

The Pittsburgh Gazette.

RED KNIFE; OR, KIT CARSON'S LAST TRAIL.

By LEON LEWIS. AUTHOR OF "THE WAGON TRAIL," "THE WITCH FINDER," "THE WATER WOLF," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I. A LIFE GLORIOUSLY STARED.

Towards the close of a beautiful day in June, 1867, a man and woman, mounted upon fleet horses, came galloping over one of the great plains of the West, and drew in the shade of a clump of cotton-woods upon the bank of a beautiful river. They had ridden far and rapidly. Their steeds were panting, and covered with sweat and foam.

"We must give the horses a breathing spell," said the former, slipping to the ground; and his companion nodded a graceful assent as she followed his example.

The couple were evidently father and daughter. The man was in the prime of life, hale and hearty, with a large frame, which was sinewy and athletic, without ceasing to be refined and prepossessing.

He had the keen, shrewd look peculiar to the frontiers of civilization, and there was an honest, frank expression on his sun-browned face that proclaimed his integrity and courage.

In her way, his daughter was equally picturesque and attractive. In the early flush of womanhood, with a pure, sweet, and tender face, with eyes darkly glowing, with coral-tinted lips, and cheeks softly flushed with the hue of the rose, with amber curls floating behind her, she was as graceful as a gazelle, as light-hearted as a bird, as lovely as a flower, and as spirited as an untamed antelope.

The stream by which the couple had halted was Wood river, a branch of the Platte, in Nebraska, at a point fifty miles northwest of Fort Kearny.

"Are you tired, Miriam?" asked the hunter, George Dane, with fatherly solicitude.

"Third, father!" rejoined the maiden, with a happy laugh. "Oh, no. How could I be tired after a day like this? Every minute has been filled with pleasure and excitement. I feel as fresh as yonder bird."

The father smiled understandingly, with a look full of the fondest affection. "I can guess the cause of your lightness of heart," said he, smilingly. "The return, now daily expected, of a certain Hubert Earle, from the mines of Idaho, my account, I suspect, for your present gladness."

A heightened color appeared on Miriam's face, for the name mentioned was that of her lover. She answered the glances of her father, with that frankness that attested his entire sympathy with her, and said:

"True, father, my heart has been unusually light for several days past. How could it be otherwise, since I know that Hubert is coming?"

"Mir. Dane did not reply. He was looking with kindling eyes at the fair flower-dotted plain, and his next remark showed how wildly his thoughts had strayed.

"I wonder what mother has been doing without me all day. She must be lonely with no one to speak to or share her meals. I shouldn't wonder if we could see our home from this point," and his face lighted up with a smiling glow. "Our cottage is not more than seven miles distant; let me see."

He drew from his coat a pocket-glass, adjusted it to his sight, and gazed through it long and earnestly, towards his ranch upon Carrey's Fork.

"Yes, I see it," he said at last, with a long, deep, and joyful inspiration, as if the sight refreshed him in every nerve. "There is our cottage, as plain as day. I can even see the vines you planted before the the windows, and there, on the grape-vine branch under the big elm, sits your mother, busy at her sewing. Bless her! She does not imagine we are looking at her. Look, Miriam."

He yielded the instrument to his daughter, who obeyed his injunction, her lovely face glowing with smiles as she regarded the distant home-scene.

"Dear mother!" she murmured. "It is a treat to her to be able to sit out under the trees without fear of molestation. There are no hostile Indians hereabouts now—there are there, father?"

"No. Red Knife as you have already heard, was killed yesterday by a settler, and his hand has retreated towards the mountains. I will confess, Miriam, that during all the time we have been in the West, I have not felt so light-hearted and care-free as since we received the news of Red Knife's death. You have just seen how this joy bubbles in me. Red Knife was a demon rather than a savage."

Miriam shuddered, and her features even paled at the memory of the Indian mentioned.

"He never spared a pale face," she said, striving to speak calmly. "Desolation and cruelty marked his path. For more than three years he has raged to and fro upon the plains like a ravening wolf. He was the terror of the border."

"You have named him appropriately, Miriam," said the hunter. "He had a death-haunted look, and his victims have been many."

"Mr. Dane held out his hand for the glass, and Miriam was in the act of restoring it, when a strange, gasping, panting sound started them both, and sent them quickly to their saddles.

