabbed a leg of each. But, intent on the growling commotion beyond, they glanced neither to right nor to left.

As the sound of their running



The Two Sentries Passed Them

faded, Tim leaped to his feet, pulling the girl with him.

"Run!" he barked. "Crooked Legs waits for us farther on, with horses, and five hundred of your people expect the signal for attack!"

As they raced forward, Tim drew his big Frontier Colts and fired two echoing shots in rapid succession.

Instantly a bedlam of howls and shots arose from the village's



Tim Fired Two Echoing Shots

southern end, where the main horse herds were held. Tim's plan was working on schedule! A moment later came the welcome beat of hoofs, as Calipers' lean form appeared, clamped to a wiry pony and clutching the bridle reins of Gray Chief.

With a lithe spring, Tim was in the saddle, even before the big stallion had slid to a stop; and with a movement almost as swift, the girl had swung up behind him.



Calipers Appeared Instantly

"That shore was quick timin', pardner!" laughed the homely cowboy, as he whirled his own pony. "We kin jest about make it to the canyon afore Buffalo Tail's bunch git thar. You'll detail a trooper to look after the gal, I s'pose, while the main show is goin' on Hey! Wait a minute, yuh ridin' fool, Tim! Even carryin' double, that thar gray boss is beatin' my pony, hands down!"



Gray Chief Spurred Forward

CHAPTER XII

TRAPPED WOLVES

Coming up over a sharp rise in the prairie floor, Tim pulled Gray Chief to a walk, and turned to look back. From his present elevation, he could see the Sioux encampment swarming like a hive of angry bees, while a short distance away five hundred mounted Pawnees were making off with Crowsfoot's



The Pawnees Made Off With the Horses

choicest saddle horses.

"Them Sioux sin't got started yet," commented Calipers drily, as he reined in his panting pony. "But in about two shakes of a cow's tail, about a thousand of 'em will grab a handful of hoss an' start chasin'. An' I reckon we'd better do some fast ridin' between now an' then, if we don't wanna get caught!"

"Okay, cowboy!" replied Tim. "You circle around and join up with Buffalo Tail now. Tell him



They Looked Down on the Sioux Encampment

I've got Singing Brook safe and sound, and he'll fight that much harder for knowing it. As for us, we'll ride straight for Captain Burns' hide-out behind the rocks, and see that he orders the charge at the right moment. Good luck, old scout!"

Far ahead of the chase, Gray Chief reached the canyon's southern end, and dodged behind the rocky buttness where Burns held his impatient troopers in hiding.



They Rode for the Hide-Out

"Captain," said Tim, lifting his slender companion to the ground, "this is Singing Brook, Buffalo Tail's daughter who was captured by Crowsfoot. I just managed to get her away from the Sioux camp in time. If you'll detail a trooper to keep her out of trouble during the fun that's just beginning, I'll climb up on those rocks and keep an eye on the hostilities. When they all get inside the canyon, I'll give you the sign to charge."



Tim Rode into Their Midst

"Verra gude, laddie!" answered the officer, his Scotch hurr thickening with excitement. "You've got a canny head on your shoulders, I'll no deny. I'll wait for your signal."

With panther-like ease, Tim climbed to the top of a tall rock that rose like a watchtower some twenty yards away. Lying flat on its crest, he could look down into the canyon entrance without danger of being seen by the racing horsemen below. He took his place



He Could Watch the Canyon Entrance

just as the last of the horse-raiding Pawnees clattered in the rocky cut.

Buffalo Tail's braves had played their part well. Most of the new rifles were still strapped to their saddles, unfired; and they had delayed their escape just enough to tempt the Sioux into reckless pursuit. Ogallala arrows were already flying among them as the last of them passed Tim's lookout post.



The Last of the Pawnees Passed

"Those Sioux are bunched up close!" Tim exclaimed to himself, as the oncoming savages thundered into view. "That'll mean all of them will get into the canyon before the Pawnees turn on them. Jiminy! Look at 'em come!"

Whooping like fiends, the enraged Sioux poured between the steep rock walls, with no thought for anything but their escaping enemies. There was some jamming of the close-packed mob as they en-



The Enraged Sioux Came Like Fiends

ered. But in less than three minutes a full thousand of them had crowded in, making the steep cliffs echo deafeningly.

