

A RACE FOR LIFE.

AN INCIDENT OF THE INDIAN WAR OF 1864.



KICKING BIRD.

IN 1864 the magnificent valley of the "Smoky Hill," with its rich share of wooded streams and fertile uplands, and the still more Elysian expanse watered by the great Arkansas—that embryo granary of two continents—were simply known as the region through which passed twin inter-oceanic trails, the Oregon and the Santa Fé, both now mere memories.

The commerce of the Great Plains over that broad path through the wilderness, the Santa Fé Trail, was at its height, and immense trains rolled day after day toward the blue hills which guard the portals of New Mexico. Oxen, mules, and sometimes horses, tugged wearily week after week through the monotony of their long journey, their precious freight over tempting

the wily nomads to plunder, dissimulation, and murder. Pawnee Rock, Walnut, Coon, Ash and Cow creeks were mute witnesses of a score or more battles that reddened the blossoming prairie in springtime, and the slopes of the Pawnee, Heath's Branch and Buckner's were resonant with the yell of the Kiowa and Cheyenne, who under the pale moonlight held their hideous saturnalia of butchery.

To protect the trains on their weary route through the "desert"—as the whole of this region was then termed, and confidently believed by the world to be—troops were stationed, a mere handful, relatively, at intervals on the "great trail," to escort the freighters and the United States mail over the most exposed and dangerous portions of the route.

The incident which is the subject of this sketch is as thrilling, perhaps, in its details, and as marvelous in its results, as any that have come down to us in the history of those memorable times. It deals with plain facts, and men who are now living—one of whom, the principal actor in the scenes to be related, is known favorably all over the State. [Capt. Henry Booth, just passed away—1898.]

Fort Riley, in the year referred to, was one of

the extreme permanent military posts. Here, in November, 1864, Capt. Henry Booth was stationed. He was chief of cavalry and inspecting officer for the district of the Upper Arkansas, the western geographical limit of which extended to the foot of the Rocky Mountains.

Early in the month, in company with Lieut. Hallowell, of the Ninth Wisconsin Battery, he received orders to make a tour of inspection of the several outposts, which extended as far as Fort Lyon, in Colorado.

Salina was occupied by one company of the Seventh Iowa Cavalry, under command of Capt. Hammer. Where the old Leavenworth stage route crossed the Smoky Hill, in a beautifully timbered bend of that stream, was a little log stockade, commanded by Lieut. Ellsworth, also of the Seventh Cavalry.

To this comparatively insignificant post—insignificant only in its appointments, not in importance—the commanding officer gave his own name, which the county of Ellsworth will perpetuate in history.

At the crossing of the Walnut, on the broad trail to the mountains, were stationed three hundred unassigned recruits of the Third Wisconsin Cavalry, under the command of Capt. Conkey.

This was one of the most important points of observation on the "Great Overland Route," for near it passed the favorite highway of the Indians on their yearly migrations north and south.

This primitive cantonment grew rapidly in its strategic aspect, was later made quite formidable, defensively, and was named Fort Zarah in memory of the youngest son of Maj. Gen. Curtis, killed by guerrillas somewhere south of Fort Scott, while escorting Gen. James G. Blunt, of Kansas fame.

At Fort Larned, always a prominent point in the military history of the Plains, one company of the Twelfth Kansas and a section of the Ninth Wisconsin Battery commanded by Lieut. Potter were stationed. From these troops—the isolated disposition of which I have hurriedly related—squads, consisting usually of from a dozen to twenty men or more, as the case might be, under the charge of a corporal or sergeant, were detailed to escort the mail coach, freighters, Government trains, etc.

On the morning the order (to make the special inspection of the outposts referred to) was received at Fort Riley, Captain Booth and Lieut. Hallowell immediately commenced active preparations for their extended and hazardous drive across the prairies.

All preliminaries arranged, the question as to the means of transportation of the two officers was determined in this wise, and as the sequel will show, curiously enough saved the lives of the two heroes in the terrible gauntlet they were destined to run.

Lieut. Hallowell was a famous "whip," and prided himself upon his exceptionally fine turnout which he daily drove around the picturesque hills of Fort Riley.

"Booth," said he that morning, "let's not take a great lumbering ambulance on this trip. If you will get a good team of mules from the quartermaster, I will furnish my light wagon, and we will do our own driving."

"All right," replied Booth; "I'll get the mules."

Lieut. Hallowell therefore had a set of bows fitted to his light rig, over which was thrown an army wagon-sheet, drawn up behind with a cord, similar to the fashion of the average emigrant outfit now so often to be seen upon the roads of our Western prairies. A round hole was thus left at the end, which served as a window, and as will be seen further on, played a most important part in the tragedy in which this simply covered wagon figured so conspicuously.

