

Charles King

Author of "DUNHAYN RANCH," "THE CO. DAUGHTER," "MARRIAGE," ETC.

(Copyright, by J. E. Spence Company, Philadelphia, and published by special arrangement with them.)

CHAPTER I

of birth and breeding, and yet one who might have resembled the intimation that she was not a thing of this world. She looked like a woman with a will of her own; her head was high, her step was firm; it was of just such a walk as hers that Virgil wrote his "vera incommo petit dea," and she made the young man in the section by himself think of that very passage as he glanced at her from under his heavy, bushy eyebrows. She looked, moreover, like a woman with a capacity for influencing people contrary to their own will and judgment, and with an added fondness for the exercise of that unpopular function. There was the air of grande dame about her, despite the simplicity of her dress, which, though of rich material, was severely plain. She wore no jewelry. Her hands were snugly gloved and undisturbed by the distortions of any ring except the marriage circlet. Her manner attested her a person of consequence in her social circle, and she was not a thing of this world.

She had promptly inspired the small, candy-crusted explorer with such awe that he had refrained from further visits after his first confiding attempt to poke a sticky finger through the baby's velvety cheek. She had spared little scorn in her rejection of the bourgeois advances of the commercial traveler, and she had with languishing eyes of lavender, he confided to his comrades, in relating the incident, that she was smart enough to see that it wasn't her he was hankering to know, but the pretty sister by her side; and when challenged to prove that they were sisters—a statement which aroused the skepticism of his shrewd associates—he had replied, substantially:

"How do I know? Cause I saw their faces before you was up there, and, sister, it's for Mrs. Capt. Rayner and her baby, and they're going out here to Fort Warren. That's how I know." And the porter of the car had confirmed the statement in the sanctity of the smoking room.

And yet—such is the uncertainty of feminine temperament—Mrs. Rayner was no more incensed at the commercial "agent" because he had obtruded his attentions than she was at the young man reading in his own section because he had refrained. Nearly twenty-four hours had elapsed since they crossed the Missouri, and in all that time not once had she detected in him a glance that betrayed the faintest interest in her or still more remarkable—in the unquestionably lovely girl at her side. Intrusiveness might seem, but indifference when she heard him reply to some impertinence of the train boy with his endless round of equally questionable facts and fiction, the book he was reading aloud, and the volume of Emerson—all combined to speak of a culture and position equal to her own. She had been over the transcontinental railways often enough to know that it was permissible for gentlemen to render their fellow passengers some slight attention, and she had had to make introductions of a desirable kind; and this man refused to see the opportunity was open to him.

True, when first she took her survey of those who were to be her fellow travelers at the "transfer" on the Missouri, she decided that here was one against whom it would be necessary to guard the approaches. She had good and sufficient reasons for wanting no young man as attractive in appearance as this one making himself interesting to pretty Nellie on their journey. She had already decided what was "Ne" in a future was to be. Never, indeed, would she have taken her to the gray frontier station whither she was now en route, had not that future been already settled to her satisfaction. Nellie Travers, barely out of school, was betrothed, and willingly so, to the man she, her devoted elder sister, had especially chosen. Rare and most unlikely of conditions she had apparently fallen in love with the man picked out for her by somebody else. She was engaged to Mrs. Rayner's fascinating friend Mr. Steven Van Antwerp, a scion of an old and esteemed and wealthy family; and Mr. Van Antwerp, who had been educated abroad, and had a Heidelberg scar on his left cheek, and dark, lustrous eyes, and wavy hair—almost raven—was a devoted lover, though fully fifteen years Miss Nellie's senior.

There was a comfort in Mrs. Rayner's soul as she journeyed westward to rejoin her husband at the distant frontier post she had not seen since the early spring. Army woman as she was, born and bred under the shadow of the flag, a soldier's daughter, a soldier's wife, she had other ambitions for her beautiful Nell. Worldly to the core, she herself would never have married in the army but for the unusual circumstance of a wealthy subaltern among the officers of her father's regiment. Tradition held that Mr. Rayner was not among the number of those who signed for Kate Travers' guarded smiles. Her earlier victims were kept a-dangling until Rayner, too, succumbed, and then were left adrift. She meant that no penniless subaltern should carry off her "baby sister"—they had long been motherless—and a season at the seashore had done her work well. Steven Van Antwerp, with genuine distress and loneliness, went back to his duties in Wall street after seeing them safely on their way to the west. "Guard her well for me," he whispered to Mrs. Rayner. "I dread those fellows in buttons." And he shivered unaccountably as she spoke.

