

THE EVENING GAZETTE, SAINT JOHN N. B., THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10, 1889.

DUNRAVEN RANCH. A Story of American Frontier Life. By CAPT. CHARLES KING, U. S. A., AUTHOR OF "THE COLONEL'S DAUGHTER," "FROM THE RANKS," "THE DISSEMINATOR," ETC.

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The colonel's collection of photographs was a great deal of it. One of the most general and popular officers of the army, he had gathered together several large albums full of pictures of prominent men and attractive and distinguished women—not only those with whom he had been associated in his long years of service, but men and women in national and state affairs, and women leaders in society in many a great metropolis.

Both the ladies had hoped to see this famous collection of photographs before the colonel had not yet unpacked the albums, and they were disappointed. Now, however, the prospect was indeed alluring, and neither could resist. When the first album was opened, the colonel looked up and smiled his thanks as the colonel passed, clanking forth at the sound of adjutant's call, and with the completely engrossed in their delightful occupation to notice what took place at parade.

The long, slender line had formed—the infantry companies on the right and left flanks, their neat and tasteful dress of blue and white contrasting favorably with the gaily yellow plumes of the four dismounted troops of the cavalry. Company after company had taken the stately pose of "parade rest" and the captain faced to the front again, the adjutant was just about moving to his post on the prolongation of the front rank, and the colonel's setting back into the conventional attitude of the commanding officer, when from outside the rear angular inclosure of the parade ground, a faint, low, and somewhat hoarse voice was heard in subdued but earnest tones. "Keep your eyes to the front, Sir!" "Stand fast, Sir!" "Center of Third company!"

The grand, too, paraded in front of his quarters some distance behind the line, was manifestly disturbed, and the adjutant, recalled to his senses and with evident expression of his sentiments to the effect that if others could not readily be content, brusquely turned his head to where the band and growled, "Sound off!" The boom and crash of drum and cymbal and the blare of brasses thrived for a moment on the ears of the adjutant. The next thing the adjutant heard or saw was a riderless horse tearing full tilt on the parade, and appearing in a big circle from the right of the line down towards the point where the colonel stood.

Following him came a pair of Cheyenne scouts, their ponies rearing and prancing, but veering off the green as they realized that they were intruding on the ceremony of the day. Believed of his pursuers, the fugitive speedily set down into a lunging trot, and the voice streaming mane and tail, with head and ears erect, with falling bridle and flapping stirrups, he charged rapidly the open space between the colonel and the band, then came trotting back along the front, as though searching for the stolid rank of bearded faces for the friends he knew. Officer after officer passed in review until he came to Stryker's troop, posted on the right of the cavalry, and there, with a look of recognition, he fearlessly trotted up to the captain's outstretched hand. Another minute and two men fell out and made a temporary gap in the rank; through this a sergeant in close extended his white glove, relieved the captain of his charge and led the panting steed away.

The men retook their places; the captain again resumed his position in front of the center of his company, dropped the point of his saber to the ground and settled back into "parade rest"; the band went on thudding down the line, counter-marched and came back to its post on the right, making a favorable ring with the triumphant strains of "Northern Route," the trumpets played the "retreat," the adjutant stalked his three yards to the front, faced fiercely to the left and shouted his resonant orders down the line, three hundred martial forms sprang to attention, and the band, with simultaneous crash, ranks were opened with old time precision, the parade "presented" to the colonel with all due formality, the manual was executed just as punctiliously as though nothing unusual had happened; first sergeants reported, orders were published, parade formally dismissed; the line of officers marched silently to the front, halted, and made its simultaneous salute to the colonel, who slowly raised and lowered his white gloved hand in recognition; and then, and not till then, did any one allowed to speak of what was uppermost in every mind—that Sergeant Greyne's horse had come in without him, and that the animal's right flank was streaming with blood.

Ten minutes later, Perry, in riding dress, came hurrying down to the colonel's quarters, where three officers were now gathered at the gate. The ladies had put aside the albums, and with anxious faces were scanning the list group as though striving to gauge from their gestures and expression the extent of the calamity or the possible degree of danger. But Mrs. Lawrence looked fairly startled when her husband's voice was heard for the first time above the general hum of conversation. "Oh, Brainerd, Mr. Perry is coming, I see, and I presume there is no trouble to

the more was he satisfied that something far down that western line there was an entrance where Dr. Quinn, at least, had the "open season."

Perry's orders were, in case nothing was seen or heard of Sergeant Greyne while on the way thither, to enter the inclosure and make inquiries at the ranch itself. Mountain, the Cheyenne scout, had been hastily summoned from their lodges along the river, and sent scurrying forth upon the prairie to trail the horse's foot prints and so work back as far as possible before darkness intervened. Captain Stryker, too, and a dozen of his best men, had mounted and ridden forth in long, scattered line across the eastern plain; and those parties were all five miles out from the post before nightfall fairly hid them from view.

One thing the sergeant had to tell Mr. Perry which confirmed him in the belief that the sooner they got to Dunraven the quicker they would be at the scene of the colonel's mishap, whatever that might prove to be. He had had no time himself to visit the stables and examine the wounds on the horse's flank but as they rode away from Dunraven he turned in the saddle and called the non-commissioned officers to his side.

"What sort of wound is it, sergeant, that made the horse bleed so—bullet or halberd?"

"It don't look like either, Sir, but I can't say. The wound is on the side of the shoulder and along the flank, like a horn or a nail."

"Or a lance?" suggested the lieutenant adjutant.

"Yes, Sir, like a lance, though I haven't thought of that, not knowing of any fences hereabouts."

"You mean what I do, to be concluded to reconnoiter the eastern front. A few steps brought him to the corner, and there he stood before him, looking at his further end in a flood of light that streamed from the open window and through this front of the ground floor all was darkness. His gaiter hand felt all the face of the horse in search of a track or knot, but nothing of the kind was there; neither was there any sign of a wound, but just as he was about to turn back, he saw a faint light on the wall, and he saw that the piano began to play.

He waited for a pause, but none came. This time the music was vehement and spirited, and no banging of his on broken doorway would be audible against such rivalry. Unconsciously, he was concluded to reconnoiter the eastern front. A few steps brought him to the corner, and there he stood before him, looking at his further end in a flood of light that streamed from the open window and through this front of the ground floor all was darkness. His gaiter hand felt all the face of the horse in search of a track or knot, but nothing of the kind was there; neither was there any sign of a wound, but just as he was about to turn back, he saw a faint light on the wall, and he saw that the piano began to play.

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