

HIS LIFE A DEEP MYSTERY.

Queer Story of Military Student "Bison" McLean.

West Point Cadet Who Disappears From School and Becomes Chief of the Navajos.

"Bison" McLean was sent to the military academy at West Point from southwest Missouri. The class he joined has become famous for the names of several of its members. The name "Bison" was given him by George B. McLellan because of McLean's long black hair and immense size. The Missourian was a poor student in his classes, and that he managed to stay at the academy for three years at all was on account of his superiority in riding and drill work. His life in the southwest had trained him in firearms, and no cadet at the Point could equal his records on the target range. He was not a popular man, for, in addition to being dull, he had a sullen temperament and moments of ungovernable passion. One cold, bitter winter night he disappeared. With one exception, this was the last time any of his classmates saw "Bison" McLean. His skates were missing, and so a search was made for him in the river. His family saw that search was made for him in New York. The books of the academy recorded him missing, and he was forgotten soon in the preparations for the war with Mexico.

The war was fought and ended. The tide of emigration to the west following the opening of the new territory and the discovery of gold in California made new duties for the army. It was necessary for emigrants to travel in great open wagon trains for their mutual protection, and the hussars were busy lending them their aid or avenging their wrongs. Garrisons were placed at Santa Fe and at several points in the southwest to keep the Indians off the trails passing through Magon Mount gap. Gen. W. S. Harney was in command of these forces and had such men as Kit Carson in his employ as scouts. Maj. Sumner, afterward a major general, was Gen. Harney's right hand man. Early in the '50s he was sent on a scout with three troops of dragoons through the Dahi and Tularosa ranges. While he was mounting a rise in the Dahi the dragoons came suddenly on a band of 800 Navajo Indians. The American troops prepared to fight, but the Indians halted and raised their hands with the open palm of peace. They explained that they were after Apaches, with whom they were then enjoying one of their predatory wars. Then a remarkable thing happened. The chief rode out from the band and, facing them, gave a sharp command. The braves formed in troops of about 100 each and marched past as it at parade. The amazement of Maj. Sumner seemed to please the chief, for he gave another command. The Indians turned sharply, changed from line into column and then back into line. Another sharp order, and they advanced in line by the entire command.

"Where in thunder did you get all this?" cried Maj. Sumner. "We've four times this many drilled braves," the chief replied, and, dropping a little stone, "we'll use them, too, perhaps when it comes to fighting the whites. We have a great war chief who has taught us these things." He raised his hand as a signal, and the Indians moved over the hill and disappeared.

Maj. Sumner made an official report of the incident. He did not forget to tell, in addition to the foregoing, that the Navajos he had seen were armed with American rifles and lances of Mexican manufacture. Jefferson Davis was then secretary of war. He had seen enough of the southwest in his experiences in the Mexican war to know how extraordinary it was that Indians should adopt a civilized method of warfare. He ordered a report in detail and called for as complete an investigation as possible under the circumstances. There was little more learned further than this—that the drill resembled that of the American dragoons and was not at all like the Mexican tactics. No white man had seen the war chief, though one of Kit Carson's scouts declared he had. The chief was not a Mexican, he said, and was a Navajo most certainly. He was a tall, handsome Indian of remarkable physique and rode like a dragoon and not like an Indian. Nothing more than these few facts could Secretary Davis gather.

It was nearly ten years later that Joseph C. Ives was sent at the head of an expedition to survey the Colorado

river. A troop of dragoons was detailed as the guard for his party. Ives had been at West Point and had been transferred to the topographical survey. While up in the mountains to the east of where now the town of Green River is the Indian guides became uneasy and reported that they were spied upon by some redskin scouts, to whom they could not approach close enough to learn their tribe. Guards were more carefully placed. One morning the relief of one of the outer pickets found the man shot through the heart by an arrow.

"There's an Indian chief on the guard line, and he's asked to see you." "You should go to your commanding officer, corporal," Ives replied. "I'm not in charge of the escort."

"No; but the Indian asked for you, sir, and by name."

"Well, that's strange. How does he know me? Bring him up. But if he has any others with him keep them out of camp."

A few minutes later the corporal returned with the chief, who was a marvelous figure for even a Navajo. He was very tall and straight and muscled like an athlete. A guide was called to act as interpreter.

"I guess we don't need that fellow," the chief remarked as the guide came up.

The officers had gathered at Ives' tent, and their mouths fell open in amazement as they heard him speak, for his English was pure and without a flaw of accent. The Navajo sat down on a camp stool in a seat possessed way and looked the group of men over quietly.

"Have you any spare tobacco, Ives?" he asked.

The tobacco was found for him, and an orderly was dispatched to an officer's tent for the bottle that, because of the inaccessibility to civilization, had been nursed lovingly and held for extraordinary occasion.

"How does it come, Ives, you're not wearing the uniform? You didn't fall down at the Point, did you?" "Great Scott, what do you know about the Point?" cried the astonished Ives.

But the chief only smiled and went on talking about the Point and the men who were there 15 years before. His familiarity with the army ended there, for he asked hungrily about these few men and how they had done in the Mexican war. He was surprised to learn how well their fortunes had prospered. For two hours the officers stared at this great brown Indian and searched their memories in vain efforts to place him.

"You may be pleased to learn that it had been arranged to kill your party off, Ives, but I recognized you yesterday while you were plowing around the hills, and we'll declare the killing off for old times' sake. I've enough braves within a mile of you to ride you all down in an hour," the Navajo said as he rose to go.