Two valises containing their dress uniforms, a box of crackers and cheese, meat and sardines, and a bottle of anti-snakebite, made up the precious freight for the long journey; and in the clear cold of the early morning they rolled out of the gates of the fort, escorted by Company L of the Eleventh Kansas, commanded by Lieut. Jacob Van Antwerp.

Junction City was in those days in reality the limit of civilization, although Abilene with its solitary log cabin, and Salina with only two, made great pretensions as the most westerly cities of the Great Plains. A single glance at the howling wilderness surrounding either place, however, dissipated all idea of possible or probable future metropolitan greatness.

The rough bluffs that border Alum and Clear creeks, in Ellsworth county, through which the trail wound its tortuous way, were always in those days a favorite haunt of the Indians, and many a solitary straggler has met his death from their swift arrows in what are now called the "Harker Hills."

Safely through these dangerous bluffs and across the beautiful bottoms that are to-day dotted with some of the most picturesque homes in Ellsworth county, marched the little army and

its one white covered ambulance. Not an incident disturbed the quiet of the grand autumn day, except the occasional slaughter of buffalo in mere wantonness now and then by some straggling soldier; and early in the afternoon the stockade in the bend of the Smoky Hill was reached.

After an inspection of this remote little garrison, which was found in excellent spirits and condition, the line of march was resumed next morning for Capt. Conkey's camp on the Walnut.

The company of 100 men acting as an escort were too formidable a number to invite the cupidity of the Indians, and not a sign of one was seen as the dangerous flats of Plum creek and the rolling country beyond were successively passed; and the cantonment on the Walnut was reached with nothing to disturb the monotony of the march.

Capt. Conkey's command at this important outpost were living in a rude but comfortable sort of way in the simplest of dugouts constructed along the bank of the stream, and the officers, a little more in accordance with military dignity, in tents a few rods to the rear of the line of huts. A stockade stable had been built, with a capacity of two hundred and fifty horses, and sufficient hay had been put up by the men to carry the horses through the winter.

The Captain was a brusque but kind-hearted man, and with him were stationed his other officers, one of whom was a son of Admiral Goldsborough, of naval fame.

The next morning Capt. Booth made a rigid inspection of the place, which took all day, as an immense amount of property had accumulated for condemnation; and when evening came, the papers, books, etc., were still untouched, and this branch of the inspection was postponed until the morning. In the evening while sitting around the campfire, discussing the war, telling stories, etc., Capt. Conkey said to Booth: "Captain, it won't take more than half an hour in the morning to inspect the papers and finish up what you have got to do: why don't you start your escort out early?—then they won't be obliged to trot after the ambulance, or you to poke along with them. You can then move out briskly and make time."

Acting upon this suggestion, Capt. Booth went over the creek to Lieut. Van Antwerp's camp and told him he need not wait for the ambulance in the morning, but to march at about half-past six or at seven o'clock, in advance. So at daylight the escort marched out agreeably to instructions, and Booth continued his inspection. It was

found, however, that either Capt. Conkey had misjudged the amount of work to be done or the inspecting officer's ability to do it in a certain time, and nearly three hours elapsed before the task was completed.

At last everything was closed up, much to the satisfaction of Lieut. Hallowell, who had been chafing under the delay ever since the troops departed. When all was in readiness and the ambulance drawn up in front of the commanding officer's tent, Lieut. Hallowell suggested to Booth the propriety of taking a few of the men stationed there with them until they overtook their own escort, which must now be several miles on the trail toward Fort Larned. So, upon this, Booth mentioned it to Capt. Conkey, who said: "Oh, there is no danger; there hasn't an Indian been seen around here for more than ten days."

If they had known as much about Indians then as they afterward learned, Capt. Conkey's response, instead of assuring them, would have made them insist upon an escort, which Booth in his official capacity had the power to order; but they were satisfied, and concluded to push on. Jumping into the wagon, Lieut. Hallowell took the lines, and away they went, rattling over the old log bridge that used to span the Walnut, as

light of heart as if riding to a dance. It was a clear cold morning, with a stiff breeze blowing from the northwest; their trail was frozen hard in some places, and was very rough, caused by the travel of heavy trains when it was wet.

Booth sat on the left side with the whip in his hand, occasionally striking the animals to keep their speed. Hallowell struck up a tune (he was a good singer), and Booth joined in as they rolled along, as oblivious of danger as though they were in their quarters at Riley.

