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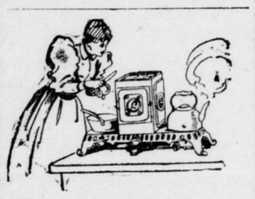

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CHAPTER I.

It was some years after the great civil war, though that it was not long after can be inferred from the fact that but one railroad had as yet laid its iron muscles across the great plains from the Missouri to the mountains. The cattle herds of the ranchers had not yet taken the place of the swarming black buffalo on the tampas. There were no settlements along the rivers where now stately cities rise, and the only means of conveyance and transportation were the saddle and the prairie schooner, as the great canvas topped wagons that conveyed the immigrants, goods and family were then called.

It was an evening in early June. The setting sun was throwing a shadow from the giant mountains to the westward over the clear tributaries of the Missouri, when a large train went into camp in a valley that afforded abundant water and pasture for their cattle and horses, while the slopes of the surrounding foothills were covered with fuel, only necessary at this time for cooking purposes. This was known as Dr. Blanchard's train.

Dr. Blanchard was a handsome man of middle age, who up to the time of his going westward had lived, as had his forefathers for many generations before him, near Wheeling and what is now West Virginia. The civil war, in which the doctor did not take part—though, unlike most of his family, his sympathies were with the Union—had left him impoverished, and, what was worse, without friends where he should most expect them. His wife had just died—it might be said of a broken heart. At the beginning of the war Mrs. Blanchard had two brothers, Frederick and Valentine Weldon. Frederick Weldon, or Fred, as he was called, strongly favored secession, and his brother as strongly opposed it.

One night Valentine returned home from Charleston, whither he had ridden on horseback with his brother. The brother never returned, but some months afterward a body was found down the river which could not be recognized except by its tattered garments, and from these it was believed to be the corpse of Frederick Weldon. The skull was fractured, and an impression went abroad that he had been killed by his brother. This impression was strengthened by the fact that immediately after the disappearance of Frederick, Valentine, with his wife, two little sons and a baby daughter, suddenly disappeared and was never heard of again in that land. Valentine had been advertised for. Through the death of his father, who died without knowing that one of his sons was dead, a large estate was left to the two brothers.

Dr. Blanchard's wife was a sister of the Weldons, but had been entirely ignored in her father's will, a fact that no doubt added to the unsettled condition of the doctor's mind and forced him to go westward with his children. These children were a son Howard, at this time a tall, handsome young man of two and twenty, and two daughters, Alice and Clara, aged respectively 17 and 19.

For the purpose of protection, a number of other wagons had joined Dr. Blanchard's train at Omaha, and before setting out they had elected the doctor to be their chief and a man known as Captain Brandon to be their guide. Captain Brandon was a tall, bronzed man, with a grizzled beard, one eye, and a very quiet manner. Though evidently in the prime of life, his hair was snowy white, which, added to

He introduced himself as Henry Kyle.

a slight deafness, made him appear much older. There was a livid scar running from his right brow to his chin. It had severed the eyeball, destroying the eye, and left an ineffaceable gash on the brown cheek.

Among the people in the caravan there was a very general impression that the scar and the lost eye were chargeable to the military services in which this strange man had won his rank. Captain Brandon's reserve amounted to positive taciturnity, which gave him the appearance of coolness and strength that attaches to most silent men.

Being adverse to speaking about himself, there were plenty of imaginative and voluble people to speak for him. According to these authorities, Captain Brandon had lived time out of mind on the western plains or in the snowy mountains beyond. What he did not know about hunting and Indians was not worth knowing, and there was a very general belief among them that he could walk blindfolded from the Atlantic to the Pacific without once making a misstep.

But Captain Brandon was not the ideal scout presented to us by the writer of western fiction. His dress was not that of a hunter, but was plain, suitable to his work and well fitting. And then, more remarkable still, he spoke with the accent and language of a man of good education, though there was in his speech a noticeable softening of the letter "r" which is peculiar to the more cultured class in the southern states.

To this remarkable man Dr. Blanchard felt himself drawn from the first; but, while his advances were not rudely repulsed, he was met with a well bred coolness that told very plainly that Captain Brandon wished to be to himself. Curiously enough, this silent man was very fond of children. During the long rides across the rolling prairies he usually had one before him on his saddle, and during the Sunday halts he gathered wild flowers for them and bright seashells in the rocks, where they had been left high and dry by the great salt sea that once swept over that land.

