

THE COURTING.

Once there was a maiden fair,
A many years ago,
With laughing eyes and misty hair,
A many years ago;
And when the golden sun had fled
Beyond the hills and day was dead,
Unto her door a brave youth sped,
A many years ago.

Adown the winding lanes they strayed,
A many years ago,
While Cupid on their heart strings played,
A many years ago;
And moonlight were the summer skies,
And lovelight glistened in their eyes,
And earth to them was paradise,
A many years ago.

He told the story new, yet old,
A many years ago;
The sweetest story ever told,
A many years ago.
He kissed her on her downy cheek,
Her blushes warm played hide and seek,
For love of him she could not speak,
A many years ago.

The maiden fair and gallant swain,
A many years ago,
Husband and wife at last became,
A many years ago.
But not each other did they wed,
She wedded a man whose wife was dead,
He wedded another maid instead,
A many years ago.

—Boston Globe.

BESIEGED IN A CRATER.

BY H. ALAN CLARKE.

The adventure I am about to relate occurred in the summer of 1880, a time when the Apaches—those virulent scourges of the southwestern border—still dominated the lives and happiness of pioneers in that section. In July of the year mentioned, a party of five—Robert Winston, Joe Baker, Clyde Harris, Jeff Hinman and the writer—left the Rio Grande valley bound on a prospecting trip into the Zuni country, of whose extensive mineral wealth we had heard some dazzling rumors.

Our party had been prospecting together for more than a year—long enough to get well acquainted with one another, and for each member to the outfit to ascertain that his partners could be trusted in almost any emergency that might arise.

Baker, Harris and I were originally from the east; but Winston and Hinman were Texans—both splendid specimens of the modern frontiersman. They were crack shots with rifle and pistol; could ride "anythin' that growed har," as Hinman expressed it; and they were thoroughly versed in plaincraft and Indian warfare.

Before we left the Rio Grande we heard considerable talk of attacks having been made by raiding parties of Apaches on the scattering settlers in the Salt river district; but such rumors were very current in New Mexico and Arizona at that time, and we paid but little attention to them, starting as soon as our preparations were complete.

Nothing worthy of note occurred during the first ten days of our journey. Game was not very plentiful, but we managed to get enough to supply us with fresh meat; we found an abundance of grass and water for the horses; no signs of Indians had been seen; and, taking all together, we felt that our lucky star was in the ascendant.

"Any of you fellers ever been to the Salt lake?" inquired Winston, as we squatted at supper one evening.

"I was there about three years ago," Harris replied. "It's about 30 miles west of Salt Lake City, and as desolate a place as you ever saw."

"I guess that ain't the one I mean," corrected Winston. "There's one over here, about ten miles to the northwest, that can knock the spots off any Utah lake when it comes to desolation."

In response to our inquiries, he described the lake as occupying the bottom of a deep and almost circular rocky basin, the sides of which were so precipitous that there was only one place down which a horseman could descend. The bottom of the lake, he explained, was covered with a crust of salt, from six inches to a foot in thickness.

"But the queerest part of it all is the crater. It stands at one side of the big lake, an' forms a part of the shore. When you get to the rim of it you find yourself standin' on the edge of a big funnel-shaped hole, about 200 feet deep; an' right down at the bottom of that is a little lake, so deep nobody has ever found a bottom to it."

Our curiosity was strongly excited, and before we turned in for the night it was unanimously decided to pay a visit to the strange lake next day.

Sunrise found us in the saddle, and a toilsome ride of two hours' duration brought us to the object of our search. Weird and ghastly are the only terms which properly describe the scene that greeted our eyes as we reined in our panting horses. At our feet lay an enormous basin of perhaps 1,000 acres in extent and some 70 or 80 feet in depth, its precipitous sides garnished with masses of volcanic rock, some of them so grotesque in shape as to appear almost unearthly. At the bottom of the basin, and occupying the greater part of its area, slumbered a lake of dazzling whiteness, its shores encrusted with curious formations of salt, from which the sun's rays were reflected in glittering light.

On the eastern shore, about a half-mile from where we stood, an enormous

mound, in shape like an inverted wash-bowl, towered to a height of 200 feet or more; and this we at once recognized as the crater of which Winston had spoken. Dark and forbidding it reared its mighty shape, like an outcast from the infernal regions; its grim aspect seeming to accentuate the awful silence that brooded over the scene.

"They say the Apaches, Navajos and Zunis have a superstition about the crater," whispered Winston, awed into something like reverence by the sublime picture of desolation spread out before us. "They imagine an evil spirit lives in the little lake at the bottom; an' that he emits thunder an' lightning whenever he gets mad at anybody. I've heard they won't kill even a white man in the basin."

"I'd like to see the place where an Apache wouldn't kill a white man, or a white woman, either," Hinman growled. "They'll knock out the brains of a child in its mother's arms, an' scalp a parson in camp-meetin', if they get a chance. An', as for superstitions, I'd rather trust to my Winchester than to any superstition, even if it's the best manufactured."

Guided by Winston, we rode down the steep trail that led to the bottom of the basin, and established our camp near a little spring that bubbled out of the rocks opposite to the crater. It was the only fresh water in the vicinity, but there were no signs to indicate that it had lately been visited by man or beast. Filling our canteens, and watering the horses, we were ready to commence the ascent of the crater.