Quickly Tim slid back from his high perch and waved both arms to the waiting troops below. High pitched, a cavalry bugle shrilled the charge; and like an enormous, dusty centipede, the cavalry column poured itself around a rocky shoulder into the narrow.

Racing Gray Chief to overtake



Tim McCoy Gave the Signal

the leading troops, Tim heard, far ahead, the popping of rifles, as the Pawnees turned at bay.

"The trap is closed, Captain!" he shouted as he galloped even with the officer's horse. "If we hold our fire until we're on top of those screeching devils, we can take them by surprise, and shock the stuffing out of them!"

"Right again, Tim—except that I'm not going to use rifles at all, to start with," grinned Burns. "See



Tim Overtook the Captain

here, man, I brought along an extra weapon for ye!"

He pressed a heavy, curved blade into Tim's hand.

"Cold steel is the best at close quarters, laddie, and it's the true cavalry arm OUT SABERS!"

At the command, two hundred other long blades flashed in the morning light. A wild cheer rang out from two hundred battle-mad troopers, blending with the roar of fighting savages just ahead. The



"Out Sabers!"

next moment Uncle Sam's cavalry crashed like a battering ram into the mob of yelling Sioux.

Surprised by the sudden turn and counter-charge of their fleeing enemies, the Sioux had already felt the shock of one who thinks he has a sheep by the tail and finds suddenly it is a wolf. But now, struck from the rear, trampled and cut down by disciplined cavalry, trapped between steep canyon walls without hope of escape, they



Uncle Sam's Cavalry Crashed into the Mob

were all but helpless.

No quarter was asked or given by the fierce Ogallala tribesmen, but their lighter ponies and long, slender lances were no match at close quarters for the big horses and heavy sabers of the white men. After the first few minutes, when they fought with the courage of despair, the Sioux leaders realized this and threw the whole weight of their remaining men against the Pawnees.



It Was Lance Against Saber

The latter, led by the dauntless Calipers and urged on by their chiefs, Buffalo Tail and Raven Wing, battled furiously; but soon the Ogallalas' sheer desperation made itself felt. Heading a wedge of picked fighters, much as Tim McCoy had done three days before, Chief Crowsfoot himself plowed a bloody path through the crush of Pawnees.

In the end, five hundred Sioux broke clear of the canyon and scat-



Calipers Led the Pawnees

tered in every direction, followed by a rattling rifle fire from Buffalo Tail's braves. The fight was over. Nothing remained for the victors except to count their losses and arrange the disposal of the now defenseless Sioux village.

CHAPTER XIII

A CALL FOR HELP

As was to be expected, the Pawnees had suffered far more than the heavily armed cavalry. About fifty braves of each chieftain's company would never return to their tepees, and of the rest many were wounded. On the other hand, only twenty troopers were casualties.

This situation would certainly have caused bitterness on the part of Tim's Indian friends, had not his quick wits met it with a prompt solution. After a brief word with Captain Burns, he approached the two grim-faced chiefs.

"My brothers have lost many more brave warriors than we whites," he said simply. "Therefore we claim no part of the horses or other property back there in the enemy's camp. The Pawnees have



Tim Approached Two Grim-Faced Chiefs

won it fairly, and it is theirs for the taking. In the name of the Great White Father, I have spoken!"

"It is good! We accept the word of Eagle Eye, Chief of the White Scouts!" replied Buffalo Tail, his dark features lighting with pleasure. "In return, we will tell the chiefs of the other Pawnee villages that the white Man keeps his promise. We will urge them to make a strong alliance with the



"The White Man Keeps His Promise."

soldiers of the Great White Father! And now we go, white friends, to take over the Sioux village before its scattered warriors return."

As the last Pawnee riders galloped off down the canyon, Captain Burns turned to Tim and Calipers with a broad smile.

"Awel, laddies," he chuckled, "thanks to you it appears we ha' done a gude day's worrk, though it's no mair than seeven o'clock in



The Pawnee Riders Galloped Away

the mornin'! We'll be ridin' back to Fort McPhairson, the noo."

But Tim McCoy shook his head.

"I wouldn't do that just yet, Captain," he replied seriously. "I've got a hunch that Major Greene may be in trouble with that train he was sent to guard. Calipers, here, found out that five hundred braves rode out of the Sioux camp last night before we arrived. He gathered that they were intending to loot that same wagon train,



There Was More Work to Be Done

which was already threatened by another bunch of hostiles. Looks like bad medicine to me!"

