

## COLLABORATEURS.

By S. D. SCHULTZ.

## CHAPTER II. (Continued.)

THE sudden alarm only worked momentary confusion among the enemy. They rallied with astonishing rapidity, and the advance guard of scouts and police were greeted with a fusillade of bullets, as soon as their heads showed above the crest of the lower hill. The line of attack quickly extended, and the gatling, flanked by two seven pound brass cannon, was speedily wheeled to a position just below the brow. The remainder of the troops crossed the creek without a single mishap.

One of the buglers was trumpeting a general advance. The blatant staccato notes were heard above the tumult of battle, above the officers' ringing commands, above the shouts of teamsters hastily forming a laager of waggons, above the clamor of cavalymen urging their chargers to the fore, above the rattle and din of musketry. The inspiring martial strains broke off abruptly, in a half-completed measure. The bugle dropped, and hung by its silken tassel, and, simultaneously, two arms were flung into the air.

The rebels menaced their white foe on every side, and were following their customary tactic of firing from ambush. The battle-field abounded with hillocks and ravines, and along these they skulked and crept. The Canadian force battled with an invisible host, only proclaiming its presence by sudden flashes, puffs of smoke and death-dealing missiles.

But now the Indians are mustering courage and confidence. They are gathering in force on the opposite hill. The guns have been hurling schrapnel into their camp with fatal effect, and the red men are determined to charge and capture the bellowing engines of destruction. It is a critical time for the volunteer lads, fatigued with their all night ride. They have never had a hand to hand encounter. The Indians are rushing down the other hill, defiantly waving their rifles in the air. They are without any show of discipline, but as the guns are the objective point of all, their charge presents something of the nature of a serried attack by trained troops. They have reached the hollow dip between the two hills, and are beginning the ascent. It is an anxious moment. The artillerymen are standing steady—waiting. A surprise is in store for the untutored children of the plains. The dusky warriors have not mastered all the tricks and devices of modern warfare. On they come—nearer—nearer. The militia are fingering the triggers with impatience. "Fire," the officer orders sharp and emphatically, and a line of flashing light blazes from a hundred rifles.

Synchronously, the crank of the gatling revolves, and a murderous shower of bullets is rained upon the startled redskins. Their impetuous rush comes to a sudden halt—they pause in dismay, and then madly race down the slope. The gatling had mowed a swath, and the descent was dotted with the bodies of the riddled slain. One of the killed was a mere tot of an Indian boy, armed with bow and arrow, who had taken part in the charge with childish ignorance of possible fatal consequences.

The Indians were taught a salutary lesson, and they returned to their native method of fighting under the cover of trees, rocks or natural rifle-pit of sheltering ravine.

The white force numbered a few casualties, chiefly from reckless exposure, but now they were adopting the plan of campaign of the enemy, and the engagement narrowed to desultory firing and skirmishing, in which the sharp-shooting of the militia more than compared with their adversaries.

A few of the enemy had taken possession of a small elevation, overlooking the corral of waggons, within which was stationed the ambulance corps, and succeeded in picking off a number of horses. A lieutenant with twenty men was deputed to dislodge the rebels, hold the position, and signal on any attempt to recapture. Frank White and Harry Seymour were included in the attacking party. The importance of the situation as a vantage point escaped the notice of the insurgents, and the few half-breed riflemen evacuated without firing a shot, at sight of the small company approaching on the double quick. When the summit was reached, they found, though, that the place was poorly protected and presented a most handy target for hostile marksmen. The enemy kept pelting the position, and the bullets were flying around in a terrifying manner. The men hugged the ground, and made no effort to answer fire. Seymour was lying beside a corpse, and another lifeless body lay stretched a few feet from White. Suddenly some one discovered that the lieutenant in command was missing. They began to grumble and murmur. They could not see the necessity of waging such unequal strife, and objected to being killed off like rats in a cask. The importance of the position never occurred to any of them. After slight hesitation, they resolved to retreat, and soon were crawling away on hands and knees to a small grove of trees.

The enemy promptly appeared on the abandoned position, and repeated their fire on the laager.

"My God, boys, what have you done? I would die rather than be disgraced. It is all my fault. I lost my head and left you. That place must be taken at all

hazard. Life is nothing to me now," was the lieutenant who had spoken excitedly. His exsanguious face bore a look of deadly determination. His teeth were clenched in savage resolve. He recognized that he was responsible for an unpardonable blunder. He must retrieve lost honor, or perish in the attempt.

They lined up. The two dead had been left on the hill, and would receive the usual horrible mutilation from the truculent enemy. The lieutenant glanced at his insignificant file of eighteen, and then at the point of attack, and owned to himself how barren and devoid of hope were the chances. "Steady, boys—bayonets—charge," and the lieutenant, sword in hand, led the way. They traversed half the incline. The rebels were reserving their fire, and a volley would crash out at short range from the summit. Frank White was rushing along at a swinging gait. Frank could always be counted in the van. He saw the glistening barrels. An unseen hand would pull a trigger. Would there be a leaden messenger for him? His elbow coupled with six feet of sturdy, well-developed physique would surely sing him out as a mark. Only a few feet more, and the muzzles would belch forth death and oblivion. What were his thoughts, dashing along with the healthy flow of vigorous young manhood surging through his veins? A faint flush on his cheek, eyes kindling with excitement, lips half parted—on, on, he rushes. Was he thinking of some one fair and lovely, some one with whom, but a short while back, he plighted troth? Only in early spring, just past, he had been rendered ineffably happy. Was he thinking of a garden, bathed in a melting, half-toned radiance of moonlight? Did his charming vision conjure up shy, trusting blue eyes that had looked into his, with a world of tenderness sparkling in their liquid depths? Or was he thinking of a dear loved, doting mother, whom kind hands had gently led away, wringing her hands, tears streaming down her cheeks, and crying out in agonized despair "Oh! my darling, my only boy. Merciful God! I may never see my Frank again!"

A remorseless black eye, under bushy beetling brows, glanced along a rushing barrel. A puff of white smoke. Something hissed through the air. Frank White fell back—Frank White—youthful, strong, handsome, fell back—dead.

The shot that severed poor Frank's thread of life was but the prelude to a volley. When the smoke cleared away the lieutenant and Seymour, among others, were lying motionless on the ground. The rest were in deadly peril. There was a shout in the rear. Reinforcements are hurrying to the rescue, to save the remnant of the luckless eighteen, and