Eight prairie schooners carried the women and children, with the household goods and the food that would be necessary till they could harvest their own crops. The route of this little party lay over the Black Hills and on toward the wondrous country of the Yellowstone. With the delight that thrills the sailor when after long watching the dim shores of the prayed for land comes in sight, the people greeted the first glimpses of the blue mountain to the west, and with thankful hearts they beheld the clear streams and the verdant valleys that mark the foothills of the great Rockies.

Alice and Clara were as beautiful semiblonds as one could meet with, and it was impossible that they could belong to a party in which there were single men without attracting attention.

Ten days before reaching the mountains the train was joined by two young men—"hunters," as they called themselves. They were clad in the typical picturesque dress of the dandies of their class, and one of them, apparently the elder, was a strikingly handsome young man of four and twenty. He was of medium height, finely built, and an admirable horseman. He introduced himself as Henry Kyle and his burly companion as Font Robb.

These young men said they were going into northern Idaho to prospect during the coming fall and winter, and they asked to be permitted to accompany Dr. Blanchard's party, the doctor at that time having in mind Washington territory as his destination.

As Henry Kyle and Font Robb were well mounted and good hunters, who could find game if there was any within reach, they were permitted to remain and at once, with an easy, western familiarity, proceeded to make themselves at home.

CHAPTER II.

There was a time when the hunters and trappers were the real heroes of the far west. These, even at the time of which I write, had given place to adventurous miners and to a class of men who were as bold in their defiance of law as were Robin Hood and his men in the middle ages. Henry Kyle and Font Robb were men of this class and were well known to Captain Brandon by reputation; but, for reasons that will be given hereafter, he permitted them to accompany him, and though he knew that they were stealing away in the dead of night—a most unnecessary proceeding, by the way—did not raise a hand to stay them. They rode through the mountains till daylight, when Henry Kyle took his friend's hand and said:

"Here we part for the present, Font. It is nearly a year since I have seen the old folks, and I am going home."

"I hope you'll find 'em all right," said Robb, adding, with a smile, "I hope they won't win you away from the boys."

Without any comment, Henry Kyle raised his bridle arm and his splendid horse darted away and was soon lost to sight among the hills. He rode until the summer sun looked straight into the deepest canyons and rifts of that wondrous land and flashed on a lake that was walled in by mountains that rose skyward like an impassable barrier.

Between the mountains and the lake there was a belt of valley many hundreds of acres in extent, with clumps of trees here and there that gave it a parklike effect. There were cattle and sheep in the meadows, and the emerald expanse was seamed with sinuous streams that flashed down from the distant snowpeaks and poured their cool trout filled currents into the lake. From one of the groves a pillar of smoke arose, marking the site of a human habitation. When Henry Kyle saw this, he left the trail he had been following and galloped for the grove. The cattle and sheep raised their heads and looked after him in wonder.

A large double log house occupied a clear space in the grove, and back of this was a barn. The surrounding gardens showed thrift, and the vines and flowers indicated more refinement in the occupants of the place than is usually seen in that wild land. As Henry Kyle was hitching his horse to a tree before the house a beautiful girl of 17 or 18 ran out, and, with a cry of "My brother! My brother!" she threw her arms about him.

"Glad to see you, Nora," said Henry Kyle, kissing her; then holding her at arm's length, while admiration filled his eyes, he continued:

"Why, you grow more and more beautiful every time I see you. Ah, it's a pity that so fair a mountain flower should be shut in from the admiration of the world!"

"The world!" she repeated. "This is my world," and she lifted her eyes with an expression of adoration from the valley to the mountains. "Away from this home I could not be happy."

"Well, well! Where one is content a knowledge of better things may not be prudent. But tell me, how is mother?"

Before the girl could answer a gray haired woman, with a calm, patient face and an indescribable look of having seen better days in other scenes, came out and greeted the young man with a warmth and tenderness which only a mother can feel.

"Put away your horse," she said. "You have surely come to stay with us now."

"Only a few hours," he answered. Then he added, with a forced laugh: "I have too often broken the peace of the valley. I do not think that my father and Louis will care to have me with them for even that time."