After they had proceeded some distance, Hallowell remarked, "The buffalo are grazing a long distance from the road to-day—a circumstance which I think bodes no good." He had been on the Plains the summer before, and was better acquainted with the Indians and their peculiarities than Capt. Booth; but the latter replied that he "thought it was because their escort had gone along ahead, and had probably frightened them away." The next mile or two was passed, and still they saw no buffalo between the trail and the river; but nothing more was said relative to the suspicious circumstance, and they rolled rapidly on.

When about five or six miles from Zarah, on glancing toward the river, to the left and front,

Booth saw something that looked strangely like a drove of turkeys; he watched them intently for a few minutes, when they rose up, and he discovered they were horsemen. He grasped Hallowell's left arm, and directed his attention to them, saying, "What's that?" Hallowell cast a hasty look to the point indicated, and replying, "Indians, by George!" immediately turned the mules and started them back toward Fort Zarah on a full gallop.

"Hold on," said Booth; "maybe it is a part of our escort."

"No, no," replied Hallowell; "I know it's Indians."

"Well," replied Booth, "I am going to see;" so, stepping out on the footboard and holding onto the front bow, he looked back over the top of the wagon. There was no doubt now that they were Indians. They had fully emerged from the ravines in which they were hidden, and while he was looking were slipping their buffalo robes from their shoulders, taking arrows out of their quivers, drawing up their spears, and making ready generally for a red-hot time. While Booth was intently watching their hostile movements, Hallowell asked, "They are Indians, aren't they?"

"Yes," replied Booth, "and they are coming like blazes!"

"Oh, dear!" said Hallowell, in a despairing tone; "I shall never see poor Lizzie again." He had been married for only a few weeks, and his young wife's name was Lizzie.

"Never mind Lizzie," said Booth; "let's get out of here!" Although he was as badly frightened as Hallowell, he had no bride at Riley, and as he tells it, "was selfishly thinking of himself and escape."

Promptly in response to Booth's remark came back from Hallowell in a firm voice, clear and determined as ever issued from mortal throat: "All right; you do the shooting and I'll do the driving," and suiting the action to the word, he snatched the whip out of Booth's hand, slipped from the seat to the front of the wagon and commenced lashing the mules.

Booth then crawled back, pulled one of his revolvers—he had two, Hallowell only one—then crept, or rather fell, over the "lazy-back" of the seat, reached the hole made by the puckering of the sheet, and counted the Indians. Thirty-four feather-bedecked, paint-bedaubed savages, as vicious-looking an outfit as ever scalped a white man, were coming down upon them like a hawk upon a chicken.

Booth had hardly reached his place at the back

of the wagon before Hallowell, between his yells to the mules, cried out, "How far off are they now, Cap.?"—for he could see nothing in the rear as he sat.

Booth answered him as well as he could, and Hallowell renewed his lashing and yelling.

Noiselessly the Indians gained, for as yet they had not uttered a whoop.

Again Hallowell asked, "How far off are they now, Cap.?" and again Booth gave him an idea of the distance between them and their merciless foe. From him Hallowell gathered fresh inspiration for fresh yells and still more vigorous blows.

Booth was sitting on a box containing crackers, sardines, etc., watching the approach of the cut-throats, and saw with fear and trembling the ease with which they gained upon the little wagon. He realized then that safety did not lie in flight alone, and that something besides mules' heels would be necessary to preserve their scalp-locks.

Once more Hallowell inquired the distance between the pursued and pursuing, but before Booth could answer, two shots were fired by the rifles from the Indians, accompanied by a yell that was enough to make the blood curdle in one's veins, and no reply was needed to acquaint the

valorous driver that the fiends were sufficiently near to commence making trouble. He yelled at the mules, and down came the whip upon the poor animals' backs. Booth yelled, for what reason he did not know, unless to keep company with Hallowell, while the wagon flew over the rough road like a patent baby-jumper. The bullets from the two rifles passed through the wagon-cover immediately between the officers, but did no damage; and almost instantly the Indians charged down upon them, dividing into two parties, one going on each side, and delivering a volley of arrows into the wagon as they rode by.

Just as they darted past the mules, Hallowell cried out, "Cap., I'm hit!" and turning around to look at him, Booth saw an arrow sticking in his head above his right ear; his arm was still plying the whip, which was going as unceasingly as the sails of a windmill, and his yelling only stopped long enough to answer, "Not much," in response to Booth's "Does it hurt?" as he grabbed the arrow and pulled it out of his head.

The Indians by this time had passed on, and then, circling back, prepared for another charge.

Booth had already fired at them three or four times, but owing to the distance, the jumping of the wagon, and the "unsteadiness of his nerves,"

as he declared, the shots had not decreased to any material extent the number of their assailants.

