

## THE TRAGEDY AT TWIN MOUNDS.

AN INCIDENT OF THE INDIAN WAR OF 1866-'67.



SUSIE RÉAUME.

sky on clear days as sharply as a summer thundercloud. In their contour they are so exactly similar, even to two white patches of limestone on

their southwestern slopes, that their name would immediately suggest itself to a stranger, for never were twins born so perfect in resemblance as these dual masses of disrupted rock.

Under their conical shadow runs the trail of the Mormon hegira to far-off Deseret, when that sect was driven out of Illinois; and also that of General John C. Frémont, on his memorable "Exploring Expedition" across the continent in 1843. Until very recently, when it was ruthlessly cut down, there stood in the valley, on the bank of the Elkhorn, immediately below the mounds, a large oak tree, at the foot of which the General caused that mutineer to be shot, the circumstances of which are related in his itinerary of that wonderful march.

But that was nearly a quarter of a century before the occurrence of the events to be related in this story; and they date back nearly the same length of time from the present. Both trails may still be seen in places where the land has not yet been subordinated to the plow; almost obliterated wagon-tracks in the short buffalo-grass covering that portion of the prairie through which the expedition passed, which each recurring season grow dimmer, and in a few more years will have vanished forever.

The valleys of the Elkhorn and the Saline were heavily timbered—are to-day, relatively. They were a favorite haunt of the Indians; and elk, buffalo, bear, and an occasional panther sought the rocky and vine-involved recesses of the primitive forest.

But the savages and the beasts of the plain have passed away. Now the land is full of harvests and green meads. Yet the Indian summer now as then wraps the hills in its mellow tints; the grass grows brown and rusty as each autumn fills its measure, and the days, as in the long-ago, are as grand as the golden sunshine of that incomparable season of the Great Plains ever lighted up; the mirage, as of old, weaves its fantastic forms out of the charming landscape, and under certain atmospheric conditions a man on top of one of the Twin Mounds will appear, as does the specter of the Brocken, like a huge giant in mid-air.

When Fort Harker, on the Smoky Hill, about fifteen miles south of the Twin Mounds, was established as a military post by Gen. Hancock in the fall of 1866, the whole vast area of central Kansas was the hunting-ground of the cruel and bloodthirsty Cheyennes, Arapahoos, and Kiowas. Their opposition to the intrusion of the whites manifested itself at every opportunity where it

was possible to murder or carry into captivity. The empire of the plow had just then dawned, and the march of the homesteader but fairly begun. The satanic genius of Indian hatred brooded over the beautiful landscape, and the harvest of the unlabored fields was blood.

It is true a few hardy trappers had for years roamed over the prairies and camped temporarily on the banks of the wooded streams, but there was no attempt at permanent settlement except in the immediate vicinity of the several forts; but they were established only from time to time at remote distances from each other, generally on the line of the Oregon and Santa Fé trail, under the protection of which it was alone safe to remain in the country.

About the time the site for the new post of Fort Harker had been determined upon, and troops—the Fifteenth Infantry and Gen. Custer's Seventh Cavalry—were camped on the grassy bottoms of the river and creeks in the vicinity, waiting for their permanent quarters to be erected, a bold and persistent frontiersman named Paul Réaume, who had been a pioneer in the wilds of Wisconsin twenty years before, emigrated from that State to Kansas.

After looking around for some time, visiting all

the inviting localities of the new commonwealth, in decided opposition to the advice of the military authorities at Fort Harker and the commanding general of the department he took up a "claim" and established a ranch at a magnificent spring a few hundred rods north of the base of the Twin Mounds.

Réaume was a widower, but his eldest daughter, Susie — dark-haired, rather handsome, and withal a modest, gentle girl of eighteen — kept house and acted the rôle of mother to her four young sisters and brothers, who loved and obeyed her with all the intensity of their warm natures, (Réaume was French but one generation removed,) which she reciprocated in an equal degree. They were a charming little family, of more means and greater refinement than are usually found in the average pioneer immigrant.

