

## CHAPTER X.

## MY APPOINTMENT AS CHIEF OF SCOUTS.



GENERAL SHERIDAN highly complimented me for what I had done and informed me that I need not report back to General Hazen, as he had more important work for me to do. He told me that the Fifth Cavalry — one of the finest regiments in the army — was on its way to the Department of the Missouri, and that he was going to send it on an expedition against the Dog Soldier Indians, who were infesting the Republican river region.

“Cody,” continued he, “I have decided to appoint you as guide and chief of scouts with the command. How does that suit you?”

“First-rate, General, and I thank you for the honor,” I replied, as gracefully as I knew how.

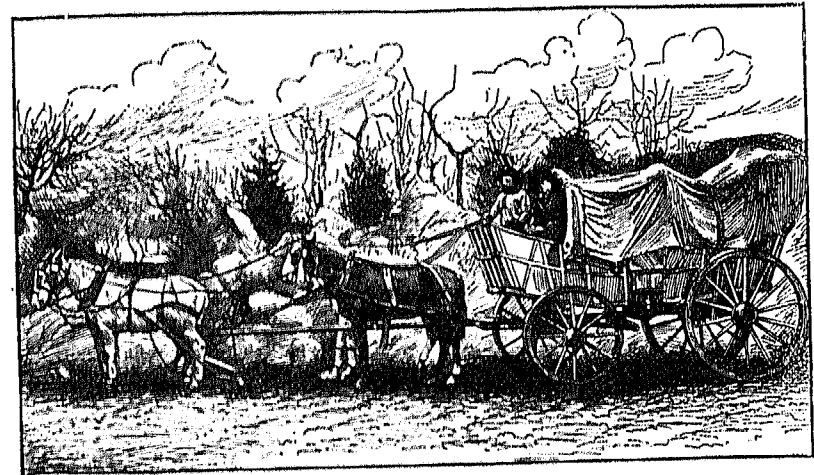
The Dog Soldier Indians were a band of Cheyennes and unruly, turbulent members of other tribes, who would not enter into any treaty, or keep a treaty if they made one, and who had always refused to go upon a reservation. They were a warlike body of well-built, daring and restless braves, and were determined to hold possession of the country in the vicinity of the Republican and Solomon rivers. They were called “Dog Soldiers” because they were principally Cheyennes — a name derived from the French *chien*, a dog.

## SCOUTING.

On the third day of October the Fifth Cavalry arrived at Fort Hays, and I at once began making the acquaintance of the dif-

ferent officers of the regiment. I was introduced by General Sheridan to Colonel William Royal, who was in command of the regiment. He was a gallant officer and an agreeable and pleasant gentleman. He was afterwards stationed at Omaha as Inspector-General in the Department of the Platte. I also became acquainted with Major W. H. Brown, Major Walker, Captain Sweetman, Quartermaster E. M. Hays, and in fact all the officers of the regiment.

General Sheridan, being anxious to punish the Indians who had lately fought General Forsyth, did not give the regiment



GOVERNMENT MULE TEAM.

much of a rest, and accordingly on the 5th of October it began its march for the Beaver creek country. The first night we camped on the south fork of Big creek, four miles west of Hays City. By this time I had become pretty well acquainted with Major Brown and Captain Sweetman, who invited me to mess with them on this expedition, and a jolly mess we had. There were other scouts in the command besides myself and I particularly remember Tom Renahan, Hank Fields and a character called “Nosey” on account of his long nose.

On the morning of the 6th we pulled out to the north, and during the day I was very favorably struck with the appearance

of the regiment. It was a beautiful command and when strung out on the prairie with a train of seventy-five six-mule-wagons, ambulances and pack-mules, I felt very proud of my position as guide and chief of scouts of such a warlike expedition.