Down came the red devils again, dividing as before, and delivering another lot of arrows. Hallowell stopped yelling long enough to cry out, "I'm hit again, Cap.!"

Looking around, Booth saw an arrow sticking in Hallowell's head, just over his left ear this time, and hanging down his back like an ornament. He snatched it out, asked Hallowell if it hurt him, but received the same answer as before—"No; not much."

Both were yelling at the top of their voices, the mules were jerking the wagon along at a fearful rate—frightened nearly out of their wits at the sight of the Indians and the shouting and whipping of their drivers. Booth, crawling to the back end of the wagon again and looking out, saw the Indians moving across the trail, preparing for another charge. One old fellow mounted on a black pony was jogging along in the center of the road behind them, quite near, and evidently intent on sending an arrow through the puckered hole of the wagon-sheet. As Booth looked out, the Indian stopped his pony and let fly. Booth dodged back sideways; the arrow sped on in its course, and came whizzing through the

hole and struck the black-walnut "lazy-back" of the seat, the head sticking entirely through, the sudden checking causing the feathered end to vibrate rapidly with a vro-o-o-ing sound. With a sudden blow Booth struck it, breaking the shaft from the head, leaving the latter imbedded in the wood.

As quick as he could, Booth rushed to the hole and fired at his aged opponent, but failed to hit him. While he was trying to get another shot at him, an arrow came flying from the left side, and struck him on the inside of the elbow, hitting the nerve or "crazy-bone," which so benumbed his hand and arm that he could not hold on to his revolver, and it dropped from his hand to the road with one load still in its chamber. Just then the mules gave an extra jump, which nearly jerked the wagon from under him, and he fell on the end-gate, evenly balanced, with his hands sprawling outside, attempting to clutch at something to save himself.

At this the Indians gave a terrible yell—of exultation, probably, supposing Booth was going to fall out; but he didn't. He caught hold of one of the wagon-bows and pulled himself in again, terribly scared. It was a "close call" and no mistake!

While all this was going on, Hallowell had not been neglected by the incarnate fiends; about a dozen of them had devoted their time and attention to him, but he had not flinched. Just as Booth had regained his equilibrium and drawn the second revolver from his holster, Hallowell yelled, "Right off to the right, Cap.—quick!"

Booth tumbled over the back of the seat, clutching at a bow to steady himself, and "right off to the right" was an Indian just letting fly at Hallowell. The arrow struck the side of the wagon; Booth at the instant fired at the Indian, missed him of course—but he was badly scared, and throwing himself on the opposite side of his pony, scooted off over the prairie.

Back over the seat Booth piled again to guard the rear, where he found a young buck riding close behind and to the right of the wagon, his pony following the trail made by the ox-drivers in walking beside their teams. Putting his arm around one of the wagon-bows, to prevent being jerked out, Booth quickly stuck his revolver through the hole; but before he could fire, the Indian flopped over on the side of his pony, and all that could be seen of him was his arm around the pony's neck, and from the knee down, one leg. Booth did not fire, but waited for him to

come up—he could almost hit the pony's head with his hand, so closely was he running. He struck at it several times, but the Indian kept him close up by whipping him on the opposite side of his neck. Presently the Indian's arm began to work, and Booth looking saw that he had fixed an arrow in his bow behind the pony's shoulder, and was just on the point of shooting at him, with the head of the arrow not three feet from his breast as he leaned out of the hole in the wagon-sheet. Booth struck frantically at the arrow and dodged back into the wagon. Up came the Indian, but Booth went out again, for he realized that the Indian had to be gotten away from there, as he would make trouble. Whenever Booth went out, down went the Indian; up he rose in a moment again, but Booth fearing to risk himself with his head and breast exposed at this game of "hide-and-seek," drew back as the Indian went down the third time, and in a second up he came again—but this was once too often. Booth had only gotten partly in and had not dropped his revolver, and as the Indian rose, instinctively, and without taking aim, fired.

The ball struck the Indian in the left nipple (he was naked to the waist), the blood spurted out of the wound almost to the wagon, his bow

and arrow and lariat-rope dropped, he fell back on the pony's rump and rolled from there heavily onto the ground, where, after a convulsive straightening of his legs and a characteristic "Ugh!" he lay as quiet as a stone.

"I've killed one of them, Hallowell!" yelled out Booth, as the Indian tumbled off his pony.

"Bully for you!" came back the response; and then he continued his shouting, and the blows of that tireless whip fell incessantly upon the mules.

All the Indians that were in the rear and saw the young warrior fall, rode up to him, circling around his dead body, uttering the most unearthly yells,—but different from anything they had given vent to before.