The fertile valley stretching many miles north and south afforded a rich pasturage, and the relatively deep woods on the margin of the Elkhorn a splendid shelter in winter for the herd of cattle that Réaume had driven from his old home. So he built as his needs required a comfortable log house and spacious corrals, where with an abundance of game all around him, from the trim-feathered quail to the huge shaggy-coated buffalo, he settled down to a life of rude contentment.

Of the many Government scouts at Fort Harker, among whom were William F. Cody ("Buffalo Bill"), William Hickok ("Wild Bill") and others, was Jack

Hart. Hart was a young light-haired boy, not more than twenty-three years old. He was fairly well educated, neither slangy nor dialectic in expression of thought; courageous as a lion, and endowed with a degree of endurance



SITTING BULL, CROW EAGLE, BUFFALO BILL.

under hardships incident to his vocation that was marvelous in its contemplation by a novice. Jack was a remarkably fine shot with either rifle or revolver. He could toss up an empty oyster can and put every ball out of his two Colts into it before it fell to the ground, and either "crease" or center the heart of an antelope at five hundred yards, as he might elect.

He was as keen on the trail as any Indian, whose original astuteness and strategy he had mastered, and was the superior of the savage, as is any white man when once thoroughly familiar with their cunning. Besides, in that quick perception and determination so essential to success in the moment of danger, when dealing with the wily nomad of the Plains, Hart was unequaled by any other scout I ever knew, and I have intimately known all who have figured at all conspicuously during the past thirty-five years.

Jack was a great favorite with all the officers at the military posts in the whole Department of the Missouri; had their entire confidence, and when any duty in his line became necessary requiring exceptional bravery, judgment and promptness in its execution, Hart was invariably detailed, if present, to perform it.

One day in April, 1867, as he was returning from the Platte river to Fort Harker with a company of the Fifth Cavalry he was guiding to the post, they halted at the spring where Réaume had established his ranch, to feed the horses, rest and water. Then for the first time in his life Jack saw Susie Réaume, who was cheerfully preparing an excellent dinner in her father's modest cabin for the officers of the command, who had politely requested of her something to eat.

It was the same old story of mutual love, the moment their eyes met; and ever after that memorable noon halt, when Hart had a day off he would mount his own roan broncho Tatonka, ride across the country to the Twin Mounds, and pour out his heart's thoughts to the gentle and confiding Susie, who before a month had elapsed promised to be his wife.

"There's no chaplain at the post now," said he, one evening after they were engaged, as they were sitting on the porch of her father's cabin in the bright moonlight, discussing plans for the future and building those airy castles in space as lovers are wont; "but I heard from the adjutant yesterday that one had been ordered to Harker from Fort Leavenworth, under an escort of a squadron of the Fifth Cavalry. They will be up in a couple of weeks, and when he arrives we will get married immediately. Eh! darling?" pleadingly continued Jack.

Susie blushing assented to Hart's importunity, and then he told her that he had saved enough to stock a ranch and build a house; that he proposed to leave the Government employ as soon as they were married, take up a "claim" on the Elkhorn near her father's, so that he would not be separated from her at all, or she from her family. Then

Jack, after cautioning Réaume, who had long before given his consent to the proposed match, to keep a sharp lookout for Indians, started about midnight on his lonely ride back to Fort Harker, where he was obliged to be early the next morning.



SA-TAN-TA.

posed of four companies of the Seventh Cavalry, commanded by Col. Keogh, to the region of Pawnee Rock and the Great Bend of the Arkansas, seventy miles to the southwest of Harker, where the Kiowas, under the leadership of the dreaded Chief Sa-tan-ta, had been for the past fortnight successfully raiding the overland coaches and the freight caravans to New Mexico.