Just as we were about to go into camp on the Saline river that night, we ran on to a band of about fifteen Indians, who, seeing us, dashed across the creek, followed by some bullets which we sent after them; but as the small band proved to be a scouting party, we pursued them only a mile or two, when our attention was directed to a herd of buffaloes, which we immediately pursued and killed ten or fifteen for the command.

The next day we marched thirty miles, and late in the afternoon we went into camp on the South fork of the Solomon. At this encampment Colonel Royal asked me to go out and kill some buffaloes for the boys.

"All right, Colonel, send along a wagon or two to bring in the meat," I said.

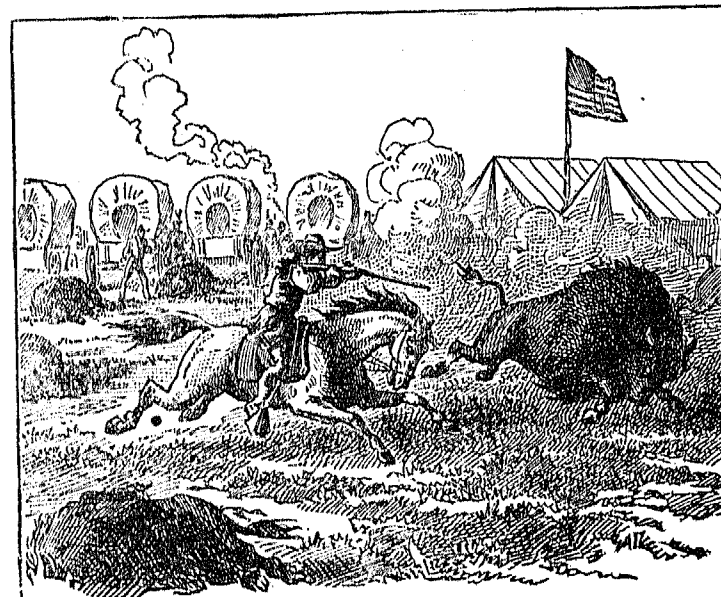
"I am not in the habit of sending out my wagons until I know that there is something to be hauled in; kill your buffaloes first and then I'll send out the wagons," was the Colonel's reply. I said no more, but went out on a hunt, and after a short absence returned and asked the Colonel to send his wagons over the hill for the half dozen buffaloes I had killed.

BRINGING LIVE BUFFALOES INTO CAMP.

The following afternoon he again requested me to go out and get some fresh buffalo meat. I didn't ask him for any wagons this time, but rode out some distance, and coming up with a small herd, I managed to get seven of them headed straight for the encampment, and instead of shooting them just then, I ran them at full speed right into the camp, and then killed them all, one after the other in rapid succession. Colonel Royal witnessed the whole proceeding, which puzzled him somewhat, as he could see no reason why I had not killed them on the prairie. He came up rather angrily, and demanded an explanation. "I can't allow any such business as this, Cody," said he, "what do you mean by it?"

"I didn't care about asking for any wagons this time, Colonel; so I thought I would make the buffaloes furnish their own transportation," was my reply. The Colonel saw the point in a moment, and had no more to say on the subject.

No Indians had been seen in the vicinity during the day and Colonel Royal having carefully posted his pickets, supposed everything was serene for the night. But before morning we were aroused from our slumbers by hearing shots fired, and immediately afterwards one of the mounted pickets came galloping into camp,



BRINGING LIVE MEAT INTO CAMP.

saying that there were Indians close at hand. The companies all fell into line, and were soon prepared and anxious to give the red-skins battle; but as the men were yet new in the Indian country a great many of them were considerably excited. No Indians, however, made their appearance, and upon going to the picket-post where the picket said he seen them none could be found, nor could any traces of them be discovered. The sentinel,—who was an Irishman,—insisted that there certainly had been red-skins there.

A SCARED IRISHMAN.

“But you must be mistaken,” said Colonel Royal.