Hallowell, from his cramped position in front, noticed the change in their tone, and asked, "What are they doing now, Cap.?"

Booth explained to him, and Hallowell's response was more vociferous yelling and harder blows upon the poor galloping mules.

Booth was still sitting on the cracker-box, watching the maneuvers of the Indians, when suddenly Hallowell sang out, "Right off to the right, Cap.—quick!" which startled him, and whirling around instantly, he saw an Indian within three feet of the wagon, with his bow

and arrow almost ready to shoot. There was no time to get over the seat, and as he could not fire by Hallowell, he cried out, "Hit him with the whip! Hit him with the whip!" The lieutenant, suiting the action to the word, simply diverted one of the blows intended for the mules, and struck the Indian fair across the face.

The whip had a knot on the end of it to keep it from unraveling, and this knot must have hit the Indian in the eye, for he dropped his bow, put his hands up to his face, rubbed his eyes, and digging his heel into the left side of his pony, was soon out of reach of a revolver, but nevertheless he was given a parting shot—a sort of salute, for it was harmless.

A terrific yell from the rear at this moment caused Booth to look around, and Hallowell to inquire, "What's the matter now?" "They are coming down upon us like lightning!" replied Booth; and sure enough, those who had been prancing around their dead comrade were coming toward the wagon like a whirlwind, and with a whoop more deafening and hideous than any that had preceded it.

Hallowell yelled louder than ever and lashed the mules more furiously still, but the Indians gained on them as easily as a blooded racer on a

common farm plug. Separating as before, and passing on each side of the wagon, the Indians delivered another volley as they charged by.

As this charge was made, Booth drew away from the hole in the rear of the wagon-cover and turned his seat toward the Indians, but forgot in the moment of excitement that, in the manner that he was sitting, his back pressed against the sheet, his body probably plainly outlined on the outside.

When the Indians rushed by and delivered their storm of arrows, Hallowell cried out, "I'm hit again, Cap.!" and Booth, in turning around to go to his relief, felt something pulling at him. Glancing over his left shoulder to learn the cause of his trouble, he discovered an arrow sticking into him and out through the wagon-sheet. With a jerk of his body he tore it loose, and going to Hallowell, asked, "Where are you hit now?" "In the back," he answered; where on looking Booth saw an arrow sticking, the shaft extending under the "lazy-back" of the seat. Taking hold of it, he gave it a pull, but Hallowell squirmed so that he desisted. "Pull it out! Pull it out!" he cried. Booth thereupon took hold of it again, and, giving a jerk or two, out it came. He was thoroughly frightened as he saw it leave the lieu-

tenant's body, for it seemed to have entered at least six inches, and looked as if it must have made a dangerous wound; but Hallowell did not cease belaboring the mules, and his yells, accompanied by the blows, rang out as clear as before.

After pulling out the arrow, Booth turned again to the opening at the rear of the wagon, to see what new tricks the miscreants were up to, when Hallowell yelled again, "Right off to the left, Cap.—quick!"

Rushing to the front of the wagon as soon as possible, Booth saw an Indian in the act of shooting at the lieutenant from the left side, and about ten feet away. The last revolver was empty, but something had to be done at once; so, leveling the weapon at him, Booth yelled, "Bang! you son-of-a-gun!"

Down went the Indian; rap, rap, went his knees against his pony's sides, and away he flew over the prairie.

Back over the seat Booth tumbled, and began to load his revolver. The cartridges they had in those days were the old-fashioned paper kind, and biting off the end of one he would endeavor to pour the powder into the chamber, but the wagon was tumbling from side to side and jumping up and down as it flew over the rough trail,

and more of the powder went into the bottom of the wagon than into the revolver.

Just as he was inserting a ball in the chamber, Hallowell cried out again, "Right off to the left, Cap.—quick!" Over the seat Booth went once more, and there was another Indian, with his bow and arrow in his hand, all ready to plug the lieutenant. Pointing his revolver at him, Booth yelled as he had at the other, but the Indian had evidently noticed the failure to fire at the first, and concluded that there were no more loads left; so, instead of taking a hasty departure as his comrade had done, he grinned a demoniacal grin and endeavored to fix the arrow into his bow.

Thoroughly frightened now at the aspect things were assuming, Booth rose up in the wagon, and grasping hold of a bow with his left hand, seized the revolver by the muzzle, and with all the force he could muster, hurled it at the impudent brute. It was a new Remington octagon barrel, with sharp corners, and when it was thrown turned in the air, striking the Indian, muzzle first, on the ribs, cutting a long gash.