The command to which Hart was attached remained away, having occasional brushes with the Indians, for several weeks. During its absence the allied tribes had become excessively impudent and threatening. They culminated their atrocities in a most fiendish and cruel massacre of the settlers on Spillman creek, upon the receipt of the news of which the Government determined to inaugurate an extended campaign against them, in which Gen. Sheridan was to take the field in person, with such famous Indian-fighters for his lieutenants as Gens. Sully, Custer, Carr, and others. Consequently all the scouting-parties were called in to their respective stations by courier, to prepare for the impending great conflict.

Of course, the moment Hart returned to Fort Harker he made preparations to leave for the ranch at Twin Mounds and the girl who had so photographed herself on the tablets of his memory. It was early the next morning after his arrival at the post; he had shaved, put on a new suit purchased from the sutler, and otherwise made himself presentable after his long scout. But he had hardly cinched the saddle on Tatonka before an orderly came to the corral and informed him that the commanding officer desired his presence at once. So Jack, with terribly depressed

feelings and mentally cursing his luck, mounted his horse and rode slowly up to headquarters, where he found the General standing on the porch waiting to receive him.

"Jack," said he, as the scout dismounted, "I'm awfully sorry to be compelled to call upon you to make another trip right away, when you have just returned from such a long one, but the fact is there's not another scout at the post; they are all away. I want you to start immediately for the Saline. Part of the Fifth Cavalry are en route from Fort Saunders here, and will probably reach the ford northwest of Fort Hays sometime to-day. It is now only six o'clock," looking at his watch; "you can reach there as soon as they do—before, if you start now. So go at once and guide them in. They don't know anything about that country on the river. You remember how terribly broken it is out there. Here are some dispatches you are to give to whomever you find in command;" and he handed the scout a small package of papers.

"All right, sir," replied Hart, as he put the bundle in the breast-pocket of his flannel shirt; "I'm off now, as soon as I go to my quarters for my saddlebags and carbine."

With a sad heart as he cast his eyes on the blue

cones of the Twin Mounds, looming up so suggestively of the ranch at their base, Jack left the post in a few minutes after his interview with Gen. Sully, fully mindful of the responsible duty intrusted to him. Hart made excellent time. He was anxious to get back as soon as possible. By two o'clock he had crossed the Saline, and when about three miles the other side of where the handsome little village of Sylvan to-day nestles so picturesquely in the wealth of woods surrounding, he met the troops, to whose commander he reported, and delivered his dispatches. He turned with them to the river, where, as it was now past three, the command went into camp for the night.

After grazing Tatonka for half an hour, feeding him some corn, and eating his own dinner, the thought suddenly struck Jack to ask permission to go over to the ranch at the foot of the Twin Mounds, whose dual peaks were plainly visible only fifteen miles away to the southeast as the crow flies. The colonel cordially granted Jack's request. He promised to join the column on the trail early in the morning before it had marched any great distance; then, at the commanding officer's suggestion, Jack drew in the sand with his finger a rough map of the route to Fort Harker, supplementing it by pointing out certain

divides and ledges of rock that could plainly be seen on the trail from where the colonel and the scout stood.

When Jack had finished he left the camp for the spot where he had given his heart more than two months before, his soul filled with rapture at the prospect of soon meeting again the gentle girl he loved.

His horse was a medium-sized broncho, full of power and endurance, which he knew could easily make Réaume's ranch in three hours. That would bring him there about seven o'clock, in time for supper, and more than an hour and a half before dark. So he struck a bee-line for the Mounds, his feelings better imagined than described; an ecstasy indefinable except to those whose experience has been similar to that of the overhappy scout.

The sun was just sinking below the horizon when Jack arrived at the Elkhorn, in the immediate vicinity of the ranch. A flood of golden light poured into the beautiful little valley as he crossed the ford and entered the circular grove, in the middle of which Réaume had built his log cabin and corrals. As he rode toward the place where the cluster of rude huts should be, his eyes, which were ordinarily as keen and as bright as an

eagle's, suddenly filled, for he looked upon a scene that caused his bronzed cheeks to blanch and an exclamation of horror to escape his lips. The cabin was roofless, and the green timber composing its sides and ends was still slowly burning.