Captain Burns' weathered face went angry red.

"Why was I not informed of it before?" he demanded. "Losh, mon! I'd not have wasted time with this skirmish among the rocks if I'd known that Greene was in difficulties!"

"But we ain't sartin that he is yet, Cap'n," broke in Calipers who



"Looks Like Bad Medicine to Me."

was tightening a blood-soaked rag around his left arm. "Anyhow I reckoned yuh-all had yore hands full, right here in the canyon for a couple of hours, an' they warn't no reason to worry yuh. Tim tells me that the Major's outfit orter be pretty close to us now, mebbe five er ten miles, an' that makes it easy fer us to lope over an' take a look-see"

The clatter of steel-shod hoofs approaching at a gallop cut short



A Trooper Was Crouching Toward Them

the cowboy's drawing speech. The three glanced up to see a trooper on a foam-flecked thoroughbred careening toward them down the canyon.

White faced, the soldier reined his panting mount and sat swaying as he fought for breath. A Sioux arrow, its point stained red, protruded through his chest, and another through his right arm. Tim caught him as he toppled weakly from his saddle.



He Toppled Weakly From His Saddle

"Maj—Major Greene's compliments, sir!" he gasped through bloody lips. "He is attacked by eight hundred Injuns, ten miles east of your position. Half the wagons are burned. Major says—he—can't hold out—much longer. I broke through, on the Major's horse, but the devils—got me!"

Gently Captain Burns lifted the trooper's head, but the man's eyes were already glazing. His gallant heart had stopped.



"But the Devils—Got Me!"

"Blod plumb white!" was Callipers' solemn comment. "I shore take off my hat to any man who kin ride ten miles with an arrer through his lungs."

Abruptly, Captain Burns stopped muttering unprintable things under his breath, and swung around to his waiting companies.

"MOUNT!" he howled; and like one man the troopers swung into their saddles.

"COLUMN OF FOURS



"MOUNT!" Captain Burns Howled

FORWARD TROT
GALLOP! And I'll horsewhip the
lazy fool who gets there last!"

Those ten miles that stretched
between the canyon and Major
Greene's supposed position were
the worst ever tackled by the
troops from Fort McPherson. Gul-
lies, arroyos, creeks and alder
thickets, outcroppings of rock, and
loose, deep sand where the horses
sank fetlock deep—all were taken
at reckless speed, regardless of



Ten Miles of Treacherous Ground

falls and weary, bruised horseflesh.

Captain Burns, his fighting Scotch blood boiling, had no mercy on men or mounts. A brother officer had called for help, and help he should have without delay, whatever the cost! Even Tim remonstrated at the breakneck pace.

"At this rate, Captain," he exclaimed once, "you're apt to get there with only half your horses."

"Then we'll charge 'em on foot!" snapped the officer, leaping his



They Rode at Breakneck Pace

horses over a twelve-foot gully.

When the beleaguered wagon train finally came in sight, many of the troop's horses had either dropped behind or given out entirely. But Captain Burns urged them to a last burst of speed, as the faint crackle of rifle fire came to their ears from the distance.

A moment's glimpse through a notch in the hills was all they saw, before the high shoulder of a butte cut off the view. But it was enough



The Indians Had Begun Their Work

for Tim's prairie-trained eyes. Pushing Gray Chief close to the officer's horse, he laid a firm hand on Burns' bridle hand.

"If you want to save the lives of those boys out there, not to mention our own," he said grimly, "you'll ease up a bit, sir! It's only throwing away our last chance to go bulling into that fight on half-dead horses, and with only a hundred men. There's a better way!"

CHAPTER XIV

"BY VOLLEYS—OPEN FIRE!"

Captain Burns turned bloodshot eyes on the scout.

"A better way?" he repeated. "I ken ye're not yellow, Tim McCoy, so I'll leesten, gin ye say it quick. Oot with it, mon!"

Tim grasped the officer's bridle rein, by way of answer, and pulled the laboring beast to a walk. The

troopers behind slowed likewise, just as a break in the line of buttes showed ahead.

"Those Injuns are starting to bunch up for a final rush, Captain," the scout pointed out. "You saw them through that notch a mile back. That means that either the soldiers and others entrenched behind the wagons are out of ammunition, or else there are few left alive to fight. If we should charge in now with our hundred men



Tim Grasped the Officer's Bridle Rein

against eight hundred savages, we'd be goners, too, in about ten minutes."

