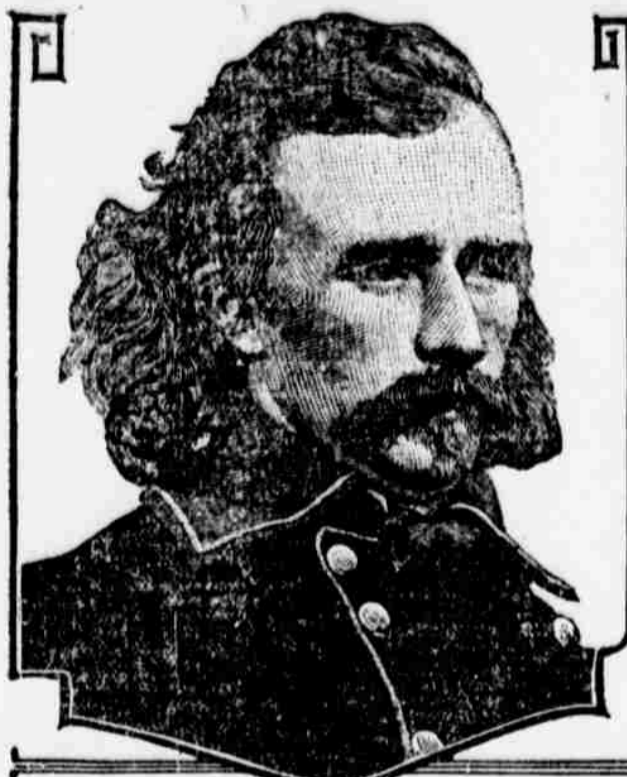


Rain-in-the-Face and Some Indian History



GENERAL GEORGE A. CUSTER

The foemen fled in the night,
And Rain-in-the-Face in his flight,
Uplifted high in air
As gloriously trophy bore
The brave heart that beat no more
Of the White Chief with yellow hair.

—LONGFELLOW.



By JOHN DICKINSON SHERMAN

HE foregoing verse is actually by Longfellow, though you may doubt it. Incidentally, it is worse history than it is verse.

Also in many books you will find the portrait of a good-looking Indian in savage finery and under it this caption, "Rain-in-the-Face the Ogallala Sioux who killed General Custer"—of which more later.

Well, in Colonel Shields' recent book, "Blanket Indians of the Northwest," (Vechten Waring company, New York) is a chapter in which Rain-in-the-Face tells how he ran 300 miles on snowshoes in a blizzard in three days—by far the most remarkable run in all history.

Ugh, what a discussion that chapter has raised all over the West! For the West will never get through talking about Custer and the battle of Little Big Horn River, June 25, 1876.

Now, of course, anyone who has ever traveled on snowshoes and has been in a South Dakota blizzard has a positive opinion as to the truth of the Indian's story. Incidentally the world's record for a hundred mile run is 13:26:30. However, the story of Rain-in-the-Face serves a double purpose; it makes interesting reading and it has brought out some reliable facts concerning the legend that the Sioux chief boasted that he would kill Custer and eat his heart—and actually did carry out his boast.

According to the story told to Colonel Shields by the Sioux in December, 1873 or 1874, while quartered with a portion of his tribe at the Standing Rock agency, about 75 miles south of Bismarck, Rain-in-the-Face got into an altercation with four white men and killed two of them in self-defense, as he claimed. He was captured, taken to the agency, and thrown into jail, "a temporary, unfinished log structure without a floor." There were six or eight inches of snow on the ground that had blown in through the openings in the walls, and the prisoner's "only means of keeping from freezing was to keep walking constantly about the room." This cruelty to Indians was practiced on the orders of General Custer then in command at Fort Lincoln, near Bismarck. General Custer ordered that "if alive, Rain-in-the-Face should be thrown into jail and punished as severely as possible, pending the time when the court-martial could be convened and the culprit disposed of in a legal way. And this meant, of course, that he would be hung or shot." When this order was read to the prisoner, "Rain-in-the-Face swore vengeance on General Custer as the author of his sufferings. He swore that if he ever got out he would kill Custer in a hand-to-hand fight, if possible, and if not, then at longer range; that he would cut his heart out and carry it away as a trophy."