"Ugh!" grunted the Indian, and dropping his long spear and bow, he flung himself over the side of the pony, and away he went over the prairie, to bother them no more.

Only the one revolver left now, and that empty, and the Indians still howling around the apparently doomed men like so many demons.

After he had driven the Indian off, Booth fell over the seat, picked up the empty revolver and attempted to load; but before he could bite off a cartridge, Hallowell yelled again, "I'm hit again, Cap.!"

"Where are you hit now?" asked the gallant captain.

"In the hand," replied Hallowell.

Looking around, Booth saw his right arm was plying the whip to the now laggard mules, and sticking through the fleshy part of his thumb was an arrow, which was flopping up and down as his arm rose and fell in its ceaseless and evidently tireless efforts to keep up the speed of the almost exhausted animals.

"Let me pull it out," said Booth.

"No, never mind," said Hallowell; "can't stop, can't stop"—and up and down went his arm, and flip-flap went the arrow with it, until finally it tore through the flesh and fell to the ground.

Along they bowled, the Indians yelling and the occupants of the wagon defiantly answering them, while Booth was still making a desperate but vain

effort to load the revolver. In a few moments Hallowell shouted, "They are crowding the mules into the sunflowers!"

Along the sides of the trail huge sunflowers had grown the previous summer, and now their dry stalks stood as thick as a canebrake, and if the wagon once got among them the mules could not keep up their gallop, and would soon be compelled to stop.

The Indians seemed to realize this fact, and one huge fellow kept riding beside the off mule and throwing his spear at him and then jerking it back with the thong, one end of which was fastened to his wrist, the other to the shaft of the spear. The mule on the side next the Indian was jumping frantically and pushing the near mule from the road.

Stepping out on the footboard, and holding a bow with one hand, Booth commenced kicking the mule vigorously. Hallowell, meanwhile, was pulling on one line, whipping and yelling; so together they forced the animals back into the trail, and away they shot at the top of their speed.

The Indian kept close to the mules, and Booth made several attempts to scare him by pointing his revolver at him; but he would not scare, so

he threw it at him. It missed the Indian, but struck the pony just behind the rider's leg, which started the latter off over the prairie, thus removing the immediate peril from that source.

They were now absolutely without firearms—nothing left but their sabers and valises; and the Indians, soon learning that there were no more shots to be fired, came closer and closer.

In turn the two sabers were thrown at them, as they came almost within striking distance; then followed the scabbards after the yelling fiends, as they surrounded the wagon. Some rode immediately in front of the mules, impeding their progress with the most infernal noises and attempts to spear them (the Indians having evidently exhausted all their arrows)—and the camp on the Walnut still a mile and a half away.

There was nothing left for our luckless travelers to do but whip and kick the mules and yell, all of which they did most lustily—Hallowell sitting as immovable as a sphinx, except his right arm, which from the time he had started had not ceased, and Booth kicking the poor animals and shouting in concert with their importunate foe. Looking casually over the seat, Booth saw twelve or fifteen Indians coming up behind, with their

spears all unstrung and ready for action, and he felt that something must be done, and that right speedily, to divert them; for if these were added to the number already surrounding the wagon, the chances were they would succeed in forcing the mules from the trail, and the end of the tragedy would soon come.

Glancing around the bottom of the wagon, in his despair, for some kind of weapon with which to resist them, Booth's eye rested upon the valises containing the dress suits, and snatching his, threw it out, while his pursuers were yet some four or five rods behind. The Indians noticed these new tricks with a yell of apparent satisfaction, and as soon as they reached the valise they all dismounted, and one of them grabbed it by the two handles and attempted to open it; failing in this, another drew a long knife from under his blanket, and, ripping up one side, thrust in his hand and pulled out a sash, and began winding it around his head (as a negro woman winds a bandana), letting the tassels hang down his back.

While he was thus amusing himself, another had pulled out a dress coat, a third a pair of drawers, still another a shirt—all of which they individually proceeded to put on, meanwhile dancing around and yelling.

Booth reported to Hallowell how the sacrifice of his valise had diverted the Indians, and said, "I'm going to throw out yours."

"All right," he replied; "let her go; all we want is time." So out it went, and shared the same fate as the other.

As long as the Indians were busy helping themselves to the wardrobes contained in the two valises, they were not bothering the mules, and as Hallowell had said, "all they wanted was time."