"Cheyennes!" he muttered with set teeth, as he unslung his carbine, spurred his horse forward, while a prayer for the safety of the girl he loved was formulated in his brain. When he reached the opening where the once happy home was so picturesquely located he drew up on the reins, and as Tatonka stopped a deep groan escaped Jack. Lying under the mighty trees, close to the ruins of the cabin, were the scalped and mutilated remains of Réaume and his four youngest children.

But where was Susie, the woman he loved? Dazed and stupefied for a moment, Jack began to search for her body. She was not with the rest of the murdered family. "Oh, my God!" he cried in his agony, "has she been saved for a fate worse than death! Carried off a miserable captive among the soulless savages? Great God, no! I cannot think of it. Sooner would I see her here dead with the others!"

Although almost overcome with grief, and furious with passion as these thoughts, so terrible in their contemplation, crowded thick upon his

brain, he was determined not to lose his self-control. Pausing for a moment, cautiously looking around to assure himself that none of the paint-bedaubed fiends were lurking in the timber, he dismounted, tied his horse to an oak sapling, walked to where his dead friends lay, and silently contemplated the horrid butchery. He dared not think of the probable fate of the faithful young girl who had promised to be his wife, but he uttered bitter curses against the demons who had so wantonly, and without the slightest provocation, annihilated the peaceful little family. He swore to himself that he would have ten lives for one, in his determined revenge. He turned away, sick at heart, from these victims of Indian hatred, and walked slowly toward the spring to quench his feverish thirst and to collect his dazed ideas.

It was six or seven rods from where the cabin had stood to the wall of rock in the hillside out of which the water gushed, and it was completely hidden by a dense growth of cottonwoods, willows and elders, covering more than an acre. As he approached the edge of this tangled thicket, a low moan reached his ear; whether animal or human, so faint was it, he could not distinguish.

Stopping for an instant, every sense on the alert, he cocked his carbine, and listened atten-

tively. The strange sound was repeated. He moved cautiously on the narrow trail. Then suddenly as he arrived at the spring, which made quite a pool as it fell from a shelf of sandstone, with a cry of horror from his lips he saw prone on the ground, her pale mouth just touching the water's edge as it flowed in a diminutive rivulet, the apparently lifeless body of Susie Réaume.

"Susie, my darling!" cried he, as he knelt reverently by her side and kissed her forehead, for he believed her certainly dead. But the girl's eyes opened as she felt the warm impress of his lips, and she looked up into his anxious face with an unmistakable glance of recognition, vainly essaying to speak.

"Oh, Susie, are you seriously hurt? Tell me, if you can," he lovingly pleaded, as he then for the first time noticed, with fear depicted on his countenance, a pool of dried blood on the sod beneath her.

After an evident struggle she laboredly gasped: "Yes—Jack—here," touching her right side with her left hand, causing her much effort to accomplish it.

Jack at once commenced to unfasten her dress, but she instinctively attempted to raise her arms to prevent him, while a delicate blush spread over her pale face.

"Susie, dear," said Jack, as he understood what her motion was intended to convey to him, "there are no woman's hands here to do what under the circumstances must be done; so, darling, let there be no false modesty. I want to save you, and you want to live."

Upon this appeal she made no more resistance, but her eyes closed, and the glow of her maiden delicacy deepened, while Jack, with the most sacred feelings, cut open her bodice with his sheath-knife and exposed her virgin bosom to the evening breeze. On the right side, immediately on a line with her shoulder, he discovered an ugly lance-wound, which had bled so profusely that she had fainted, and was almost exhausted when Jack found her. The wound had evidently stopped flowing some time since, and fortunately the blade had not penetrated her lungs; at least so thought Jack in his careful and gentle examination, determining the matter from the fact that there was no hemorrhage from her mouth, and he silently thanked God.

It was now long after sundown. In the lingering twilight he carefully washed the wound with water, using a portion of her skirt he had cut off for the purpose. Completing this office, and binding on a wet compress, Jack then moved her

tenderly to a mat of soft buffalo-grass near by, made a pillow of his saddle, and a covering for her out of his saddle blanket, then busied himself in making her a cup of coffee, a supply of which and a small pot he always carried with him.

