

COLLABORATEURS.

BY S. D. SCHULTZ.

CHAPTER II. (Continued.)

THE retreat was most orderly, and conducted with the precision of a battalion manœuvring in a prize drill competition. On the left flank, a detachment of the Governor-General's Body Guard and Queen's Own were out in skirmishing order, each man being placed ten paces apart. A volley was fired over their heads to clear the brush of lurking foe. There was no special danger on the right. The gatling brought up the rear with the Mounted Police and a squad of "B" Battery. The Battleford Rifles were the first to get across the creek, taking with them one of the seven-pounders. The rebels attempted to follow. When they saw the soldiers retreating, instead of following up their victory, the Indians naturally came to the conclusion that something was amiss. They could be heard noisily calling their scattered forces together, and presently appeared in threatening numbers. The gun across the creek and the gatling opened fire, and the Indians retired beyond range. Their ammunition had run out, and they contented themselves with hovering in the rear, and stolidly watching the retiring white column. The remaining corps, with waggon, wounded and dead, passed the ford without loss. Orders were given for a hurried meal, after which a start would be made for Battleford. It was understood that the march would be a forced one, without a single halt.

Archer had his repertorial duties to perform. He resolved to start for Battleford at once, as he was desirous that the *Gazette* should have a "scoop" of the Cut Knife engagement. There was a long dispatch to prepare in the nature of a full descriptive "special." He must also forward the photographic plates for development, for he knew that the account would have added interest if illustrated with views of the fighting ground and the relative positions of the contending forces.

Archer hastened over to the ambulance wagon, and took a look at Seymour, who was still unconscious. The tears welled up in his eyes, as he sadly thought he might never see him again. He had not known Seymour as long as White, but still had learned to like and esteem the former's impulsive, trusting nature. Time was pressing. He could not afford to linger and give way to poignant sorrow. But he could not go without a parting look at his true and tried old friend, now at peace in eternal sleep. He looked around for the wagons in which the dead had been promiscuously bundled. Mounting on the hub of the nearest wheel, he

lifted the heavy tent covering that had been spread over the victims of the conflict. He made no attempt to check his emotion, and caught his breath in broken sobs as he took a last, long look at White's calm features. Gazing into the silent face of his old college chum, Archer's head bent lower and lower. Well! Suppose he did drop a tear on White's pallid face? What of it? Some there are who impatiently characterize such exhibitions of sentiment as unmanly, but impulsive, loyal friendship honors itself by the display of true regret, and does not mould word and action to cold and studied conventionalities. Archer must hurry, though. He filled his pockets with "hard tack," vaulted into the saddle, and was soon galloping over the trail to Battleford. The hoof-beats had a dull, muffled sound, as they thudded against the grassless sod. The ashes of the recent fire stirred into a low line of powdered dust, faintly marking the course of the rider, cantering along under the fierce, vertical rays of the hot, early spring sun.

There was an oppressive dreary ache in his heart. The pale faces of Seymour and White were ever before his eyes. Often he was forced to hastily grab at the pommel of the "Mexican" to prevent himself from losing his seat.

Archer's thoughts travelled back to the first time he ran across White. It was just after the opening of term. White was a freshman and Archer a sophomore. He remembered a visitation to White's room. The mufti ordered White to jump on the table. White obeyed with alacrity, and looked around with honest, fearless eyes. There was a pause, and then the mufti began to brusquely question the freshman.

"Where do you come from, freshman?"

"Montreal," quickly answered White.

"Where is Montreal?" quizzed the mufti, and the seniors zealously enquired whether anyone by some remote chance had heard of such a place.

"Spell it, freshman, and are you sure you have given the proper accent; is it Montree-hall or Montrall?"

White smiled and looked sheepish.

"No levity, freshman," chorused the seniors, threateningly. "You must answer. Where is Montreal?"

White knew that anything he might say would be ridiculed, and determined that the seniors should not have all the laugh.

"I come from the largest city in Canada, and not like you jays, from straggling cross-road shacks," White replied jauntily.

The seniors were fairly staggered. Such a speech from freshman lips was unprecedented in college circles. He must be humbled, and racked with torture, until his proud spirit crawled in the dust.

White had a hard time during his first year. The seniors made it very interesting with nightly visitations and "pyramiding." The latter function consisted of the operation of putting the table upside-down, placing the bureau on the upturned legs, and then by delicate manipulation of chairs, and component parts of the bedstead, rearing a structure that touched the ceiling. Over all would be stretched a ghostly sheet. White, on returning from the theatre or some other engagement late at night, would tumble against this topsy turvy state of affairs. The seniors stood by, snickering at and pretending to sympathize with his attempts to detach various articles of furniture from the pile without damaging anything. But the structure was flimsy, and the slightest touch would bring everything down with a crash. The seniors would offer their services, but intentionally added to White's confusion and difficulties by doing everything the reverse of right. Whilst engaged in putting together the bedstead, the upper and lower ends and sides would be presented with reverse face, and when after exasperating delays, the skeleton of the bed was completed, White would have to sit by and watch a fencing tourney, the seniors using the slats after the manner of two edged battle axes, parrying and slashing with both hands on the hilt.

Archer also thought of White racing over the campus with the football tucked under his arm. He was the hero of the Rugby field. His sprints and rapid passing told effectively against opponents, and his stalwart form evoked the wildest enthusiasm whenever he was seen speeding along, dodging his check, and distancing those who attempted to spoil his run.

Archer's fingers tightened around the reins with nervous intensity. White's inexplicable foreboding of death during last evening's halt had correctly augured the future. Those words of his, "I have a nameless dread—a premonition that I am going to pass in my checks to-morrow. You know I'm no coward, but I can't get rid of this awful foreshadowing of death, that seems to have taken entire possession of my being," came back to Archer with all the force of dread reality. White would be the last to fall prey to superstitious fears. Had some mysterious agent, some chance visitant from the skies communed with White, and whispered the stern decree of fate? Or was it the result of strong mental excitement induced by the coming fray, coupled with moody broodings over the prospect of an eternal separation from sweetheart and mother and friends and the world with its vista of achievement and success to a young, sanguine enthusiast?

Archer was too grieved to see anything