Nellie was pledged, therefore, and this youth in the Pullman was not one of those fellows in buttons, so far as Mrs. Rayner knew; but she was ready to warn him off, and meant to do so, until, to her surprise, she saw that he gave no symptom of a desire to approach. By noon of the second day she was as determined to extract from him some sign of interest as she had been determined to do so. I can in no wise explain to

you, my dear, how the fact is stated in the book that she was not a thing of this world. Another person? "That's what I did for," she would say, conclusively. "And that's what I thought," said Miss Travers, with a quiet smile. "However, he had no time then; he was hurrying off to see whether any of the soldiers had come on board. He took his flask with him, and apparently was in haste to offer some one a drink. I'm sure that is what papa used to do," she added, as she saw a fellow gathering on her sister's face.

"What papa did just after the war—a time when everybody drank—is not at all the proper thing now. Capt. Rayner never touches it, and I don't allow it in the house."

"Still I should think it a very useful article when a lot of frozen and exhausted men are on one's hands," said Miss Travers. "That was but a small flask he had and I'm sure they'll need more."

There came a rush of cold air from the front, and the swinging door blew open ahead of the porter, who was heard banging shut the outer portal. Then he hurried in.

"Can some of you gentlemen oblige me with some whisky or brandy?" he asked. "We've got some from soldiers aboard. Two of 'em are pretty nearly gone."

Two of the card players dropped their hands and started for their section at once. Before they could rummage in their bags for the required article Mrs. Rayner's voice was heard: "Take this, porter." And she held forth a little silver flask. "I have more in my trunk if it is needed," she added, while a blush mounted to her forehead as she saw the quizzical smile on her sister's face.

"Ever so much obliged, ma'am," said the porter, "but this would be only a thimbleful and I can get a quart bottle of this gentleman."

"Where are they?" said the person thus referred to, as he came down the aisle with a big brown bottle in his hand. "Come, Jim, let's go and see what we can do. One of you gentlemen take my place in the game," he continued, indicating the commercial gent, two of whom, nothing loath, dropped into the vacant seats, while the others rushed on to the front of the train. The porter hesitated no moment.

"Yes, take my flask; I shouldn't feel obliged without doing something. And please say to the officers that I'm Mrs. Rayner—Mrs. Capt. Rayner, of the infantry—and ask if there isn't something I can do to help."

"Yes, ma'am; I will, ma'am. Oh, he knows who you are; I don't tell him last night. He's gone to Fort Warren, too." And, touching his cap, away went the porter.

"There! He did know all along," said Mrs. Rayner, "but he kept it so extraordinary."

"Well, it is the proper thing for people in the army to introduce themselves when traveling? How are they to know it will be agreeable?"

"Agreeable? Why, Nellie, it's always done, especially when ladies are traveling without an escort, as we are. The commonest civility should prompt it, and the officers always send their cards by the porter to the ladies they find any ladies on the train. I don't understand this one at all, especially"—But here she broke off abruptly.

"Especially what?" asked Miss Nellie, with an inspiration of maidenly curiosity.

"Especially nothing. Never mind now." And here the baby began to fidget, and stir about, and stretch forth his chubby hands, and throw his little knees in the air, and pucker up his face in alarming contortions preparatory to a wail, and after one or two soothing and tentative sounds of "sh—sh—sh" from the maternal lips the matron abandoned the attempt to induce a second nap, and picked him up in her arms, where he presently began to take gracious notice of his pretty aunt and the kitchen.