The coffee and somehardtack he had, revived the wounded girl very materially, reduced the incipient fever which had set in, and permitted her to fall into a gentle slumber; while Jack, under the brilliant constellations of the incomparable June night, nursed her through its silent watches. The poor fellow leaned patiently over her with looks of the most tender solicitude, bathing her temples now and then with water from the spring when she became the least restless, and occasionally running his fingers through her dark ringlets with the fondness of a young but constantly growing affection—for it was his first love, and he had given his soul up to it with all the strength and weakness of his passion.

The sun, though not yet above the horizon of the valley, was just gilding the crests of the Twin Mounds next morning when Susie awoke with a glance of approving affection on Jack. Although she did not speak, there is a language of looks which is sufficient for the purposes of love. As

he quietly kissed her he understood it perfectly, and it filled his soul with joy.

Jack then, after his ablutions at the spring, made a little fire, put on his coffee-pot, which soon boiled, and while it was settling he tenderly washed the wounded girl's face and placed a fresh compress on the cruel hole in her side.

After Susie had partaken of her frugal breakfast, she was able to converse a few minutes. She expressed herself in words that were music in Jack's ears, of the deepest gratitude and love for the care he had bestowed upon her, assuring him that but for his opportune coming and devotion, she would hours since have been dead.

"Do you think, Susie, you could ride on my horse?" pleadingly inquired Jack. "We could reach Fort Harker early in the afternoon, if you have strength enough to sit in the saddle, and can bear the fatigue. I am certain you need a doctor's care and a woman's nursing. Were it possible to leave you here, I would make the post in three hours, and bring back an ambulance for you. But that would require every minute from now until four o'clock; and to compel you to remain here and alone until I return, with the Indians perhaps hovering around, cannot be thought of."

Susie was now sitting up, leaning against the trunk of a big elm to which Jack had carried her, in order that she might be more comfortable; and in answer she said:

"I think I am strong enough, Jack. I *must* be. That is the only thing that can be done. I have n't much fever now, and my wound has n't bled any since yesterday. Let's try, at least. I've lots of courage—you know that—and I believe that I can make the trip."

Jack then watered Tatonka, saddled him, and after tying him to a tree, told Susie he would go up on the hill and make a reconnoissance before they started; that he would be gone only about ten or fifteen minutes, and not to worry during his absence.

The sun was fairly above the horizon when Jack, with only his sheath-knife, started for the bluffs above the creek bottom, where he could see over the country for miles. He wanted to satisfy himself whether there were any Indians skulking in the vicinity, as he dared not take such desperate chances, handicapped with the helpless girl, as he would if he were going to make the trip to Fort Harker alone.

He had not forgotten his promise of the afternoon before, to join the cavalry column and guide

it to the post; consequently he was somewhat disturbed at first. But when he left the colonel he of course never imagined that such a fate had befallen Réaume's ranch and the girl Jack loved. So the scout did not, when he considered the matter a moment, weigh his duty in the scales of his affection. He would have sacrificed place, friends and everything to save his affianced. What man would blame him?

He had just reached the second bottom above the creek and was emerging from the heavy growth of timber out on the prairie at the foot of the most southerly of the Twin Mounds, when he was confronted by a monstrous she-panther, with three young ones not more than six weeks old. Ordinarily, that animal of the *genus felis* will not attack man,—preferring, rather, to shrink from his presence, unless provoked by wounds. But in this instance both Hart and the panther were face to face on the edge of the woods before they were aware of the fact. Which was the more surprised, the man or the beast, it would have been difficult to determine.

If there had been no little ones with her, in all probability the panther would have incontinently bounded into the timber at the first glance of Jack's eyes; but the presence of the kittens

aroused the maternal instinct for their safety. So, with a low growl and a characteristic "spit" at him, she flew at the scout's breast, fastening her great claws into his shoulders before he could draw his knife, and they both fell by the sheer impetus of the cat's onset.