"You know they will. Ah, Henry, if you would only stay with us we might be very happy!"

They had now entered the house, and an Indian boy, who acted as a servant, was told by Mrs. Kyle to take charge of the horse.

"I should like to make you all happy, but I am afraid I am an Ishmaelite and can never settle down. Have you not often defended me by telling father it was in the blood?"

"No, Henry. It is not in your blood to err as you have done. Impulse has been the curse of the—the Kyles, but not a one of them has ever been capable of a deliberate wrong," said Mrs. Kyle, coming over and stroking his wavy brown hair.

"I might be happy in this valley if I could persuade a young beauty whom I recently met to stay here with me and share my fate," said Henry Kyle with the light, careless manner that was peculiar to him.

"And who is this beauty?" asked Mrs. Kyle.

"She is with her father, brother and another sister, now en route to Oregon or Washington territory. The immigrant train passes within two hours' ride of here tomorrow."

"And where does this family come from?"

"From West Virginia," replied Henry.

"West Virginia?"

"Yes, mother. Why, the name seems to startle you," said Henry, turning and watching the white cloud of trouble that swept over his mother's face.

"Oh, no! Why should the name of a place affect me?" She stroked her forehead nervously and then asked with an evident effort at composure, "And what is the name of the people?"

"Blanchard," replied Henry. "The old gentleman is called Dr. Blanchard."

"Dr. Blanchard!"

No effort, even had one been made, could hide the emotion that Mrs. Kyle now felt. All the color fled from her face, and her hands trembled so that she had to interlock her fingers to keep them steady.

"Did you ever hear of the name before?" asked Henry.

"I—I think I have."

Nora was about to speak, but was interrupted by the joyous barking of a dog outside, and the sound of voices near by gave her an excuse to cry out:

"Father and Louis! They will be glad to see you."

The girl went to the door, where her father and brother greeted her fondly, and she then led them into the room where was her truant brother. Louis Kyle was a few years younger than his brother and equally handsome, but his face had a stronger and more serious expression. He welcomed Henry cordially, but the look on the father's face was not one of pleasure. Mr. Kyle was a tall, well made man of 50, with iron gray hair and shoulders slightly stooped. The story of a great grief was plainly written on his face.

"Are we to have you with us long?" asked Mr. Kyle, addressing Henry.

"No, sir. I was near here and came to see how you all were."

"I suppose we should be thankful," said Mr. Kyle with a sneer. "It must have caused you an effort to leave your companions."

"Let us not blame him," broke in Mrs. Kyle. "There is but little to occupy a young man of spirit here."

"There is duty," interrupted the younger brother. "Any man who wants a higher incentive would be incapable of appreciating it."

"Ah, Louis," laughed Henry, "we are differently constituted! The blood of the Scotch-Irish Covenanters freezes in your veins; the red current of the French burns through mine. I love you better for being what you are. If we were alike, these mountains would be too small to hold us."

"If you were like me, this valley," said Louis, "would be a kingdom large enough."

Leaving the brothers to talk, Mrs. Kyle beckoned to her husband to follow her. She led him into another apartment, the floor of which was carpeted with the softest furs, then cautiously closing the door, said:

"Dr. Blanchard, his son and two daughters are near by on their way to Oregon."

"My God!" sobbed the man. "My sister Mary's husband! My sister Mary's children!"

"But they will not come near us," she said soothingly.

Mr. Kyle took a turn across the room; then coming back he cried out:

"My heart goes out to them. All the past rises in judgment before me. It was but yesterday that I fled through the storm and darkness with this right arm red with the blood of my brother!"

As Valentine Kyle, or Valentine Weldon, to give him his true name, spoke he buried his face in his big brown hands and cried as if his heart were breaking. The wife and husband were still talking when a bright Indian girl, known as Kushat, came into the room and told them that dinner was ready.

During the meal this girl followed Henry Kyle with her black eyes, and there was that in the gaze that told of a more than ordinary interest in the handsome young man. After dinner Henry Kyle saddled his horse, bade his family goodby and was soon flying from the mountains from which he had come.

CHAPTER III.