"Then let's have your plan, quick!" cried Burns. "If it's as desperate as that, we mean to do something!"

"Just around the end of this butte," Tim continued rapidly, "there's a dry watercourse that runs up close to the wagon train. We must ride along it slowly so as not to raise dust and warn the



"Just Around the End of This Butte."

Sioux. When we get as close as possible, we'll leave the horses, go over the top of the gully on foot, and pour lead into that mob of Indians at short range. We can't afford to waste a bullet, and on foot we can kill enough of them to make some impression. As I said, Captain, it's our only chance."

"Then we'll take it," snapped the officer. "And Heaven help ye, lad-die, if ye've guessed wrong! IN COLUMN OF TWOS . . . FOR-



Captain Burns Gave the Command

WARD!" he gave the command.

Begrudging the precious minutes they needed to complete the maneuver, the little troop of weary cavalry crept slowly along the dry creek bed until a bedlam of shots and warwhoops off to their right told them the Sioux had commenced their last rush. Then, at a swift signal from Tim, the soldiers flung themselves from their saddles and, carbines in hand, scrambled over the bank's steep edge. There, bel-



The Soldiers Waited the Order to Fire

lying flat to the ground, they waited the order to fire.

It was not long in coming. The Sioux, much closer at this point than Captain Burns had expected, and as yet unaware of the cavalry's presence, had just reached the flimsy barrier of half-burned wagons. A few of them had already forced their way through.

"BY VOLLEYS OPEN FIRE!" roared Burns, squeezing the trigger of his big Army Colt.



"FIRE!" Roared Burns

A withering blast of lead struck the massed hundreds of Sioux in the flank. The mob shrank, halted, milled about in confusion. Before it could recover, another volley blazed from the soldiers' guns.

A terrible yell of rage burst from savage throats, drowning a feeble cheer from within the ring of smoking wagons. Then some chief among the attackers realized the pitifully small numbers of their new enemy.



He Saw the Small Numbers of the New Enemy

There were a few high-pitched yelps of command, and suddenly in the face of the third volley the redskins charged, leaping over the bodies of their own dead and wounded.

But the soldiers of Uncle Sam never flinched. Getting calmly to their feet, they shot as fast as they could pump shells into their rifle chambers, mowing down the Sioux front rank like grass. Then, reversing their empty weapons, they



The Redskins Charged

countercharged with a fury that met the enemy half way.

The fighting was now hand to hand, with the soldiers still outnumbered six to one; but here again the superior discipline of the white men counted. Besides, the Sioux, meeting them breast to breast, could bring scarcely a quarter of their actual numbers to bear. Thus, yard by yard, the savages were pushed back, despite the bows of their chiefs.



Hand to Hand Fighting

Twenty yards from the ring of wagons, the Sioux broke and turned tail, unable longer to face those terrible clubbed rifles. Horses and lances, they realized, would give them the needed advantage over the dismounted cavalry.

But just this break was the moment for which Tim McCoy had been watching.

"Forward, Captain!" he cried, seizing Burns by the arm. "Get the boys inside the wagon ring



The Sioux Broke and Turned Tail

quick, or the jig is up!"

Without pausing even to reload, the ninety remaining troopers raced in Tim's wake to the "prairie fort" of dead horses and wagon wheels. An instant later they climbed over the makeshift breastworks to be welcomed by the wounded survivors of Major Greene's two companies, and the almost hysterical occupants of the train.

But there was no time for con-



"Prairie Fort"

gratulations, even had the situation been less desperate. The Sioux were re-forming in four separate bodies to rush the "fort" from as many different sides. To meet these tactics, Captain Burns quickly spread three fourths of his troop around the inside of the circle, holding the remaining twenty men as a reserve. Should the savages break through at any point, this shock group led by the two scouts must plug the gap.



Captain Burns Spread His Troop

The arrangements were completed in little more time than it takes to tell; and Major Greene, propped up against a wheel with three arrows through his body, weakly grasped the hand which Captain Burns reached down to him.

"As you see, Captain," he said, suppressing a groan, "I haven't many men left; but they're under your command from now on. We've been able to protect the



"I Haven't Many Men Left."

women and children in the wagons, so far, and I know you boys will carry on until we're all wiped out! Now, give me a rifle and a few cartridges and forget about me. Thank heaven, I can still pull a trigger!"

