



WAR.

"Why, I sees it all afore me every time I shuts my eyes. Lordy, sir, you wouldn't hardly believe how clear it is to me. There's our line from the paregoric bottle right along to the snuff-box. D'ye see? Well, then the pill-box is for Hongoumont on the right, where we was; and Norah's thimble for La Hay Saint. There it is all right, sir, and here were our guns, and here, behind, the reserves and the Belgians. Ach, them Belgians!" He spat furiously into the fire. "Then here's the French where my pipe lies, and over here, where I put my baccy pouch, was the Proosians a-comin' up on our left flank. Jimini, but it was a glad sight to see the smoke of their guns."

"And what was it that struck you most now in connection with the whole affair?" asked the Colonel.

"I lost three half-crowns over it, I did," crooned old Brewster. "I shouldn't wonder if I was never to get that money now. I lent 'em to Jabez Smith, my rear rank man, in Brussels. 'Only till pay-day, Grig,' said he. By Jimini, he was stuck by a lancer at Quarter Brass, and me with not so much as a slip o' paper to prove the debt! Them three half-crowns is as good as lost to me."

The Colonel rose from his chair, laughing. "The officers of the Guards want you to buy yourself some little trifle which may add to your comfort," he said. "It is not from me, so you need not thank me." He took up the old man's tobacco pouch, and slipped a crisp bank note inside it.

"Thank ye, kindly, sir. But there's one favour that I would like to ask you, Colonel."

"Yes, my man?"

"If I'm called, Colonel, you won't grudge me a flag and a firing party? I'm not a civilian; I'm a guardsman—I'm the last of the old third guards. When I'm gone they'll have a good muster yonder."

"All right, my man, I'll see to it," said the Colonel. "Good-bye; I hope to have nothing but good news from you."

"A kind gentleman, Norah," croaked old Brewster, as they saw him walk past the window; "but, Lordy, he ain't fit to black the boots o' my old Colonel Byng."

Early in May the veteran's breathing grew more laboured, and he had a sore struggle for air. For weeks on end he lay gasping, propped with pillows, until his feeble spark of life was but a flickering thing, which any hour might extinguish. The young curate of the parish used to come in an evening and read the Bible to him, but he seemed to take little notice of it for the most part. Only the chapters about Joshua and the wars of the Israelites appeared to fix his attention, and he held his trembling hand up to his ear for fear of missing a word of them.

"I say," he croaked one night, "what's that great fight that is to be?"

"Armageddon?"

"Aye, that's the word. That's the great battle in the other world, ain't it?"

"It is the great final fight," said the curate. "It is said to be typical of the struggle between good and evil."

The old man lay silent for a long time. "I s'pects the third guards 'll be there," he remarked, at last. "And the Dook—the Dook 'll have something to say."

It was the 18th of June, the anniversary of the great victory, when things came at last to a crisis with the old soldier. All day he had lain with nothing but his puffing blue lips, and the twitching of his scraggy neck to show that he still held the breath of life. Norah and Sergeant Macdonald had sat by him in the afternoon, but he had shown no consciousness of their presence. He lay peacefully, his eyes half-closed, his hands under his cheek, as one who is very weary.

They had left him for an instant, and were sitting in the front room where Norah was preparing the tea, when of a sudden they heard his footstep in the room above, and a shout that rang through the house. Loud and clear and swelling, it pealed in their ears, a voice full of strength and energy and fiery passion. "The guards need powder," it cried, and yet again, "the guards need powder."

The sergeant sprang from his chair and rushed upstairs, followed by the trembling Norah. There was the old man standing by his bedside, his blue eyes sparkling, his white hair bristling, his whole figure towering and expanding, with eagle head and glance of fire. "The guards need powder," he thundered once again, "and by God they shall have it!" He threw up his long sinewy arms, and sank back with a groan upon his pallet. The sergeant stooped over him, and his face darkened.

"Oh, Archie, Archie," sobbed the frightened girl, "what do you think of him?"

The sergeant turned away. "I think," said he, "that the third guards have a full muster now."

—A. CONAN DOYLE, in *Black and White*.

OUT WEST.

I.