Two hours later, just as the porter had notified them that Warren Station would be in sight in five minutes, the young man of the opposite section returned to the car. He looked tired, very anxious, and his face was paler and the sad expression more pronounced than before. The train conductor stopped him to speak of some telegrams that had been sent, and both ladies noted the regarded the railway official with a keen interest in the tone in which he spoke. The card players stopped their game and went up to ask after the frozen men. It was not until the whistle was sounding for the station that he stood before them, exhibiting a little bundle of handkerchiefs, his broad Ethiopian face clouded with anxiety and concern.

"The gentleman told me to take all his handkerchiefs. We've got a dozen frozen soldiers in the baggage car—some of 'em might be sick, and we're trying to make 'em comfortable until they get to the fort."

"Soldiers frozen? Why do you take them in the baggage car—such a barn of a place? Why weren't they brought here, where we could make them warm and care for them?" exclaimed Mrs. Rayner, in impulsive indignation.

"Laws, ma'am! never do in the world to bring frozen people into a hot car! You might as well try to make 'em comfortable until they get to the fort."

"Soldiers frozen? Why do you take them in the baggage car—such a barn of a place? Why weren't they brought here, where we could make them warm and care for them?" exclaimed Mrs. Rayner, in impulsive indignation.

"Laws, ma'am! never do in the world to bring frozen people into a hot car! You might as well try to make 'em comfortable until they get to the fort."

"Soldiers frozen? Why do you take them in the baggage car—such a barn of a place? Why weren't they brought here, where we could make them warm and care for them?" exclaimed Mrs. Rayner, in impulsive indignation.

"Laws, ma'am! never do in the world to bring frozen people into a hot car! You might as well try to make 'em comfortable until they get to the fort."

"Soldiers frozen? Why do you take them in the baggage car—such a barn of a place? Why weren't they brought here, where we could make them warm and care for them?" exclaimed Mrs. Rayner, in impulsive indignation.

"Laws, ma'am! never do in the world to bring frozen people into a hot car! You might as well try to make 'em comfortable until they get to the fort."

"Soldiers frozen? Why do you take them in the baggage car—such a barn of a place? Why weren't they brought here, where we could make them warm and care for them?" exclaimed Mrs. Rayner, in impulsive indignation.

"Laws, ma'am! never do in the world to bring frozen people into a hot car! You might as well try to make 'em comfortable until they get to the fort."

"Laws, ma'am! never do in the world to bring frozen people into a hot car! You might as well try to make 'em comfortable until they get to the fort."

"Soldiers frozen? Why do you take them in the baggage car—such a barn of a place? Why weren't they brought here, where we could make them warm and care for them?" exclaimed Mrs. Rayner, in impulsive indignation.

"Laws, ma'am! never do in the world to bring frozen people into a hot car! You might as well try to make 'em comfortable until they get to the fort."

"Soldiers frozen? Why do you take them in the baggage car—such a barn of a place? Why weren't they brought here, where we could make them warm and care for them?" exclaimed Mrs. Rayner, in impulsive indignation.

"Laws, ma'am! never do in the world to bring frozen people into a hot car! You might as well try to make 'em comfortable until they get to the fort."

"Soldiers frozen? Why do you take them in the baggage car—such a barn of a place? Why weren't they brought here, where we could make them warm and care for them?" exclaimed Mrs. Rayner, in impulsive indignation.

"Laws, ma'am! never do in the world to bring frozen people into a hot car! You might as well try to make 'em comfortable until they get to the fort."

"Soldiers frozen? Why do you take them in the baggage car—such a barn of a place? Why weren't they brought here, where we could make them warm and care for them?" exclaimed Mrs. Rayner, in impulsive indignation.

"Laws, ma'am! never do in the world to bring frozen people into a hot car! You might as well try to make 'em comfortable until they get to the fort."

"Laws, ma'am! never do in the world to bring frozen people into a hot car! You might as well try to make 'em comfortable until they get to the fort."

"Soldiers frozen? Why do you take them in the baggage car—such a barn of a place? Why weren't they brought here, where we could make them warm and care for them?" exclaimed Mrs. Rayner, in impulsive indignation.