Henry Kyle's splendid horse flew over the mountain trail that dark night with all the ease and certainty of a great bird cleaving the air. After three hours of ceaseless galloping the young man saw, far to the front and far down from the hill along which his horse coursed, a campfire, and the ruddy light revealed a group of men, their rifles flashing on the trees like queer igneous fruit, while in the background the outline of a group of grazing horses could be made out. Suddenly a figure in hunter's dress appeared on the trail, and Henry Kyle, reining in his horse with his left hand while his right dropped back to the stock of his pistol, called out:

"Is that you, Bouton?"

"Yes. We're waiting for you," replied the tall figure in a gruff voice.

Henry Kyle dismounted, and as the two drew nearer to the fire the light glowed on the fierce brown face of Bouton, a lawless half breed but too well known to the settlers in these mountains.

"The boys are in a hurry," continued the half breed.

"What's up?"

"They are afraid the immigrant train may escape us, and that mustn't be, for it is the richest outfit that has been seen in these hills for many a day."

"Are the Blisses in camp?"

"Yes, Hank."

"I can't see why two Virginia lawyers should come out to this country and join a gang that is notoriously lawless," said Henry Kyle meditatively.

"They keep their own secrets, Hank," chuckled Bouton.

"So they do, but I can't see why they should be so eager to get this Dr. Blanchard and his son out of the way."

"In order that they may marry the daughters, I suppose. But are the girls so beautiful?"

"Beautiful as pictures, Bouton—too beautiful to be thought of in connection with such a brace of ugly curs as these two brothers," said Henry Kyle, the words coming as if from between his set teeth.

By this time the two men had reached the campfire, and a score of men, bearded and bronzed, greeted Henry Kyle with a cheer that indicated his popularity, if, indeed, it did not imply his leadership. Henry Kyle unsaddled and staked his horse—the first care of a true hunter—and then went to the fire, on which meat was broiling and savory messes steaming in iron pots.

"You met up with them. Mr. Font Robb says you met up with them," said a man, laying his hand on Henry's arm.

"Oh, you—Mr. Tom Bliss! How are you? Yes, I met them. I told you I would if they were on the plains."

"So you did, so you did, and I believed you implicitly." And as Tom Bliss spoke he drew Henry Kyle out of hearing of the others.

Just here it may be necessary to explain the appearance of Jonas Bliss' two sons in these wilds. Dr. Blanchard had not been gone from his old home a week when the collateral heirs—the kinsmen of old John Weldon, the patriarch—began to make inquiries about the immense estate that had been unclaimed for so many years in the old lawyer's hands that he very naturally began to look upon it as his own.

Lawyer Bliss refused to give them any satisfaction, and the consequence was that the remaining Weldons appealed to the courts and demanded an investigation. The courts granted the order, and the old lawyer found the calm current of his prosperity vexed by opposing ripples.

He said one day to his sons:

"I am left sole executor of John Weldon's estate. It was left to his grandsons, Valentine and Frederick. The latter is dead, and if the former is not we can safely count on never seeing him again. He is a murderer and will not risk his life to gain any wealth. The will can still be set aside, but only by Dr. Blanchard's children. They are the rightful heirs."

"But they have left it all behind them and fled," said Tom Bliss, who was very much like his father.

"That is no bar. The courts will hunt them up, though the courts cannot force them to press their claims."

"It wouldn't be a bad thing for us," interposed Sim Bliss, who was thought to be very shrewd because he spoke but little, "if the whole party was gobbled up by the Indians."

There was so much more in this than the mere words would ordinarily convey that the old lawyer and his son Tom fairly gasped for breath. It was Tom who first recovered and said:

"They could be stopped."

"They could be so fixed as never to be heard of again," joined in Sim.

"The girls should be watched over and cared for. Ah, if you boys had only succeeded in winning them," sighed the old lawyer, "the whole estate would be in our hands and we might snap our fingers at the whole Weldon clan!"

"It is not too late yet," said Tom, and thereupon he whispered a plan that met the approval of his father and brother.

The result of this plan was that within a week Tom and Sim Bliss, with plenty of money in their pockets, were speeding out for the Black Hills. They had learned of the course taken by Dr. Blanchard and his family, and steam and stage enabled them to get to the mountains while the train under Captain Brandon was drawing its slow length across the scorching plains. They met with Henry Kyle and Font Robb at Deadwood and by them were introduced to Bouton's gang, as these outlaws were called.

