

CHAPTER III

THE RIVAL ESTABLISHMENT

'GOD help us!' cried Wentzel, who was the first to realise Archie's danger, 'the boy's caught in the stampede;' and losing all thought of shooting bison in his anxiety for his young friend, he slung his musket over his shoulders, and concentrated his energies upon the task of forcing his horse through the terrified herd in an attempt to get to Archie's side.

A moment later the factor also became aware of his son's critical position, and he in like manner paid no more attention to the hunt, but made strenuous efforts to reach the imperilled boy.

In truth the situation was a very serious one. The thousands of maddened bison were thundering down the valley at a terrific pace towards the pond, to whose miry depths far more of them would fall victims than to the hunters' bullets. The pond was hardly half a mile distant, and unless Archie were extricated from their midst before they reached it, the chances were that he would share their fate.

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