"Laws, ma'am! never do in the world to bring frozen people into a hot car! You might as well try to make 'em comfortable until they get to the fort."

"Soldiers frozen? Why do you take them in the baggage car—such a barn of a place? Why weren't they brought here, where we could make them warm and care for them?" exclaimed Mrs. Rayner, in impulsive indignation.

"Laws, ma'am! never do in the world to bring frozen people into a hot car! You might as well try to make 'em comfortable until they get to the fort."

"Soldiers frozen? Why do you take them in the baggage car—such a barn of a place? Why weren't they brought here, where we could make them warm and care for them?" exclaimed Mrs. Rayner, in impulsive indignation.

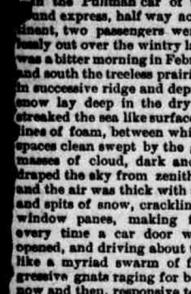
"Laws, ma'am! never do in the world to bring frozen people into a hot car! You might as well try to make 'em comfortable until they get to the fort."

"Soldiers frozen? Why do you take them in the baggage car—such a barn of a place? Why weren't they brought here, where we could make them warm and care for them?" exclaimed Mrs. Rayner, in impulsive indignation.

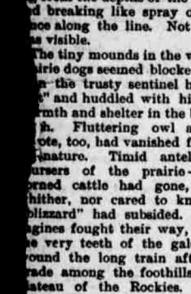
"Laws, ma'am! never do in the world to bring frozen people into a hot car! You might as well try to make 'em comfortable until they get to the fort."



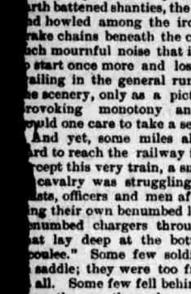
"Take this, porter."



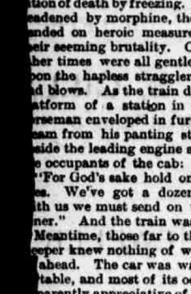
"Take this, porter."



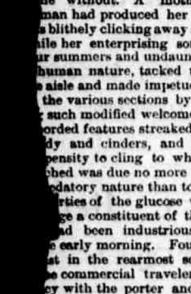
"Take this, porter."



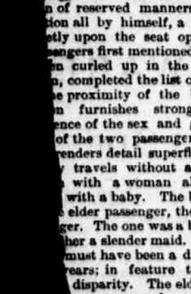
"Take this, porter."



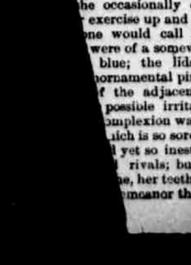
"Take this, porter."



"Take this, porter."



"Take this, porter."



"Take this, porter."

SUN DANCE OF THE SIOUX.

A GREAT RELIGIOUS CELEBRATION BY AMERICAN INDIANS.

The Ceremony Described in the March Century—Barbarous, Cruelty and Self Torture—They Sometimes Lead a Fainting and Prove the Warrior's Nerve.

The March number of the Century Magazine has an article by Lieut. Schwatka, describing the great sun dance held a few years ago by Sioux Indians at the Spotted Tail agency on Beaver creek, Nebraska.

White men are rarely permitted to view the ceremony, and it was only through the influence of Spotted Tail, the chief, and Standing Elk, the head warrior, that Lieut. Schwatka was permitted to be present at this dance, the celebration of which occupied eight or nine days.

In the magazine the ceremony is fully described. We quote from advance sheets but two incidents of the dance.

The charge upon the sun pole, which Mr. Frederic Remington has made the subject of a spirited illustration, is described as follows:



WAVED HIS BLANKETED ARM ABOVE HIM. (After Frederic Remington in the March Century.)

"Long before sunrise the eager participants in the next great step were preparing themselves for the ordeal, and a quarter of an hour before the sun rose above the broken hills of white clay a long line of naked young warriors, in gorgeous war paint and feathers, with rifles, bows and arrows, and war lances in hand, faced the east and the sun pole, which was from 600 to 600 yards away. Ordinarily this group of warriors numbers from 50 to 300 men. An interpreter near me estimated the line I beheld as from 1,000 to 1,800 strong. Not far away, on a high hill overlooking the arena, a score of men, in an old war, a medicine man of the tribe, I think, whose solemn duty it was to announce by a shout that could be heard by every one of the expectant through the exact moment when the tip of the morning sun appeared above the eastern hills.