"But who in thunder are you?" Ives cried. "You seem to know me, but I can't for the life of me recall you."

"Don't you remember McLean, who was in your class at West Point?" the chief asked.

"What, 'Bison' McLean—who was drowned?"

"Yes, I'm 'Bison.' There is no record of any other instance of magnanimity on the part of 'Bison' McLean. Only an occasional trapper, with the exception of Indians, saw him after that. His history thenceforth is as mysterious as that which had connected itself with him when he was only the great Navajo war chief. How he left the Point and joined the Indians and why no one knows to this day. The retreat of Chief Joseph and his Nez Percés from New Mexico to the lava fields in the war of 1877, one of the most remarkable in all military history for its strategy, is credited by army officers to the generalship of 'Bison' McLean. It is not doubted that he is now dead, but when and where did he die? No one knows and probably never will.—Kansas City Star.

En Route to Eagle.
W. R. Edwards and wife, of Fargo, N. D., are registered at the Regina. Mr. Edwards is the receiver of the U. S. land office at Eagle, and is en route for the scene of his duties. He seems to have earned his appointment to this office as he was one of the first volunteers to land on Philippine soil during the recent unpleasantness with Spain. Mr. and Mrs. Edwards will be passengers on the first boat going down the river.

The warmest and most comfortable hotel in Dawson is at the Regina. Shoff, the Dawson Dog Doctor, Pioneer Drug Store.

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PERSONALITIES.

Congressman William A. Jones, of Virginia, served during the civil war in the defense of Richmond, and earned a nickname which still clings to him. He was born in Warsaw, Va., and his fighting qualities earned for him the title of "Thaddeus of Warsaw."

Col. E. F. Fleming, the clock master of the treasury department in Washington, has over 500 clocks in his care. His friends call him "Father Time." He starts winding his little army of eight-day clocks on Monday and gets around to the last one on Saturday night.

Ex-Gov. Roger Wolcott, of Massachusetts is spoken of as a candidate for the presidency of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. It is rumored that the board of trustees of that institution has already offered him the place, but this rumor he refuses to either affirm or deny.

Prof. Todd, of Amherst college, and Percival Lowell, of Boston, are making preparations for a trip to Africa to observe the eclipse of the sun in May next. Mr. Lowell's interest in astronomy began in an amateur way six or seven years ago. He founded the Lowell Observatory, at Flagstaff, Ariz., in 1894, and since then has made some important observations.

It is said that Gov. Crane, of Massachusetts, is very popular among the employes of his paper mill in Dalton, owing to his liberal treatment of them. There are several aged men in the town whose sole duty is to walk to the office of the mills and draw their pay—a sort of pension for services loyally rendered in the past. A strike in the establishment has not been known in the three generations of family management.

Lieut. Ward Cheney, of Connecticut, who has just died of wounds received in a skirmish in the Philippines, was a graduate of Yale college in the class of 1896, and was on the staff of the Hartford Courant when he enlisted, in 1898. When he left he remarked laughingly to his associates in the office that he supposed he ought to write his own obituary before he should go away. The suggestion was taken seriously, and at the request of one of the editors he wrote a paragraph covering his life, which has just been published. It fills but 26 lines of the Courant, and is very modestly written.

Quiet Up the River.

From all persons who arrive in Dawson from the outside comes the statement that all the towns in the upper country, including Skagway, are very dull. Old Skagwayans report that many are going out of business there owing to the exceedingly dull and quiet times. Bennett is said to be going the same route Dyea traveled two years ago, while Caribou, which never did attain to either name or fame, is holding her own. Whitehorse is reported as quiet but steadily growing on a solid, substantial basis, and is bound to be the best point between Dawson and the coast.

Concerning the copper mines near Whitehorse a late Skagway paper says: Bernard Whalen, who has just returned from a visit to Whitehorse, made a round of the various copper properties while there and declares that if the properties can be proven to have depth, the future of the district as a mining camp is assured. He says further: "Many shafts and tunnels have been made throughout the district on properties owned by poor men as well as those controlled by big companies. Poor men are putting in much of their time patiently working all their small incomes will permit."

"The Anaconda promises to be the greatest property in the camp. Six shafts have been sunk on it, each now from 16 to 25 feet deep, and a tunnel of 160 feet in length has been opened. In every one of the shafts and in the tunnel nothing has been encountered but ore. There are no walls. It is simply one huge body of quartz. The depth is alone to be ascertained. The tunnel so far penetrates a soft free milling gold rock which would pay to work in most countries."

"In the Rabbit's Foot much work has been done and it is showing up well. The Anaconda and the Rabbit's Foot now have ore that would pay to ship."

"Hundreds of tons of ore could be shipped from the Carlisle right now."

"The Pueblo, while low grade, has 100,000 tons of ore in sight."

"Capt. Stretch of the road has been in the camp endeavoring to arrange for the shipment of ore to Skagway and down the coast in some way satisfactory to mine owners and all."

Rapid Rise of the Yukon.

Between Friday evening and yesterday evening, a period of 48 hours, the Yukon river, which had formerly been steadily falling, rose upwards of a foot and has been continuing to rise today. Within the past three days there have been heavy rains all over the Yukon basin and to this fact is due the sudden and material rise in the river. It was the increased depth of water that enabled the steamer Lightning to move off the bar near Selwyn on which she had been hung up for several days. During the remainder of the season it is not feared but that there will be abundance of water.

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