Jack, unfortunately for himself at this juncture, had left his carbine and revolvers with Susie. She could use them very effectually in case of emergency, but she was too far away to be able to hear him if he should call, and too weak to come if she could hear him. Now, his only dependence for defense from the murderous attack of the ferocious beast was his knife, but he was an expert in its use.

They struggled fearfully, the infuriated animal endeavoring to insert its teeth in the scout's throat, which luckily he succeeded in preventing by the dexterous use of his knife. But in the awfully unequal battle he was terribly cut by the sharp, active claws of the enraged beast, and was bleeding profusely from more than a dozen wounds already inflicted on his shoulders, legs and body. He had, fortunately, been able to keep the cat's great paws off his face.

At last, by one desperate effort Jack succeeded in giving a home thrust in the region of the crea-

ture's heart, which ended the struggle; luckily for him, too, for at that moment he swooned from loss of blood. The panther loosened her hold—she was dead.

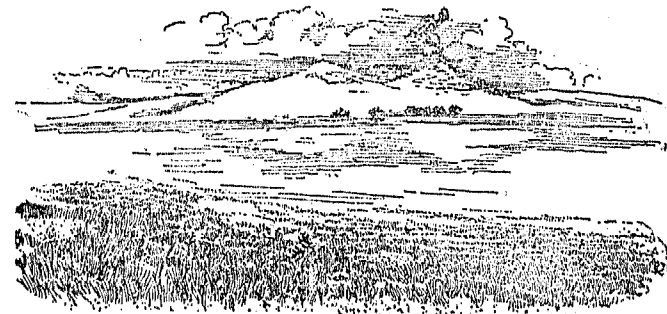
This final effort of the scout occurred on the extreme edge of a rocky shelf, whither both man and beast had been forced during their desperate fight. Below this shelf, at a distance of only a few feet, fortunately, the level prairie hugged the timber, the latter throwing a deep shade over the spot. Into this grassy little place both Hart and the panther fell—he insensible from loss of blood, with the lifeless beast alongside him.

In the cavalry camp on the Saline the troopers were busily grooming their horses at the picket-line. The captains of companies near by were superintending this important duty, while the colonel, surrounded by a group of officers, nearly all of whom were smoking their matutinal pipes, stood in front of headquarters tent, drinking in the charming landscape and delicious freshness of the early summer morning. Suddenly, as his eyes happened to rest upon the double cones of the Twin Mounds that loomed up blue and clearly defined in the coming light from the east, he

pointed in their direction with a field-glass he had in his hand, and exclaimed:

“Look, gentlemen, look! A mirage! a mirage!”

Every one turned; and presently, while all were gazing with enchantment on the strange phenomenon, far above the peaks, in the sky, but inverted, two moving figures appeared, surrounded by that waving purple mist characteristic of the mirage



THE MIRAGE.

on the Great Plains. One of the celestial apparitions was in the similitude of a man, the other of a beast. Both were gigantic and exaggerated in outline; both were grappling in a deadly struggle!

Every soldier stopped his work to watch the curious picture suspended in the heavens; some regarded it with a superstitious awe, thoroughly frightened at the manifestation, which they never dreamed of as within the range of possibilities.

The colonel recognized the huge figure of the man in the clouds, disproportioned as he was, to be the scout who had left him the afternoon before, but what the beast was none of the men could make out.

"Great Caesar!" cried the colonel; "what a place for a battle, away up there in the clouds! It reminds me of Lookout Mountain, when I was with Hooker."

Every one intently watched the strange combat, filled with excitement at the novelty of the thing, until presently the figures appeared to fall over an immense precipice and vanish, although they seemed to disappear with an upward movement. Then there was nothing left but the inverted mounds, the woods and the prairie of the wonderful mirage; it, too, was all dispelled in a few moments more.

The colonel turned to his adjutant and ordered "boots and saddles" sounded at once.