But while the diversion was going on in the rear, the devils on each side and front were still attempting to force the mules from the road by rushing at them and yelling, and brandishing their spears; none of them had as yet tried to kill them, evidently thinking they could wound the two officers and secure them alive—a prize too valuable for an Indian to lose. But as they were now drawing near the creek, on the opposite bank of which the camp was situated, and the chance of escape grew brighter, one miserable cut-throat of the band apparently conceived the idea of killing one of the mules, for he charged down on the wagon, rode close up to one, and discharging his arrow at him, struck him on the fore leg, severing a small artery, from which the blood spurted by jerks. The mules had no blinds on

their bridles, and the one hurt, seeing the blood, became so frightened that he gave a terrific jump and started off at a break-neck gait, dragging the other mule and the wagon after him; so all the occupants had now to do was to pound and kick the uninjured one to make him keep up.

This fresh spurt of speed had carried them away from the Indians, but Booth and Hallowell knew that the animals could not continue it, and they became convinced that the Indians now meant to kill one or both of the mules in order to stop them.

The lull caused by the mules outstripping the Indians gave our almost despairing heroes time to talk the matter over.

Hallowell said he did not propose to be captured and taken to Medicine Lodge creek, or some other place, and then butchered or burned at the leisure of the Indians. He said to Booth, "If they kill a mule and we stop, let's kick, strike, throw clods or anything, and compel them to kill us on the spot." So they agreed, if worst came to worst, to stand back to back and fight them off.

This may seem overdrawn to many of our readers of to-day; but if they have ever seen the remains of men and women hacked and mutilated,

as the writer has, and realize as fully as the occupants of the little wagon did that such a fate awaited them in the event of capture, they too would have courted death sudden, certain, and immediate, in preference to that other, more remote but just as sure, and far more terrible.

During the discussion of the situation by Booth and Hallowell, the speed of the mules had slackened but little; the arm of the latter still plied that effective lash, and they drew perceptibly nearer the camp, where there were men enough to rescue them if they could only be made aware of their situation; and as they caught the first glimpse of the tents of the officers and dugouts of the men, hope sprang up within them, and life, hanging as it were by a slender cord, seemed more precious than ever. In the hope of arousing and attracting the attention of some of the soldiers, they again commenced yelling at the top of their voices; the mules were panting like hounds on the chase; wherever the harness touched them it was white with lather, and they could not keep on their feet much longer.

Would they hold out until the bridge was reached, provided they escaped the spears of the Indians? The whipping and kicking had little effect on them now; they still continued

in their gallop, but it was slower and more labored than before, and as the Indians fell back to make fresh charges, the mules also slackened their gait, and it became almost impossible to accelerate their motion.

Hallowell kept his whip going mechanically, and Booth continued his attention to the little near mule with his foot; but the worn-out animals began to evince unmistakable signs of breaking down, and longing eyes were turned toward the camp, now so near.

Though the Indians who had torn open the satchels had not come up, and did not seem inclined to further continue the fight, there was still a sufficient number of the fiends pursuing to make it interesting; but they could not succeed in spoiling the mules, as at each attempt the plucky animals would jump sideways or forward and evade the impending blow.

One gigantic fellow followed them with a determination and valor worthy of a better cause, the others seeming now to have almost abandoned the idea of capturing either men or animals; but this persistent warrior was in all probability related to the young "buck" Booth had killed, and was thirsting for revenge. At any rate, he was loth to give up the chase, and followed the wagon

to within a few rods of the bridge, long after the other Indians had fallen back entirely.

The little log bridge was now reached; their pursuers had all retreated, but the valorous Hallowell kept the mules at the same galloping gait. This bridge was constructed of half-round logs, and of course was extremely rough. The wagon bounded up and down enough to shake the teeth out of one's head, as the mules went flying over the rude structure. Booth cried out to Hallowell, "No need to drive so fast now—the Indians have all left;" but he answered:

"I ain't going to stop until I get across," and down came the whip, on sped the mules, not breaking their gallop until they pulled up in front of Capt. Conkey's tent. Booth could not stand the fearful bounding of the wagon as it rolled across the bridge, so he crawled out behind and walked up to the quarters.

The rattling of the wagon on the bridge was the first intimation the command had of its returning. The sentinel on the post had been walking his beat on the east side of the long stockade stable to keep out of the cold northwest wind, and had heard nothing of the yelling and talking until they struck the bridge, when he came around the stable, saw the wagon and two or

three of the Indians behind, fired his carbine, and thus aroused the camp.

The officers came running out of their tents, the men poured out of their dugouts like a lot of ants, and the wagon and its occupants were soon surrounded by their friends. Capt. Conkey ordered the bugler to sound "boots and saddles," and in less than ten minutes ninety troopers were mounted, and, with the Captain at their head, started after the Indians.

