













A DREADFUL EXPERIENCE

I had built a small fire in a secluded spot among the hills, and was toasting a bit of meat on the end of a stick. I had seen signs of a rook in two days, and felt as safe as in my own house. All of a sudden I felt the presence of somebody. I hadn't heard any suspicious sounds, nor had my eyes detected "signs" but I just felt that danger emanated from behind. It came like a flash, and before I could turn my head the peak of the mountain five miles away fell on me. So it seemed to me at the instant, but when I opened my eyes again, perhaps three or four minutes later, the mountain was all right and firm on its pins. I was the only one who was wrong. A Rockin, hideously dark and dazed, had crept upon me and struck me over the head with the flat of his tomahawk. While I was unconscious from the blow, he dragged me to a stunted pine, lashed my body to the tree, and then pulled my arms back each side of it, and tied me together at the wrist.

While my thoughts were slowly coming back he stood and surveyed me, his face wearing something of a grin. He had done a pretty smart thing, and it was only natural that he should feel his puff of up with content. I hadn't made it all up to my own satisfaction yet, when he turned to the fire and coolly proceeded to help himself to my provisions. It took him an hour to satisfy his appetite, and he then went through my pack. The rough maps, drawings and notes he burnt up, as also my stock of simple medicines, but of all else he made a neat package and hid it inside. He had a Winchester, but he reserved it. I had a Winchester and two revolvers. While, no doubt, pleased to secure the rifle, he was immensely tickled with the revolver, and it was plain that he knew how to use them.

The game was laid with the bundle, his own rifle added to the pile, and then he was ready to attend to my case. By this time I had solved the problem. He was a scout from some body of Indians in the neighborhood, and he would carry me in his pack. I was wondering if there would be any show of escape, when he came and sat down in front of me. I could see at a glance that he was just boiling over with content. When a man gets through looking a unit dog in the eye he wants to experiment on an Indian warrior. That "black" had eyes like a worried tiger, and my fish crawled as he sat there and looked me over. I wasn't over a minute making up my mind that I wasn't going away as a prisoner. The spoils of camp, to which he would add my scalp, would testify him. That devil was going to torture me, and I knew it even before he had made a move! This infernal predation and self-satisfaction you never saw in a face.

I had a long-legged pony. He jerked them off, one after another, and then pulled off my socks. I knew what was coming. He had the whole afternoon before him, and he was going to begin on the soles of my feet. Up to this time neither of us had spoken, but I now determined to give him a blast. I was a hundred miles from any white man, utterly helpless, and was content to die any way. I preferred a stroke of the tomahawk to death by inches.

"See here, you long-legged, paint-daubed, cowardly cur, you dare's tough me!" I yelled.

"We are!" he replied.

"See and be hanged! Let me loose and I'll fight you, whole tribe! You are a nation of cowards! A Sioux will run from a woman. Bah! You cur!"

It didn't move him. I called him names. I reviled the memories of his ancestors. I waded into his father, mother, brothers and sisters. I reviled and abused his own character and standing. All this time he was sharpening a dry hard stick to a finer point and he never even looked up.

"Gosh! Bless! You infernal skunk!"

He had jabbed the sharpening stick into the sole of my foot. It went in half an inch and came out covered with blood, and he grinned like a monkey. Slowly and deliberately he jabbed that stick into my foot ten times. It was no use to try to keep silence. The pain was terrible, but it was lessened somewhat by the excitement of abusing him. "I make white men cry now!" he said, as he hung away the stick and rose up.

What did the fiend do but go over to the fire and get a burning brand and come back and apply it to the sole of my other foot. I tell you that if I had been ten times a man I couldn't have repressed a scream of agony every time the fire was held to my flesh. It pleased him to hear it, and he busied my foot about twenty times before he ceased operations. I wondered what next, as he put down the fire; but I was not to be left in doubt more than a minute.

"Now white man will laugh!" he chuckled as he rose up.

Out came his hunting knife and he hefted the edge on his thumb nail. Then he left over me, seized the rim of my belt over his fingers, and was about to slice that ornament off my head, when he suddenly fell backwards and I heard the crack of a rifle. The buck was on his feet like a cat, and it seemed the thickest buck I ever, and it holding the knife in his hand, and it seemed a long minute before I caught the crash of footsteps and the shout: "Hang a gun that will go back on a man in times like this! Here's your Sioux, with your own weapons!"

A big giant of a trapper sprang past me, knife in hand, and the Sioux stood for him. The fight was now before my eyes, and in a few feet away. There were the rifles and revolvers in plain sight, but neither man seemed to see or stand up. It was a square and a horrible thing it was. I hoped to discover the Indian and encourage the white man by shouts but it is doubtful if either heard me. Up and down and across and around they fought, both stabbing and slashing but neither speaking. It was over in five minutes, though it seemed half an hour to me. The buck suddenly threw up his hands, and went down, and the trapper twisted off his scalp before my eyes and came twenty. Then he came to me and

the cords. He had hardly accomplished this before he sank down. I crawled up to him and began to wipe the blood from a terrible cut in the shoulder, but his face grew white, his eyes closed, and he half shouted: "He's wiped me out! Waugh!"

He was dead next moment. He had sixteen cuts and slashes on his body, and that buck had over twenty. The indolent, the careless, and the mere pleasure-seekers are the spendthrifts of time. They wastefully throw away the opportunities of increasing their true happiness and value of life. On the other hand, there are some who pride themselves on never wasting a minute, who rush from one thing to another without pause, who can find no leisure to bestow on their families or friends, who consider amusement a waste of time and sleep a necessary evil, who injure their health and narrow their mind by a continuous round of labor that is ever decreasing in value from receiving no intus of the vitality from outside sources. These people think that they are frugal in their use of time, when in truth they are only penurious. Time, like money, is valuable as it contributes to the worth and happiness of life, and to this end there must be system in its management and no waste. Labor, repose, and relaxation must each be wisely provided for, the claims of health and comfort must be considered, duties to self and to others must be measured, and such an apportionment of time as will harmoniously develop their purpose will be both frugal and liberal in the best sense.

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