The hunter wheeled his horse and looked down upon the river-bank, from which direction the sound had come, his manner indicative of alarm. The maiden followed his example.

Her eyes were the first to discover the cause of the sound that had started them. The bulk of the party consisted of ten cavalrymen, under a lieutenant, who were returning to Fort Laramie, their post of duty. They were well mounted, and had several lodges in their train, loaded with their provisions and appurtenances of travel.

The balance of the party comprised three civilians, who had seized the opportunity of crossing the mountains under military escort. Two of these were emigrants, and had settled near Fort Bridger, but who had tired of the great solitude, or been frightened by the Indians, and were now returning eastward in

search of homes nearer the haunts of civilization. The third civilian was Hubert Earle, the lover of Miriam Dane, the settler's daughter, whom we have just left in such deadly peril.

He was a splendid specimen of American manhood, magnificently formed, broad shouldered, deep-chested, as vigorous as an athlete, and rode his horse, a fiery Mexican steed, with the grace and ease of a Centaur.

At the moment of his introduction to the reader, he was riding in the rear of the little train, busy with his own reflections, which were evidently as bright as the morning itself—the forenoon excitement of the events we have recorded.

His thoughts were wrapt in the sweet memory of Miriam, who had wept so bitterly at his departure, and who, he expected, would smile so joyously at his return.

"The dear little soul!" he murmured aloud. "Where is she now?"

His eyes darkened with tender sweetness, his lips quivered with the ineffable bliss of smiling to her as he remembered her, and he pictured their meeting, the pretty home they would spend together, the years they would spend in each other's society, the tender love that would bless all their coming days.

He had left her, a poor adventurer, to seek his fortune among the mines of Idaho, and was returning to her with a moderate, rich man's bill of exchange in his chamois money-belt of sufficient value to support them both in luxury as long as they both might live.

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Suddenly he was aroused from his trance-like slumber, by cries of delight from his companions, and by the fact that the horses had stopped.

Looking around him quickly, he beheld the cause of the unusual excitement. To the southward, at no great distance, a small herd of buffaloes was grazing lazily, seemingly not at all alarmed by the near presence of a formidable enemy.

The wind was blowing from them, the horses were fresh, and, as he looked at the tempting game, he began to feel the spirit of the hunter grow strong within him.

Giving rein to his horse, he galloped along the line to speak to the lieutenant, but was met half way by that officer, who had checked their speed.

"What do you say to an hour's sport, Mr. Earle?" shouted the lieutenant, as he beckoned to his friend to dismount.

"I think it would be downright shame to turn our backs on such splendid game," was the quick response. "Who could eat a dinner of salt pork, with those fat buffaloes so near us?"

The lieutenant smiled, glanced up and down the line, and then, looking at the faces of his men, and resolved to carry out his own and the general desire.

A word of command from him, the party set out at a quick gallop for the spot where the buffaloes were.

The Buffaloes allowed the enemy to approach quite near, the wind favoring the hunters; but at length began to sniff the air, and to shake their heads, and to look for the cause of their apprehensions.

A moment later they had beheld the enemy, and with frightful howlings and mighty tramp had begun their wild, mad flight to the southward.

The chase was a long one, and it was not till the hunters had run the buffaloes down the line, and were long in the rear, that they were able to overtake them.

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LEGAL. 10th Day of April, 1899.

AT 10 o'clock A. M. the following described Real Estate of J. H. H. RHOODES, bankrupt, subject, however, to existing liens, situate in the First Ward, City of Pittsburgh, Pa., is being sold.

ALL THAT LOT OF GROUND, situate in the First Ward, City of Pittsburgh, Pa., bounded by the Allegheny and St. Clair Rivers, a board-and-bench fence, and by the Allegheny River, containing 2 1/2 acres, more or less.

There was a general shuffling back. Every soldier was brave in an Indian fight, but not one dared to face a mysterious and unknown danger.

"Whoever will venture in search of the missing man shall receive from me a hundred dollars in gold!" exclaimed Hubert, in his clear, ringing tones. "Who speaks first for the money?"

"The offer was tempting; but it was not accepted. Not a word of reply was made to it."

Hubert hesitated, giving a brief thought to Miriam, his loved and waiting Miriam! His face then glowed with a heroic light, and he said to himself: "I will go in search of the missing man, and I will bring him back to my comrades."

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