Some time before the Custer massacre, Rain-in-the-Face escaped from his prison with the assistance of two friends, who "handed him a pair of snowshoes and a blanket in which a piece of dried buffalo meat was rolled." The buffalo meat fell out as he adjusted the blanket, and so he started out "into the desert, in the midst of a howling blizzard, at nightfall, with only one blanket, without a mouthful of food, without a weapon of any kind, when the temperature was probably forty degrees below zero and the wind was blowing thirty miles an hour." "He told me the story of his great run and I will tell it to you in his own words as nearly as I can recall them," reports Colonel Shields:

"I asked him, through an interpreter, 'Where did you go when you escaped from the jail at Standing Rock?' He said:

"I went to the camp of my friends, at the base of Woody mountain, in Canada."

"How far is that?" I asked.

"Three hundred miles as the crow flies."

"How long did it take you to make the run?"

"Three days and nights."

"Do you mean to tell me that a man can run a hundred miles in twenty-four hours, on snowshoes, and another hundred in the next twenty-four, and another hundred in the next?"

"He said, 'I did it.'"

"How often did you sleep on the way?"

"I didn't sleep at all. I knew I dared not sleep. I dared not even sit down to rest, for if I had, under the terrible fatigue and hunger and strain from which I suffered, I would have lost consciousness, a supor would have overtaken me, and I would have frozen solid in half an hour. I was fleeing from the persecution, the wrongs, the outrages inflicted on me and my people by the white men. I was going to my friends and had deter-

mined to reach them. I knew the only way I could do that was to keep going. I ran most of the way. Occasionally I would slow down to a walk to recover my breath and recuperate my strength a little; then I would forge ahead again."

"What did you eat on the way?" I asked. He said:

"Browse. When I would cross a dry coulee I would break off a handful of brush, willows or box-elder, and eat it as I ran across the next plateau, maybe ten miles, or twenty miles, or thirty miles. Then when I crossed another coulee I would break off more and eat that as I ran.

"After running two days and nights and the greater part of the third day, late in the afternoon the wind lulled, the snow cleared from the air for a few minutes, and I saw the dim outline of Woody mountain towering away into the sky. That gave me new hope, new courage. I knew the camp was not more than twenty miles away, and I knew I should reach it. I put on a new burst of speed, and after running a few miles more the wind lulled again, the air cleared, and I saw the outline of the great blue forest that surrounds the base of the mountain; and I saw three little columns of blue smoke curling up among the trees."

The Indian told Colonel Shields, with equally substantial detail, how he found his friends, how they welcomed him, how he collapsed in their arms, and knew nothing for two days and nights.

D. F. Berry, official photographer and scout with Custer's forces, was at Fort Lincoln during the time Rain-in-the-Face was in jail there. He gives this "plain, unvarnished account" in the Wisconsin Times:

"In 1874, the Seventh United States cavalry was out scouting along the Yellowstone. Dr. Holzinger and a trader by the name of Ballran stopped to pick up some moss agates while the command moved on. A little later the horses owned by the two men came up to the command riderless. The scouting party started back to see what happened to Holzinger and Ballran and discovered they had been shot. They scouted around to see who had killed them but there was no trace of Indian or white man to be found.

"The next summer the Sioux Indians were holding a big war dance at Standing Rock and between the dances some of the warriors would get up in the center of the circle and relate some of the brave deeds of the band. A handsome young chief stepped into the circle and told the Indians how he had killed two men on the Yellowstone, shooting both. When he had finished he received great applause from the Indians. This Indian was Chief Rain-in-the-Face.

"Charles Reynolds, General Custer's famous scout, was present watching the dancers and heard the chief tell how he had killed the two men. The next day he returned to Fort Lincoln, the army post, located near Bismarck, on the west bank of the Missouri river. Reynolds told General Custer how he had heard Chief Rain-in-the-Face relate his deed. On the next ration day, General Custer sent his brother, Capt. Tom Custer, and 100 soldiers of the Seventh cavalry, together with some officers, to Standing Rock, to arrest the Indian chief for the killing of the two men.