The brothers congratulated themselves on their good luck. They found the tools they needed already to their hand. The half formed plans took definite shape when they met with the outlaws. The crimes from which cowardice might make them shrink in the east here became the easiest possibilities. They sent Henry Kyle and Font Robb to spy out the train, and the result has already been given.

"We can have them in our power," said Tom Bliss when he had Henry Kyle out of hearing.

"Yes, but the job will not be easy."

"The doctor has lots of money."

"So I understand. But I say, Bliss, you can have all the money; for me, I am going to have the eldest daughter."

"Alice!" exclaimed Tom Bliss.

"Yes, Alice, or I'll die trying," replied Henry Kyle.

"Well, Mr. Kyle," said Tom, trying to smile, but making a wretched failure of the effort, "you and I can't differ about a small matter when we are agreed about many great ones. I hope we shall always be friends. If we are not, it shall not be for the want of a strong desire on my part."

"That is all right, Mr. Bliss. I am as anxious for harmony as any man in this outfit, but I want to see through your motive if I can," said Henry Kyle.

"I am willing to explain anything you do not understand," responded Tom Bliss, and he smiled again and stroked his rusty mustache. "But, Mr. Kyle, you should have made your inquiries before you took my money and began this job."

"I have so far done my work."

"True. Now the point is, are you willing to continue the work under the

"We can have them in our power," said Tom Bliss.

same conditions? If you are, why, I shall be glad to make your reward commensurate with your efforts. If you are not, no harm has been done."

Tom Bliss stopped, for Font Robb came up, and not knowing that he was intruding on a private conversation or perhaps not caring for it—all Bouton's men did pretty much as they pleased and claimed to have no secrets, and so there could be no privacy—he called out: "If you chaps want anything to eat, you'd better come over. Thar ain't too much cooked, and the boys is jist a-wadin in."

Font Robb, to make sure of getting his own share, had carried a large piece of broiled venison in his hand, which he began devouring the moment he ceased speaking.

"Have any of the scouts come in?" asked Henry Kyle as he turned to walk back to the fire with Tom Bliss.

"Black Eagle, the Shoshone, is back. He says that Captain Brandon's party is in camp on the Blue Water."

"Then he'll rest there for some days before going on."

"Of course, Hank. As there's no good grass for 180 miles to the west, that's what he'll do; but if he was only a prophet or the son of a prophet, he'd push ahead," said Robb.

"I do not think he is gifted in that way, but it won't do to underrate him on that account. I'd rather have any man in the mountains opposed to me than this same Captain Brandon," said Henry Kyle as they reached the circle of the outlaws about the blazing campfire.

CHAPTER IV.

Captain Brandon and Alice Blanchard were admiring the scenery from the top of a hill overlooking their camp when Howard came up and informed them that a young man had come into the camp who wished to see the captain. They descended the hill and made their way to the place where the pillars of smoke marked the sight of the camp. As they neared the tents and huts a young man of graceful form and strong, handsome face came out to meet them. He extended his hand to the captain—the other hand held his hat—and asked:

"Are you Captain Brandon?"

"I am," was the reply.

"I have ridden fast to see you, sir," said the young man. "My name is Louis Kyle."

Louis Kyle released Captain Brandon's hand, and a blush of modest confusion covered his handsome face as he felt the eyes of Alice Blanchard were on him.

"Kyle! Did you say your name was Kyle?" asked the captain, his hand to his ear and his head bent forward.

"Yes, sir."

"You look as if you might be a brother of Henry Kyle."

"I am," replied Louis, and the blush on the down covered cheeks deepened.

"You live with your father far back in the heart of the mountains?"

"Yes, captain, and I have lived there since my earliest recollections."

"And you say you have ridden hard?"

"Very hard, sir."

"Then you must eat and rest. After that you can tell me the object of your visit. In the meantime let me say that you are welcome to our camp, no matter what your object may be."

Captain Brandon turned and introduced the doctor and his children, Clara having joined them as they entered the camp.

Unaccustomed to the forms that rule in society, but with a courtliness that was natural and graceful, Louis Kyle shook hands with each, and if he held Alice's hand a little longer than he did the others it was because he was so magnetized by the touch, so fascinated by the beauty of her form and face, as to be wholly unconscious of the act. Bowing by way of apology for what he was about to do, he said to the captain:

"Could I speak with you privately?"