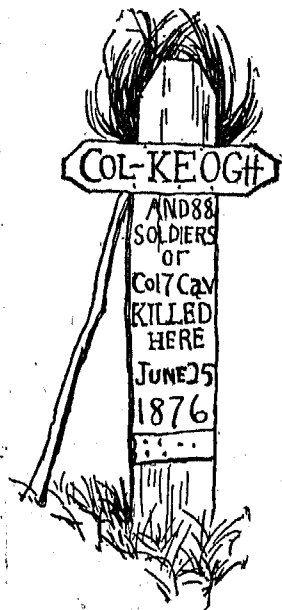
“Upon me sowl, Colonel, I’m not; as shure ez me name’s Pat Maloney, one of thim rid divils hit me on the head wid a club, so he did,” said Pat; and so, when morning came, the mystery was further investigated and was easily solved. Elk tracks were found in the vicinity and it was undoubtedly a herd of elks

that had frightened Pat; as he had turned to run, he had gone under a limb of a tree, against which he hit his head, and supposed he had been struck by a club in the hands of an Indian. It was hard to convince Pat however, of the truth.

A three days’ uninteresting march brought us to Beaver creek where we camped and from which point scouting parties were sent out in different directions. Neither of these, however, discovering Indians they all returned to camp about the same time, finding it in a state of great excitement, it having been attacked a few hours previous by a party of

Indians, who had succeeded in killing two men and in making off with sixty horses belonging to Co. H.

That evening the command started on the trail of these Indian horse-thieves; Major Brown with two companies and three days rations pushing ahead in advance of the main command. Being unsuccessful, however, in overtaking the Indians, and getting nearly out of provisions — it being our eighteenth day out — the entire command marched towards the nearest railroad point, and



MONUMENT ON OUSTER BATTLE GROUND.

camped on the Saline river, distant three miles from Buffalo Tank. While waiting for supplies we received a new commanding officer, Brevet Major-General E. A. Carr, who was the senior major of the regiment, and who ranked Colonel Royal. He brought with him the now celebrated Forsyth scouts, who were commanded by Lieutenant Pepoon, a regular-army officer.

It was also while waiting in this camp that Major Brown received a new lieutenant to fill a vacancy in his company. On the day that this officer was to arrive, Major Brown had his private ambulance brought out, and invited me to accompany him to the railroad station to meet his lieutenant, whose name was A. B. Bache. He proved to be a fine gentleman, and a brave, dashing officer. On the way to the depot Major Brown had said, “Now, Cody, when we come back we’ll give Bache a lively ride and shake him up a little.”

A LIVELY SHAKING UP.

Major Brown was a jolly good fellow, but sometimes he would get “a little off,” and as this was one of his “off days” he was bound to amuse himself in some original and mischievous way. Reaching the depot just as the train came in, we easily found the Lieutenant, and giving him the back seat in the ambulance we were soon headed for camp.

Pretty soon Major Brown took the reins from his driver, and at once began whipping the mules. After getting them into a lively gallop he pulled out his revolver and fired several shots. The road was terribly rough and the night was so dark that we could hardly see where we were going. It was a wonderful piece of luck that we were not tipped over and our necks broken. Finally Bache said, good-humoredly:

“Is this the way you break in all your Lieutenants, Major?”

“Oh, no; I don’t do this as a regular thing, but it’s the way we frequently ride in this country,” said the Major; “just keep your seat, Mr. Bache, and we’ll take you through on time.” The Major appropriated the reply of the old California stage-driver, Hank Monk, to Horace Greely.

We were now rattling down a steep hill at full speed, and just

as we reached the bottom, the front wheels struck a deep ditch over which the mules had jumped. We were all brought up standing by the sudden stoppage of the ambulance. Major Brown and myself were nearly pitched out on the wheels, while the Lieutenant came flying headlong from the back seat to the front of the vehicle.

"Take a back seat, Lieutenant," coolly said Major Brown.

"Major, I have just left that seat," said Bache.