Qu'Appelle! The Vale of Qu'Appelle! The words still sound charming to our ears, recalling pleasant memories of red men, half-breeds, beautiful lakes and north-west romance. Prosaic indeed must be the traveller who can sit in the lodges listening to the traditions of the natives without a pang of regret, and a longing to gaze once more upon the boundless prairie covered with thousands of buffalo,

dotted with buffalo-skin lodges, ornamented with pictures of various colours detailing the history of the martial heroes of the camp, and the large bands of antelope which roamed in innocence amid the primitive glory of the plains of Assiniboia. Alas! a great change has come in the interests of civilization, but the poet and artist cannot fail to drop a tear in silence for the faded glory of the native races, who, as they gaze upon the iron horse rushing past, cannot help "nursing their wrath to keep it warm."

It was a beautiful morning, in the month of September, that we left the railroad station of Qu'Appelle and northward sped toward the pretty village in the lovely Vale of Qu'Appelle. Two uneventful hours quickly passed, and as we sat with head reclining, musing upon the stories we had heard of the spirits which flitted from stone to bush and lodge, we heeded not the scattered settlers' homes. A word from the driver, and there at our feet lay the pretty village. What a charming scene! Resting a few moments upon the hill, the eye wandered across the lovely valley, fully three miles wide, where in the distant past lazily pursued its eastward course, the river Qu'Appelle. Eastward and westward, for twenty miles or more, stretched a line of lakes, connected by a small river, which at this time was dry. Upon a narrow neck of land between two of the lakes were clustered the houses which comprised the village of Fort Qu'Appelle. Tiny craft were plying to and fro upon the lakes, the largest of which was six miles long and about three miles wide. Descending the hill, we spent a few hours at the home of a friend and then away we sped along the shore of one of the lakes eastward to feast our eyes and gather inspiration for succeeding days. Chatting freely and yet keeping an observant eye for the beauties of nature, the cup of our happiness seemed filled to the brim. Nestling under the banks of the valley at the edge of the lakes were many primitive looking log cabins belonging to the half-breeds, attracted by the fish in the lakes and the timber which covered the slopes of the valley. Small fishing craft were drawn up on the beach, and fishing nets were hanging up to dry beside the lonely dwellings. Lonely did we say?—there were many children scantily dressed running in childish glee, happy, indeed, in their poverty and filth.

Three miles from the fort stood the Indian Industrial School, presided over by the genial and cultured Father Hugounard. The Dominion Government has erected extensive brick buildings as a place of residence for the children of the Indian reserves who can be induced to attend to receive an elementary English education and be taught a trade. The boys are taught under the supervision of the priests, and the girls have the care and instruction of the nuns. It was after school hours and smaller children were in sportive glee chasing each other around the playground, while out in the fields the elder scholars—boys and girls—were busily working, and a merry group they seemed to be.

Homeward we journeyed with images of the past rising before us, the river rushing down the vale, and the smoking lodges encamped upon its banks. It was in the days of yore, the natives say, that the Indian lover roamed the forest, and at eventide he heard a voice mention his name. It was a familiar voice, which oftentimes had touched his heart with joy, but now fear shook his frame as he called aloud in reply, "Qu'Appelle?" Twice did the spirit mention his name, and then, with strange forebodings, he stepped into his canoe and allowed it to glide gently down the stream, musing meanwhile upon the purport of the message from the spirit land. At early sunrise he drew his canoe ashore and through the narrow fringe of trees which skirted the river he passed. Upon the gentle sloping prairie a number of lodges were pitched, and around one of them, which wore a familiar appearance, a small group of people were gathered in deep silence. His heart divined the purport of the message, and slowly approaching the company he enquired the cause of their sorrow. They told him, with tears, that as the sun was slowly sinking the previous day the spirit of his lovely bride had fled. With grief unspoken he lingered awhile and then sadly entered his canoe. Out into the great unknown wastes he wandered, gliding slowly with the waters, and mortal never saw again the faithful lover of the lodges.

The shades of night fell upon us, and as we cast a retreating glance upon the lakes in the beautiful vale we thought we heard from out of the waters the voice of the Indian lover; and, as we listened, all we heard him say was "Qu'Appelle!"

ROBIN RUSTLER.

MOOSEJAW, Assiniboia.