"For we must be off," said he, addressing the officers around him generally. "Life may depend upon our promptness in reaching the scene of that strange conflict."

In less than a quarter of an hour the column had moved out, headed in a "bee-line" for the Twin Mounds, every man in the whole command

as anxious as his comrade to reach the place, for all were excited over what they had witnessed.

It required four hours of brisk marching before they arrived on the plateau at the base of the Mounds, and by that time it was past eleven o'clock, and intensely hot. The command halted there, while the colonel, the adjutant, the surgeon, several other officers and a detail of five enlisted men instituted a search for the missing scout.

In a little while they found the bodies of Hart and the panther close together, lying in the shade of the huge oaks, where they had fallen in their last struggle, and when they had disappeared to those who had watched the combat from their camp on the Saline.

Upon examination, the surgeon discovered that the scout was alive, but terribly lacerated by the sharp claws and teeth of the panther, as well as badly bruised in consequence of his fall from the ledge of rocks, though no bones were broken, nor were any of his wounds necessarily serious. He had merely become insensible from loss of blood and exhaustion incident to the awful struggle. The doctor placed a flask of brandy to the unconscious man's mouth, which he pried open with Jack's own knife, still clutched in his right hand

when discovered; and in a few moments, as the stimulating liquor reached his stomach, he slowly opened his eyes, looked around in a bewildered manner at first, then apparently taking in the situation of affairs at a glance, partially raised himself, and in a hoarse whisper, pointing in the direction where he had left her, said:

"Susie Réaume! Near the spring! Quick, for God's sake!"

"Who?" replied the astonished doctor; "Susie, a woman, here too?"

Jack had by this time gotten over his dizziness somewhat, and was able feebly though intelligently to convey the story of the awful massacre at the ranch, his relations to the wounded girl, and the state of affairs when attacked by the panther. Then looking at the sun, and realizing that hours must have elapsed since he had left Susie, he urged the doctor to go at once, upon which he attempted to get on his feet to guide him to the spot, but he was too weak yet, and would have fallen if one of the men had not caught him.

"No! no!" exclaimed the doctor, when he divined Jack's intention; "don't try to walk yet. I'll leave one of the troopers to look after you and I'll go and attend to the young girl immedi-

ately. You'll be all right in half an hour; then you can follow."

So, with directions from Jack, the doctor, the colonel and two soldiers started for the spring, which they found without any difficulty, the trail to that point having been explained in such a clear manner by the anxious scout.

Entering the maze of willows by a well-beaten trail that led from the kitchen door of the destroyed cabin, they found Susie in nearly the same position in which Jack had left her early in the morning, sitting on the grass against the big elm, weak and feverish. She involuntarily gave a little cry of surprise when she saw the officers approaching, and with a slight blush mantling her cheeks, laid the rifle she had raised from the ground at her side when she first heard footsteps, back in its place, and bowed her head gracefully in response to the colonel's courteous salutation. Both he and the doctor were surprised to find so much refinement and culture as Susie evinced, in such an unlooked-for place.

"Miss Susie," said the colonel, as he irresistibly lifted his hat to the charming picture of rusticity, "I have brought our surgeon, at Jack's request, who will see what he can do for you, and then we'll find means to transport you comfort-

ably to Fort Harker, where you can be properly cared for. The doctor will tell you all about Jack's mishap—there, don't be alarmed," as Susie made a convulsive start; "he's all right, and will be here presently." Then bowing again, the colonel and his two men retired some distance, while the doctor, as modestly as possible, examined the gentle girl's wounds, and told her the story of Jack's strange adventure.

Susie Réaume was a girl of the strongest affections, but not in the least degree demonstrative. Her grief at the horrible fate of her father, brothers and sisters was as deep as the circumstances were appalling, her love for the young scout as pure as it would be enduring; but on both subjects of the sorrow which had come to her in a single day she was reticent, or communicated so little that the first impressions of the colonel and the doctor were that she was as emotionless as a marble statue. There was never a greater error of judgment: concealment of her anguish was a prominent characteristic of her nature, while she suffered unutterable mental torture.