Lieut. Hallowell reached the line of officers' tents before Booth, and as the latter came up was attempting to rise so as to get out; but each effort only resulted in his falling back. It was thought at first his wounds were the cause, but when asked, "What's the matter? Can't you get out?" replied, "I don't know. I seem to get up only so far." Some one stepped around to the other side to assist him, when it was discovered that the skirt of his overcoat had worked outside the wagon-sheet and hung over the edge, and that three or four of the arrows fired by the Indians had struck the side of the wagon, and passing through the flap of his coat, had pinned him down. Booth pulled the arrows out and helped him up. He was pretty stiff from sitting in his cramped position so long, and his

right arm dropped to his side as if struck with paralysis.

While Hallowell walked into Capt. Conkey's tent, assisted by the adjutant and quartermaster, some of the soldiers unhitched the poor mules and led them to the corral. On examining the inside of the wagon, twenty-two arrows were found lying in the bottom, innumerable holes through the sheet made by the passage of arrows, besides two from bullets, and the outside of the bed was scarred from one end to the other.

Booth stood looking on while Hallowell's wounds were being dressed, when the adjutant said, "What makes you shrug your shoulders so, Captain?" Booth replied that he "did not know; something caused it to smart." The adjutant looked, and said, "Well, I should think it *would* smart!—here is an arrow-head sticking into it;" and he tried to pull it out, but it would not come. Capt. Goldsborough then attempted it, but was no more successful than the adjutant. The doctor told them to let it alone and he would take care of it after he had finished with Hallowell, which he soon did, and with his lance cut it out. The point of the arrow had struck the thick part of the shoulder-blade and made two

complete turns, wrapping around the muscles, which had to be cut apart before it could be withdrawn.

Both of the principals in the terrible ride were soon attended to and made as comfortable as possible. Booth was not seriously hurt. Hallowell, however, had received two severe wounds: the arrow that had struck in his back penetrated almost to his kidneys, and the wound in his thumb was very painful, caused not so much by the simple contact of the arrow, as the tearing away of the muscles by the shaft while he was whipping the mules; his right arm, too, was swollen fearfully, and became stiff, from the incessant use of it during his drive, and for nearly a month he required help in dressing and undressing. The mules, the veritable saviors of our heroes, were of little account after their memorable trip;— they remained stiff and sore from the rough road and their continued forced speed. Booth and Hallowell went out the next morning to take a look at them as they hobbled around the corral, and from the bottom of their hearts wished them “green fields and pastures new.”

About half an hour after the little wagon had returned to Capt. Conkey's camp, a portion of the escort which had been sent out in advance in the

morning came galloping up, and from them the following was learned in relation to their movements:

They had started early, as ordered the night before, and moved out on a brisk walk toward Fort Larned. There were plenty of buffalo on the north side of the trail, and they saw no signs of Indians except the absence of buffalo near the river. They kept looking back, and slackened their gait somewhat after getting out four or five miles, to enable the wagon to catch up; and after they had proceeded about a mile beyond the point where the Indians made their first attack, and the wagon had been turned toward the camp, one of the lieutenants said to the other that they were getting too far ahead of the Captain, and suggested the propriety of halting; but Van Antwerp, who was in command, thought it better to leave a part of the company at that spot to wait. Accordingly, a corporal and fifteen men were detailed to remain there until the wagon should arrive, and the remainder moved on toward the fort.

The squad that had been detailed remained beside the trail for half an hour or so, when, becoming chilled, the corporal took them toward the river into a ravine that sheltered both men and horses from the cold northwest wind. There they

remained some time, when the corporal, becoming anxious, sent one of the men up the trail to see if the wagon was coming, but he soon returned, reporting nothing in sight. Waiting a few minutes longer, he sent out another man, who on returning reported that the wagon was coming, and had an escort. This last man had seen them a long way off while the Indians were chasing them, and supposed they were an escorting party—which was correct in one sense, but not as he thought and reported.

Remaining in the ravine until the corporal supposed the wagon had arrived nearly opposite, he moved out his squad on the trail, but seeing no wagon, and suspecting something had happened, started his party toward the camp on Walnut creek. They had proceeded but a short distance when one of his men cried out, "Here 's an arrow!" Hardly were the words out of his mouth before a second said, "Here 's another!" They knew now the reason why the wagon had not come up, and the corporal gave the command to gallop, and away they flew toward the camp. As they successively passed by the empty valises and the innumerable arrows on the trail, they fully realized what kind of an escort had accompanied the little wagon when the soldier had

reported, "They are coming, and have an escort."

Capt. Conkey's command returned about midnight. He had seen but one Indian during the entire ride, and he was on the south side of the river, in the sand-hills.