"Captain Custer discovered Chief Rain-in-the-Face in the traders' store and with some soldiers grabbed the chief, wrested his rifle from him and ordered him to mount a horse. The party headed for Fort Lincoln, and upon their arrival there Chief Rain-in-the-Face was placed in the guard-house to await trial for murder in the spring term of the United States court.

"Two men who had been caught stealing oats and other grain from the government at Lincoln were also in the same guard-house awaiting trial at Fargo. Friends of the two grain thieves cut a hole in the guard-house to effect their escape and

when the second was leaving he motioned to Chief Rain-in-the-Face to come. They made their escape soon after taps had blown and all lights were then out at the post.

"Rain-in-the-Face started towards Standing Rock, keeping away from the trail and traveling by night. When he reached his old camp the Indians started him for the hills for fear the soldiers would come and get him. A small party accompanied him and they later became known as Renegade Sioux. Their band increased until their number ran up in the thousands. The next time Rain-in-the-Face met Captain Custer was June 25, 1876, on the Little Big Horn river, in Custer's fight. Contrary to reports Chief Rain-in-the-Face did not hate General Custer, but liked him and his wife. They often talked with him while he was in the guard-house. However, the chief did hate the general's brother and sought vengeance against him.

"At one time I asked the chief if he had seen Captain Custer and he remarked that he had looked for and had found him. The Indians told me that the chief had mutilated the captain after the big battle. Tom Custer's heart was not cut out as the reports have it. General Benteen stated in a letter to me that he would make an affidavit to that effect. General Benteen and Doctor Porter were the two men who identified him. Captain Custer's body was horribly mutilated."

"There was no blizzard the night Rain-in-the-Face made his escape," Mr. Barry declares further. "I hesitate to comment, knowing Mr. Shields very well, but historians will grab such stuff as this and pass it on as authentic."

Donne Robinson, secretary and superintendent of the department of history of the State of South Dakota, writes to the Literary Digest:

"When Rain-in-the-Face lay dying at his home on Grand river, South Dakota, he was constantly attended by Miss Mary C. Collins, the very notable missionary, who was a doctor of medicine as well as of souls. He professed great remorse for the sins of his life, particularly his sins of mendacity, and confessed that it had been a great satisfaction in his sinful career to invent whoppers for the edification of the whites."

"1. There is no record that Rain-in-the-Face killed two men at Standing Rock agency in 1873-4. The offense which got him in bad with the military was the killing of Holzinger, the veterinarian, and Ballran, the sutler of General D. S. Stanley's expedition to the Yellowstone. This occurred on August 4, 1873.

"2. The next winter Rain-in-the-Face appeared at Standing Rock agency and boasted of the murders he had committed. Word was sent to Fort A. Lincoln, and Captain Tom Custer, brother of General George A., went down to Standing Rock to apprehend the culprit. He found him trading in the sutler's store, and slipping up behind him threw a blanket over the Indian's head and leaping upon him soon had him securely bound and took him a prisoner to Fort A. Lincoln. Whatever vengeance Rain-in-the-Face was harboring at this time was against Captain Tom and not against the general.

"3. Rain-in-the-Face escaped from the prison. I am not informed of his whereabouts during his freedom; he may have taken himself to Woody Mountain. If so, it was not nearly 'three hundred miles as the crow flies.'

"4. Rain-in-the-Face took no part in the Battle of the Little Big Horn, on June 25, 1876. He was away during the entire day, but returned that evening.

"5. The body of General Custer was not mutilated, nor was that of Captain Tom, whose heart Rain-in-the-Face had vowed to eat. If he ate anybody's heart that night, it was not that of either Custer."

IMPROVED UNIFORM INTERNATIONAL

Sunday School Lesson

BY REV. F. H. FITZWATER, D. D.,
Faculty of English Bible in the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.
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LESSON FOR DECEMBER 4

PAUL IN MELITA AND ROME.