We soon lifted the wagon out of the ditch, and then resumed our drive, running into camp under full headway, and creating considerable amusement. Every one recognized the ambulance and knew at once that Major Brown and I were out on a "lark," and therefore there was not much said about our exploit. Halting with a grand flourish in front of his tent, Major Brown jumped out in his most gallant style and politely asked his lieutenant in. A very pleasant evening was spent there, quite a number of the officers calling to make the acquaintance of the new officer, who entertained the visitors with an amusing account of the ride from the depot.

Next morning at an early hour, the command started out on a hunt for Indians. General Carr having a pretty good idea where he would be most likely to find them, directed me to guide him by the nearest route to Elephant Rock on Beaver creek.

IN SEARCH OF INDIANS.

Upon arriving at the south fork of the Beaver on the second day's march, we discovered a large, fresh Indian trail which we hurriedly followed for a distance of eight miles, when suddenly we saw on the bluffs ahead of us, quite a large number of Indians.

General Carr ordered Lieutenant Pepoon's scouts and Company M to the front. This company was commanded by Lieutenant Schinosky, a Frenchman by birth and a reckless dare-devil by nature, who was anxious to have a hair-lifting match. Having advanced his company nearly a mile ahead of the main command, about four hundred Indians suddenly charged down

upon him and gave him a lively little fight, until he was supported by our full force.

The Indians kept increasing in numbers all the while until it was estimated that we were fighting from eight hundred to one thousand of them. The engagement became quite general, and several were killed and wounded on each side. The Indians were evidently fighting to give their families and village a chance to get away. We had undoubtedly surprised them with a larger force than they had expected to see in that part of the country. We fought them until dark, all the time driving them before us. At night they annoyed us considerably by firing down into our camp from the higher hills, and several times the command was ordered out to dislodge them from their position and drive them back.

After having returned from one of these little sallies, Major Brown, Captain Sweetman, Lieutenant Bache and myself were taking supper together, when "whang!" came a bullet into Lieutenant Bache's plate, breaking a hole through it. The bullet came from the gun of one of the Indians, who had returned to the high bluff overlook-



A CRACK SHOT.

ing our camp. Major Brown declared it was a crack shot, because it broke the plate. We finished our supper without having any more such close calls.

At daylight next morning we struck out on the trail, and soon came to the spot where the Indians had camped the day before. We could see that their village was a very large one, consisting of about five hundred lodges; and we pushed forward rapidly from this point on the trail which ran back toward Prairie Dog creek.

About two o'clock we came in sight of the retreating village, and soon the warriors turned back to give us battle. They set fire to the prairie grass in front of us, and on all sides, in order to delay us as much as possible. We kept up a running fight for the remainder of the afternoon, and the Indians repeatedly attempted to lead us off the track of their flying village, but their trail was easily followed, as they were continually dropping tepee poles, camp kettles, robes, furs and all heavy articles belonging to them. They were evidently scattering, and it finally became difficult for us to keep on the main trail. When darkness set in, we went into camp, it being useless to try to follow the Indians after nightfall.

Next morning we were again on the trail, which led north and back towards Beaver creek, which stream it crossed within a few miles of the spot where we had first discovered the Indians, they having made nearly a complete circle, in hopes of misleading us. Late in the afternoon, we again saw them going over a hill far ahead of us, and towards evening the main body of warriors came back and fought us once more; but we continued to drive them until darkness set in, when we camped for the night.

The Indians soon scattered in every direction, but we followed the main trail to the Republican river, where we made a cut-off, and then went north towards the Platte river. We found, however, that the Indians by traveling night and day had got a long start, and the General concluded that it was useless to follow them any further, as we had pushed them so hard, and given them such a scare that they would leave the Republican country

and go north across the Union Pacific railroad. Most of the Indians, as he had predicted, did cross the Platte river, near Ogalalla, on the Union Pacific, and thence continued northward.