CHAPTER XV

"WE OWE YOU OUR LIVES!"

Scarcely had Burns saluted and turned away from the gallant major, when a fresh outbreak of warwhoops heralded the Indians' charge from four sides at once. At the same time, the rifle fire from the fort deepened into one continuous roll.

But this time the Sioux rode

their ponies straight at the breastworks, seeking with sheer weight of horseflesh to crash through. On all sides they struck with the force of a hundred battering rams. Wagons swayed and groaned under the impact. Stout wheels splintered from their hubs. Horses screamed with the pain of broken legs.

Snarling over the wreckage appeared the painted faces of the enemy. Arrows began to fill the



The Sioux Rode Straight at the Breastworks

air about the defenders' ears. Soldiers and wagoners fell, pierced by barbed shafts.

Then it was that the little shock group led by Tim and Calipers showed its mettle. Though keeping together, they seemed to be everywhere at once, shooting, clubbing, hurling themselves at one threatened point after another. From time to time, half-a-dozen of them leaped into a newly opened gap to close it with their bodies un-



Arrows Began to Fill the Air

til others could drag up wagon wheels, dead horses, dead Indians—anything to make a barrier.

Whether it was hours or only minutes that they struggled, they could not tell, for time seemed to stand still. But finally the Sioux attack slackened, melted suddenly into a headlong retreat. Again the soldiers' rifles began their regular drum-fire, which died out in its turn as the savages drew their shattered ranks beyond range.



The Sioux Drew Their Ranks Beyond Range

For a few minutes the beleaguered whites would be able to catch their breath and count their remaining fighters.

Wiping blood from his eyes, Captain Burns hurried up to where Tim was helping to drag a broken wagon box across a weakened part of the breastworks. An arrow had scored the officer's scalp, but otherwise he seemed unhurt.

"Do ye think the deevils have had enough, laddie?" he panted.



"Do Ye Think the Deevils Had Enough?"

Tim gave a final shove to the wagon box, and turned to regard the captain with sober eyes.

"I don't, sir," he replied. "And, between you and me, I think they'll rush us again within ten or fifteen minutes. We might possibly last out one more attack—with luck. But sooner or later they'll really break through; and then God help the women and children, for we'll be dead!"

"As bad as that?" muttered the



Their Situation Seemed Hopeless

Scot. "Aweel, I'll no be surprised if ye're right, Tim. And a man has to dee sometime But I see Major Greene heckoning us. We maun tell him the worst!"

A soldier was bandaging the major's wounds, and the tight wrappings were causing that officer to grimace with agony. But between grunts of pain he smiled bravely.

"I judge by your expressions, gentlemen," he said, "that you fear the next attack will finish us? To



A Soldier Bandaged the Major's Wounds

tell the truth I thought it would all be over before now; but our boys fought splendidly, Burns! They did wonders, and we've reason to be proud of them! Unfortunately they can't do the impossible. I'm only sorry that I sent that message and got you into this jam!"

Captain Burns seized the hand of his superior and wrung it.

"Dinna feel that way, Major!" he cried. "Loch! It's a preevilege to dee fightin' in your company;



"Dinna Feel That Way, Major!"

sir! I'd never forgive myself if I'd learned of your need too late!"

"The captain is right, sir!" exclaimed Tim McCoy. "Our place was here beside you, as soon as we heard you were in trouble. But while there's time, we'd be interested to learn just what happened before we showed up."

The major nodded.

"It was a case of being outnumbered six to one," he said, "and with a wagon train that was rich



They Were Outnumbered Six to One

enough to fire the savages' lust for loot. - Until that second crowd of five hundred Sioux appeared, the others who had been pacing us kept away. But once they were re-enforced the real devilment started.

"They commenced with their usual tactics of circling nearer and nearer, shooting from under their horses' necks while they clung like monkeys on the other side. Of course, we dropped a good many



The Major Told What Had Happened

of their ponies, but it was clear that wouldn't stop them for long. The only hope was to get a message through to you fellows.

"I ordered a flying charge through the Sioux lines by Company K under Lieutenant Mumford. He was to cover the escape of Corporal Dowling on my own thoroughbred mare.

"To make a tragic tale short, gentlemen, they did get Dowling through and away—wounded, I be-



"I Ordered a Flying Charge."

lieve. But poor Mumford and over half his men were killed before they could get back to the wagons.