"Certainly," replied the captain. "Come this way."

"I have come to warn you of a great danger. It is one that you may be guarded against, but I doubt if the ordinary precaution will meet it. Bouton's gang and fully a score of renegade Indians are in the mountains to the south, and they are hastening this way with all the speed of their horses."

"How do you know this?"

"I cannot explain it to you now," said Louis Kyle, averting his face.

"But you should give me your reasons for your fears as well as the warning," urged the captain.

"Do not ask me to do that. I want you to believe in my integrity. To explain all might lead you to doubt all, for the honor of one's own name should be very precious."

"I understand you. Here, give me your hand again." The captain took the young man's hand and continued, "It is a terrible thing, a very terrible thing, for brothers to be arrayed one against the other."

"I would die to save my brother," said Louis excitedly, "but better that he and all of the name should perish than that a great wrong should be done."

"I agree with you. Better that all should perish than that a wrong should be done. Better the name should be blotted out if its purity cannot be maintained. But pardon the digression. When men reach my age, they are apt to philosophize. I do not want to be considered garrulous."

"Nor are you. Your thoughts, Captain Brandon, are such as I daily think. But you have warned me not to speak of myself when more important matters are concerned."

"You mistake me," interposed the captain. But the young man waved his hand and continued:

"From the fresh trails I passed not two hours ago I am certain that we are now under the eyes of Bouton's gang."

"You could not be mistaken?"

"No. His Indian allies are scouting within rifle range and waiting for their leader to come out."

"And when do you think they will be here?"

"Before another sun rises."

"And what would you advise?" The captain spoke in a lower tone than usual, and, bending forward, he anxiously watched the young man's face.

"If there were time, I would advise you to push rapidly to the west and so shake these hounds from your trail."

"But do you think, if we were to break camp now and push on with all speed, that we could do this?"

"I do not."

"What then?"

"I would at once build a strong corral on the bank of the river and place within it all your wagons, stock and other property."

"That is sensible."

"And within the corral I should erect a defense commanding every foot of the inclosure and large enough to hold all your people."

"Good again."

"A dozen good rifles can keep the gang at bay."

"Until all our provisions are exhausted?"

"Yes, if you cannot get help in the meantime."

"But where can we look for help?"

"I will find it," said Louis Kyle, clinching his hands, while his eyes blazed with resolution.

"But where can you find it?" asked the captain, who still maintained his quiet but deeply interested manner.

"My father will come to the rescue."

"He is only one man."

"Aye, but he is a giant in strength and a lion at heart. We have a dozen Indians and half breeds on our place, on every one of whom we can count to the death. These are all armed. But I should not wholly rely on them. I should send couriers asking for aid to the mining camps, 60 miles to the northwest, and to the military posts at Keogh and on the Yellowstone."

"You are a born soldier; but your plans involve a long time, do they not?"

"Yes, to a man starving it would be a long time, but it would not be so long to strong, well fed men battling for their lives and the honor of their women," said Louis Kyle with an increase of energy and earnestness.

"When do you intend returning?"

"Not till my horse is rested."

"About dark?" and the captain looked out at the sun sloping westward.

"It will be better after dark."

So expeditious were Alice and her sister that in a very short time Louis Kyle was set before the very best dinner that the camp afforded and large enough to satisfy the appetite of a starved giant. Had his real purpose in coming been suspected, the women—they were nearly all young—would not have stood there laughing and declaring that the stranger was one of the handsomest men they had seen since leaving home.

The sun seemed resting in a canopy of opaline clouds on the crest of the western mountains when Louis emerged from the tent. So great was the change wrought in these few hours that he could scarcely credit his eyes. The tents were down and the arbors scattered about.

The corral was up in a semicircle by the river's side, and all the stock were inside of it, with the wagons chained about the central point, where the stockade was being erected. The people were working like beavers and with a coolness that surprised and delighted the young man. The tent in which he had been sleeping was down and removed within the stone inclosure five minutes after he had left it.

"You see we are acting on your advice," said the captain without stopping in his work of rolling and lifting the stones into place.

"I hope the precaution may not be necessary," said Louis, lending a hand, "but I do not think the work will be finished too soon."

"And you are determined to leave us tonight?"

"I must."

"But think of the danger!"