That night we returned to the Republican river and camped in a grove of cottonwoods, which I named Carr's Grove, in honor of the commanding officer.

#### OUT IN A DRY COUNTRY.

The General told me that the next day's march would be towards the head-waters of the Beaver, and he asked me the distance. I replied that it was about twenty-five miles, and he said he would make it the next day. Getting an early start in the morning, we struck out across the prairie, my position as guide being ahead of the advance guard. About two o'clock General Carr overtook me, and asked how far I supposed it was to water. I thought it was about eight miles, although we could see no sign or indication of any stream in our front.

"Pepon's scouts say you are going in the wrong direction," said the General, "and in the way you are bearing it will be fifteen miles before you can strike any of the branches of the Beaver; and that when you do, you will find no water, for the Beavers are dry at this time of the year at that point."

"General, I think the scouts are mistaken," said I, "for the Beaver has more water near its head than it has below; and at the place where we will strike the stream we will find immense beaver dams, large enough and strong enough to cross the whole command, if you wish."

"Well, Cody, go ahead," said he, "I'll leave it to you, but remember that I don't want a dry camp."

"No danger of that," said I, and then I rode on, leaving him to return to the command. As I had predicted, we found water seven or eight miles further on, where we came upon a beautiful little stream—a tributary of the Beaver—hidden in the hills. We had no difficulty in selecting a good halting place, and obtaining fresh spring water and excellent grass. The General, upon learning from me that the stream—which was only eight or nine

miles long — had no name, took out his map and located it and named it Cody's creek, which name it still bears.

SURPRISED BY INDIANS.

We pulled out early next morning for the Beaver, and when we were approaching the stream I rode on ahead of the advance guard, in order to find a crossing. Just as I turned a bend of the creek "bang!" went a shot, and down went my horse — myself with him. I disentangled myself, and jumped behind the dead body. Looking in the direction whence the shot had come I saw two Indians, and at once turned my gun loose on them, but in the excitement of the moment I missed my aim. They fired two or three more shots, and I returned the compliment, wounding one of their horses.

On the opposite side of the creek, going over the hill, I observed a few lodges moving rapidly away, and also some mounted warriors, who could see me, and who kept blazing away with their guns. The two Indians who had fired at me and had killed my horse were retreating across the creek on a beaver-dam. I sent a few shots after them to accelerate their speed, and also fired at the ones on the other side of the stream. I was undecided as to whether it was best to run back to the command on foot or hold my position. I knew that within a few minutes the troops would come up, and I therefore decided to hold my position. The Indians, seeing that I was alone, turned and charged down the hill, and were about to re-cross the creek to corral me, when the advance guard of the command put in an appearance on the ridge, and dashed forward to my rescue. The red-skins whirled and made off.

When General Carr came up, he ordered Company I to go in pursuit of the band. I accompanied Lieutenant Brady, who commanded, and we had a running fight with the Indians, lasting several hours. We captured several head of their horses and most of their lodges. At night we returned to the command, which by this time had crossed the creek on the beaver-dam.

We scouted for several days along the river, and had two or

three lively skirmishes. Finally our supplies began to run low, and General Carr gave orders to return to Fort Wallace, which we reached three days afterwards, and where we remained several days. While the regiment was waiting here for orders, I spent most of the time in hunting buffaloes, and one day, while I was out with a small party, we were "jumped" by about fifty Indians. We had a severe fight for at least an hour, when we succeeded in driving the enemy. They lost four of their warriors, and proba-



FLIGHT OF THE INDIANS.

bly concluded that we were a hard crowd. I had some excellent marksmen with me, and they did some fine work, sending the bullets thick and fast where they would do the most good. Two or three of our horses had been hit, and one man had been wounded; we were ready and willing to stay with the red-skins as long as they wished — but they finally gave it up, however, as a bad job, and rode off. We finished our hunt, and went back to the post loaded down with buffalo meat, and received the compliment of the General for our little fight.