By the time the doctor had finished dressing Susie's wounds the command was well established in camp on the stream, and dinner in progress. Jack had returned to the spring too, holding a

conference with the colonel as soon as he arrived there, explaining that he was not a quarter of a mile away from a good trail to Fort Harker, that ran a little distance west of the Elkhorn, where they now were.

Jack was thinking and congratulating himself upon the curious chain of circumstances which had thwarted all his plans, provided better for the wounded Susie, and at the same time saved his honor, if indeed it were at all involved, in breaking his word to the colonel.

Both of the doctor's patients in a short time received some excellent nourishment, prepared by the hospital steward out of the medical stores, under the surgeon's direction, reviving the wounded girl materially and putting Jack fairly "on his feet" again, for he was "as tough as a knot."

About half-past two the column was ready to move out. Susie was made comfortable on a litter, fashioned after the Indian method of transporting their wounded, constructed of saplings and blankets, which was carefully slung between two pack-mules of the supply train, respectively led by two troopers detailed for that duty. This novel equipage the colonel ordered to march in advance of the column, so that the dust raised by the company's horses should not annoy Susie;

while Jack, who was able to mount Tatonka, though he was terribly sore and stiff, rode alongside of her and piloted the command on the trail. Before they left the ruined ranch, however, the colonel caused the bodies of the unfortunate Réaumes to be temporarily interred and large stones put over their graves, to prevent the wolves from digging up and eating the flesh off their bones, as it was Hart's intention to have them taken to the post and decently buried in the little cemetery there.

After an eventful march the command arrived at Fort Harker just as the sun was setting, where Susie was kindly cared for, and Jack went to his own quarters, to be patched up and plastered by the post surgeon.

Hart was out and ready for duty inside of a week; but Susie did not gain rapidly. She seemed to be slowly wasting away with a fever, though the wound in her side had closed, and there was no longer danger from that source. It was the terrible agony of her soul; she did not complain, and the doctor was puzzled. The awful mental strain incident to what she had passed through, coupled with the morbid fear that the marriage with the man she loved could not be consummated, was doing its work. Only time, the great

healer of sorrows, could bring relief, and both she and Jack were impatient.

The weeks dragged their weary length along, and the golden October days came before she was convalescent; but with that subdivision of the year came also the inauguration of that celebrated winter campaign against the allied tribes, for which Gen. Sheridan had been making vigorous preparations all summer. Of course there could be no marriage now until the war was over, and it lasted (officially) for one hundred and sixty-three days, counting from the 21st of October, but virtually ending with Gen. Custer's annihilation of Black Kettle and his band of warriors in the battle of the Washita, in November.

At last, in May, 1869, that month of floral beauty on the Central Plains, on a delicious Sabbath morning, Jack and Susie were married by the post chaplain in the large unoccupied ward of the hospital at Fort Harker, which had been garlanded with wild flowers, roses predominating, and great bunches of the creamy-petaled yucca, for the occasion.

Gens. Sheridan, Custer, Sully, and all the officers, with their wives, who were part of the garrison stationed there, graced the ceremony with their presence. Buffalo Bill, Wild Bill, and all

the other famous scouts on duty at Fort Harker, were also present; and many substantial presents were received from all the distinguished guests by the favored couple.

Nearly a quarter of a century has elapsed since then. All the famous generals mentioned are dead. Hart is now a prosperous ranchman, with large herds of mild-eyed Jerseys and broad-backed Shorthorns peacefully grazing in his extensive pastures. On the porch of his beautiful home, Susie, now a stately matron, and Jack with his pipe in his mouth, may be seen sitting in their large arm-chairs at the close of day, resting from the labors the ranch imposes. A bevy of handsome children are busy with hammock or swing under the great trees of the lawn; and as the twilight gathers, the old folks relate to the little ones the story of those terrible hours on the Elkhorn so many years ago—a picture on "memory's walls" that time can never efface.