LESSON TEXT—Acts 28:1-31.
GOLDEN TEXT—I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth.—Rom. 1:16, 18

REFERENCE MATERIAL—Mark 16:13; Rom. 15:17.

PRIMARY TOPIC—The End of Paul's Journey.

JUNIOR TOPIC—The End of a Long Journey.

INTERMEDIATE AND SENIOR TOPIC—Paul Living in Rome.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULT TOPIC—Paul's Ministry in Rome.

I. The Shipwrecked Crew on Melita (vv. 1-10).

Through the storm they lost their bearings, and when they were safe on land they learned that the island was called Melita.

1. The hospitable reception of the natives (v. 2). They built a fire and made them as comfortable as possible from the cold and the rain.

2. Paul gathering sticks for a fire (v. 3). This is a fine picture of the world's greatest preacher and missionary not above picking up sticks for a fire. The ability and disposition to serve naturally in whatever way is the evidence of capacity for great commissions.

3. Paul bitten by a venomous serpent (v. 3). With the sticks that Paul gathered there was a serpent. Perhaps it had already curled itself up for its winter sleep, but when the warmth of the fire aroused it it darted at Paul and fixed its fangs upon his hand. The natives expected to see him fall down dead, yet he shook it off, nothing harmed. At first the natives concluded that he was an escaped murderer and that this was retributive justice being meted out to him. When they saw that he was unharmed they concluded that he was a god.

4. Paul heals Publius' father (vv. 7-10). These people are now getting some return for their kindness. When this man of note was healed others came also and were healed. To this they responded in appreciation by loading them down with necessary supplies.

II. Paul Arrives at Rome (vv. 11-16).

When Paul landed at Rome Christ's charge to the disciples was fulfilled. After three months' stay at Melita, Paul departs for Rome in the ship Alexandria, whose sign was Castor and Pollux. At Syracuse they were delayed three days, perhaps for favorable winds. At Puteoli he found brethren, at whose request he tarried seven days. At Appollonia and at the Three Taverns brethren from Rome met him. From Puteoli the news went before Paul's coming, and so interested were the brethren that they came more than forty miles to meet him. This greatly encouraged him, for which he gave God thanks. No one, perhaps, ever enjoyed more close fellowship with God, and yet no man ever enjoyed more and derived more benefit from human fellowship than he. His readiness to preach the gospel at Rome, which he had expressed in the Epistle to the Romans, written from Corinth about three years before, was now realized. He was treated with great leniency at Rome, for he was allowed to hire a house there and live alone except that the soldier that remained his guard was constantly with him. Being chained to a soldier was rather irksome, but yet it gave him a chance to preach to the soldiers which he could not have had any other way. He rejoiced in whatever circumstances, just so the gospel was preached.

III. Paul's Ministry in Rome (vv. 17-31).

1. His conference with the leading Jews (vv. 17-22). He did not, as usual, wait for the Sabbath day to speak to the Jews. He only allowed one day for rest. His object was to have a fair understanding with them. When they came he endeavored to conciliate them. He told them that, though he came as a prisoner, he was not a criminal. Though his own countrymen had so sought his life, he did not come with an accusation against them. The result of this interview was that the Jews cautiously took neutral ground, but expressed a desire to hear what Paul could say in defense of a sect which was everywhere spoken against. The fact that this sect was spoken against is no evidence that it was wrong. Many times a thing may be wrong in men's minds, because their judgments are biased. If a thing is right in the sight of God it matters not what men think about it.

2. Paul expounding the kingdom of God and persuading concerning Jesus (vv. 23-31). He pointed out a real kingdom—the Messianic Kingdom with Jesus as the King.

Consecration. If you want to live in this world, doing the duty of life, knowing the blessings of it, doing your work heartily, and yet not absorbed by it, remember that the one power whereby you can so act is, that all shall be consecrated to Christ.—Alexander MacLaren.

Supplication of Solomon. Now, my God, let, I beseech thee, thine eyes be open, and let thine ear be attentive unto the prayer that is made in this place.—II Chronicles 6:40.

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