"I do, but it is of the danger to you, not to myself. You will need help, and it must be forthcoming."

"Help is desirable. But what if you fall into the hands of these desperadoes?"

"I must guard against that," said Louis coolly.

"But is not the danger great?"

"Very great, captain; but it will be no greater tonight than it was when I came here in the full blaze of the sun. Those fellows know where I am. Let them get me if they can."

"You cannot travel as well by night."

"I can travel better. My horse and I know every rock, stream and defile from the Yellowstone geysers to the place where Custer and his gallant fellows died on the Big Horn. Trust me for that."

As they conversed the sun went down, and it became so dark that work on the nearly completed structure had to be suspended. It is surprising how soon the most inexperienced will perceive the necessities of such an emergency. No one thought of starting a fire or making a light. Even the children hushed their prattle as they lay on the blankets inside the defense. As soon as the stars were out Louis Kyle shook hands with the immigrants—Alice's was the last hand he took—and bidding

Alice's was the last hand he took.

them be of good cheer he sprang on his horse, forced him at the corral wall and flew over.

A dead silence fell upon the camp. Men and women bent to catch the rapid beating of the horse's hoofs along the face of the mountain behind them.

Ten minutes passed. To Alice it seemed an age, for to her the most prominent figure of the day was missing.

"Hark!" cried one. "What was that?"

No answer was given. There was no need of an answer to tell them what it was. The honest heart stopped for an instant, then beat more rapidly with dread as shrill cries and the roar of rifles came from the direction which Louis Kyle had taken.

[CONTINUED.]

THERE is nothing binding upon any Democrat to vote for the ticket nominated at Chicago.

CHAIRMAN Faulkner should not be too hard on his young candidate. It is asking too much of Mr. Bryan that he should "bottle up some of the personal joy he feels." Youthful spirits must out.

It would have been much better for the Democratic party had its platform contained but a single plank, and that plank free silver, as there are many Democrats who could stand free silver much better than they can swallow the Populistic rot which constitutes the rest of the platform.

To sound money Democrats one thing is too evident for question; if they would save the country from financial ruin they must first of all make sure, if possible, that the power of the government is not seized upon by the crazy Populists and anarchists that controlled the late Chicago convention.

THE Chicago platform is composed of false pretenses. They were framed for the purpose of drawing the attention of the reader away from the dangerous and revolutionary methods and doctrine therein advocated, and no Democrat or Republican who holds honesty and honor in high esteem, no business man who desires to prosper and has the prosperity of the country at heart can support it.

THE Hon. Joe Sibley, of Pennsylvania, "found it absolutely impossible to get to St. Louis" and the Hon. Jonah Jeremiah Mott's silver convention, but sent his best wishes, an easy contribution to make. Since Mr. Sibley escaped from Chicago without having the nomination for vice president thrust upon him, he has made it a rule to keep away from conventions. Writing letters from Pennsylvania is safer and cheaper.

THE Republican party is not fighting Democracy in this canvass. There is no Democracy in the Chicago platform except its opening declarations that are immediately defined by the specific measures that it pledges the party to. The platform was made to suit the Populists and it is an expression of Populist opinions except where it is the work of Altgeld, and at those points it declares for that anarchy which he loves so well.

Will Support McKinley and Gold.

The Free Press will bolt the ticket, and support McKinley and gold.—Holyoke (Mass.) Free Press.

Cannot Accept Men or Measures.

The Times will not, cannot, advocate the adoption and acceptance by the American people of the Populistic, anarchistic, undemocratic and anti-Democratic measures and men presented for indorsement by the Chicago convention.—Louisville (Ky.) Times.

Repudiation of Honest Obligations.

The Lewiston Sun will not support the platform and nominees of the silver Democratic convention. The acceptance of a silver platform, The Sun honestly believes, would bring disaster and panic. It means the repudiation of the country's honest obligations.—Lewiston (Me.) Sun.

What the Convention Could Not Do.

The ardent advocates of the white metal can unseat regular sound money Democratic delegates; they can ignore the two-thirds rule; they can, as they did in this state, throttle the voice of the minority and bind them under protest with the unit rule, but there are some things they cannot do. They cannot, thank God, change our honest convictions or compel us to cast our ballot for any candidate.—Alexandria (Va.) Times.