"Realizing that Dowling had gone for help, the enemy waited no longer, but charged us with everything they had. My hundred men, with forty armed wagoners, beat them off three separate times, but there weren't enough of us left to stand off a fourth attack. They were starting it just when you boys rose up out of that gully and start-



"The Enemy Charged Us."

ed shooting. You know the rest!"

"Aye, and we'll know the worst in a few moments, sir!" added Captain Burns, as a chorus of bloodthirsty yelps announced what would probably be the final act so far as the remaining whites were concerned.

But all at once the Sioux war-whoops ceased, to be replaced by a confused howling. Something unexpected had happened!

With a bound, Tim McCoy



Tim Mounted the Nearest Wagon Box

mounted the nearest wagon box and glanced rapidly around. Then his eyes fixed themselves on a dust cloud barely one mile distant, approaching through a notch in the line of buttes. At the end of thirty seconds, he had the answer.

"Captain! Major Greene!" he shouted, leaping down. "It's a rescue party of three hundred riders! At first I thought they were another bunch of Sioux, but I saw uniforms and a flash of drawn



A Rescue Party of Three Hundred Riders!

sabers. Must be the Pawnees and some of your troops, Captain!"

"It's a meersacle!" cried Burns, running to Mook. "But seein' is believin'!"

By now even the wounded soldiers were crowding to the barrier, scarcely able to trust their eyes. The Sioux, however, showed by their actions that the impossible had actually happened.

Re-enforcements were coming for the wagon train's defenders,



The Wounded Soldiers Crowded to the Barrier

and Crowsfoot's Ogallalas were already deciding that the game was up. Stopping only to round up riderless horses and bear away their wounded, they made off at a fast gallop while the newcomers were still half a mile distant.

Three minutes later, fourscore fresh cavalry troopers rode through a breach that had been made for them in the wagon ring, while on the outside Buffalo Tail's two hundred Pawnees sat their



The Ogallalas Made Off at a Fast Gallop

ponies as proudly as if on parade.

Ten yards away from the little group about Major Greene a tall chief, a grizzled sergeant of cavalry, and a young Pawnee girl swung down from their horses and approached.

The sergeant saluted and spoke first.

"Sergeant Dennis McCarthy reportin' to Captain Burns! Ivry man who dropped out betwixt here an' the canyon is now prisint an'



The Newcomers Approached

accounted for, owin' to them Pawnees overtakein' us an' supplyin' us with remounts afther our own horses had given out. Thank God, sor, that we got here on time!"

"Aye, sergeant!" replied Burns, returning the man's salute. "And thanks also to our Pawnee friends who made it possible! But I dinna understand as yet how they came to find you."

"Beggin' the Captain's pardon, sor," returned the soldier, "but



Burns Returned the Man's Salute

I'm thinkin' the big chief here can tell ut better in his own languidge. The McCarthys could always hold their own in a foight, but they lack the gift o' gab. An' anyhow, both you an' the Major shpeak the red haythen's tongue, sor, as well as Tim McCoy himself."

At a word from the Major, Buffalo Tail stepped forward, arm raised in the Pawnee salute.

"How, White Chieftain!" he greeted. "We are glad to find you



Buffalo Tail Stepped Forward

safe, though wounded! What we did was little. Singing Brook, my daughter, whom Eagle Eye rescued from the Sioux, saw the white cavalry riding east and hastened to the Sioux village to tell me.

"By that time five hundred other Pawnees had appeared, to learn how the fight had gone. I left them to guard our loot and came to seek you, knowing where you must have gone, and why. On the way we picked up your soldiers, whose



"We Are Glad to Find You Safe."

horses were lame. That is all."

Staggering to his feet, the wounded major grasped the old warrior's hand.

"We owe our lives to you, O Chief!" he said. "And not only we but the white women and children in this train! But had it not been for these other friends," he continued, turning to Tim and Captain Burns, "your graves would have arrived too late."

"Men!" he cried, raising his



"We Owe Our Lives to You, O Chief."

voice so that every soldier could hear. "Three rousing cheers for Buffalo Tail, Chief of the Pawnees! And three more cheers with a TIGER, for Captain Burns and Uncle Sam's greatest Chief of Scouts, TIM McCOY!"



Three Rousing Cheers for Tim McCoy

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