"Perfect quiet rested upon the line of young warriors and upon the great throng of savage spectators that blacked the green hills overlooking the arena. Suddenly the old warrior, who had been kneeling on one knee, with his extended palm shading his scraggy eyebrows, arose to his full height, and in a slow, dignified manner waved his blanketed arm above his head. The few warriors who were still unmounted now jumped hurriedly upon their ponies; the broken, wavering line rapidly took on a more regular appearance, and then the old man, who had gathered himself for the great effort, hurled forth a yell that could be heard to the uttermost limits of the great throng. The morning sun had sent its commands to its warriors on earth to charge.

"The shout from the hill was re-echoed by the thousand men in the valley; it was caught up by the spectators of the hills as the long line of warriors hurled themselves forward towards the sun pole, the objective point of every armed and naked savage in the yelling line. As they converged towards it the slower ponies dropped out and the weaker ones were crushed to the rear. Nearer and

nearer they came, the long line becoming massed until it was but a surging crowd of plunging horses and yelling, scintillating riders.

"When the leading warriors had reached a point within a hundred yards of the sun pole, a sharp report of rifle shot sounded along the line, and a moment later the rushing mass was a sheet of flame, and the rattle of rifle shots was like the rapid beat of a drum resounding among the hills. Every shot, every arrow and every lance was directed at the pole, and bark and chips were flying from its sides like shavings from the rotary bit of a planer. When every bullet had been discharged, and every arrow and lance had been hurled, the riders crowded around the pole and cheered as only excited savages can shout."

Several days following the consummation of the sun pole were devoted to sun worship, fasting, dancing and various other rites. The final ordeal is thus described by Lieut. Schwatka:

"The row of dancers took their places promptly at sunrise, but it was not before 9 or 10 that the torture began. Then each of the young men presented himself to a medicine man who seated himself to a medicine bag and took between his thumb and forefinger a fold of the loose skin of the breast, closed half way between the nipple and the collar bone, lifted it as high as possible and then ran a very sharp knife through the skin from the hand. In the operation the patient, and before the knife was withdrawn a strong stream of lava about the size of a carriage wheel was forced. Then the man's hands were washed and over the production of the medicine man's hands and feet, a medicine man's hands and feet were thrown a sharp kick, and an instant later, bearing the kitten, ruffled, terrified and wildly excited, yet unharmed, there came springing lightly down the steps the young man in civilian dress who was his fellow traveler on the Pullman. Without a word he gave his prize into the dainty hands outstretched to receive it, and never stopping an instant, never listening to the words of thanks from her pretty lips, he darted back as quickly as he came, leaving Miss Travers suddenly struck dumb."

Capt. Rayner turned about on his heel and stepped back into the waiting room. Mr. Ross nudged a brother lieutenant and whispered: "By gad that's awkward for Miss!" The two subalterns who had taken the wrong turn at the station, and never stopping there just as the runner had passed them on his way back, and stood staring, first after his disappearing form, and then at each other. Miss Travers, with wonder and relief curiously mingled in her sweet face, clung to her restored kitten and gazed vacantly up the stairs.

Mrs. Rayner looked confusedly from one to the other, quickly noting the constraint in the manner of every officer present and the sudden disappearance of her husband. There was an odd silence for a moment, then she spoke: "Mr. Ross, do you know that gentleman?"

"I know who he is. Yes."

"Who is he, then?"

"He is your husband's new first lieutenant, Mr. Rayner. That's Mr. Hayne."

"That's Mr. Hayne?" she exclaimed, growing suddenly pale.

"Certainly, madam. Had you never seen him before?"

"Never; and I expected—I didn't expect to see such a— And she broke short off, confused and plainly distressed, turned abruptly, and left the hall as had her husband."

Continued next Saturday

Continued next Saturday