It took at least ten minutes to conquer the ascent, though we traveled up a path whose well-worn surface indicated that many others before us had invaded the precincts of the spirit of the mound. Perhaps the path was made by some by-gone race, who toiled up it with offerings intended to placate the animosity of the powerful being who was supposed to dwell in the depths of the lake.

Arrived at the summit we at once saw that Winston's description had not been overdrawn. At our feet yawned a great funnel-shaped hole, at the bottom of which twinkled a miniature lake, its hue of brightest emerald contrasting strangely with the dark scoria of the crater's sides.

With many turns and twists, and much unavoidable sliding, we descended to the shore of the lake, and seating ourselves on fragments of lava, spent half an hour in endeavoring to account for the presence of such a jewel in so incongruous a setting.

"They say the water is so thick with salt that a feller can't sink in it," remarked Winston.

"Did you ever test it?" I asked.

"No, sir-ree! You couldn't hire me to go swimmin' in such a hole as that. I'd be afeard that spirit 'ud grab me by the feet and pull me down. There's never been no bottom found in the center."

The rest of us had no such scruples, however, and, doffing our clothes, we were soon splashing about in the briny element.

It gave me a grewsome feeling to swim across the fathomless abyss in the center. Its ragged circumference, seen distinctly many feet below the surface, suggested the ravenous jaws and gaping maw of a monster of the Cyclopean world, lying in wait for whatever unwary creature might venture into its vicinity. I caught myself wondering how I should feel if some mighty force were suddenly to seize and drag me downward; and I had almost succeeded in working myself into a state of genuine fright, when a shout from the rim of the crater diverted my thoughts into a more sensible channel.

After watching our aquatic sports for a few minutes Winston had ascended to the crest of the mound, where I now caught sight of him lying flat on the inner edge of the crater and excitedly gesticulating to us. To scramble into our clothes was the work of a few moments, and we climbed up the steep to his side.

He did not wait for us to ask for an explanation of his call. Pointing to the bluffs on the northern side of the basin, he ejaculated the single word: "Look!" leaving us to observe and draw our own conclusions from what we saw.

"Indians!—and a big bunch of 'em!" cried Baker, who was the first to glance in the indicated direction.

"There's just 19 of 'em," said Harris.

"If they are hostiles and discover us—"

"Discover us!" interrupted Hinman.

"How can they help discoverin' us when they'll strike our 'sign' the minute they start down in to the basin?"

"If they failed to see our 'sign,' they couldn't very well overlook that bunch of saddled hosses standin' at the foot of the hill," said Winston, arising and starting down the path at a rapid pace.

"We can't afford to let 'em get the outfit," he said, as we overtook him at the bottom; "so we'll just lead the hosses to the bottom of the crater, an' find standin' room for 'em on the inside."

The suggestion was adopted. Mounting our horses, we drove the pack animals to the bottom of the ascent, and sent them all up the winding path at a pace that must have astonished them, since heretofore they had good reason to regard us as men merciful to their beasts.

Securing the horses to blocks of lava on the inner slope, which afforded a somewhat precarious footing for them, we again centered our attention upon

the causes of our disquietude. They were riding along at the same slow trot as when first seen, and were now within 100 yards of the trail leading down to the basin, which it was evidently their intention to enter.

"Ten dollars to one they see our trail before they get to it," said Winston, his frontier recklessness prompting him to gamble even on such desperate chances as those of the present moment.

The words were scarcely uttered, when the leading warrior, spurring his pony suddenly forward, bent low in the saddle and scrutinized the ground before him. He was immediately joined by his comrades, and we had the felicity of seeing ourselves tracked by a band of human bloodhounds, whose keen eyes never falter on a trail, and who seldom fail to run their prey to earth.

"I'd have won my bet, anyhow," said Winston, commencing to slip cartridges into the magazine of his Winchester.

All doubt as to the warlike mission of our visitors was removed as they descended into the basin and followed our trail toward the spring, at a long, swinging slope. The absence of women, children and dogs, their painted faces and the "fighting trim" of their scanty habiliments, proclaiming them a war party of Apaches, while the confidence with which they advanced unquestionably indicated that they had already gathered from the trail an approximate idea of our numbers and character.

Arrived at the spring, several of them knelt and quenched their thirst, the others scanning the summit of the crater in a questioning way that clearly showed their knowledge of our whereabouts.

They seemed to consult together for a few minutes, and one of them finally stepped out of the group and advanced to the foot of our stronghold, holding his hands above his head with the palms to the front, as a sign of his amicable intentions.

"Buenas dias, amigos!" he hailed in Spanish, with which language the southwestern Indians are generally conversant.

"They know we're here, an' we might as well talk to 'em," said Hinman.

No one objecting, he rose to his feet and answered the salutation of the dusky herald in the tongue in which it was given.

"Buenas dias! Que quiere usted?" (Good-morning! What do you want?) I understood Spanish sufficiently well to enable me to follow the conversation that ensued, and I knew enough of Indian diplomacy not to be particularly surprised by the herald's propositions on behalf of his very hospitable compatriots. These involved nothing less than the turning over of our horses and arms, and the giving up of our persons to as bloodthirsty a band of cutthroats as ever harried the defenseless citizens of the border. The Indian prefers artifice to fighting in his efforts to discomfort his enemy, and this band was only following the instincts of their craft.

"If my friends will only come down," he said, "they shall be entertained like chiefs. The hearts of the Apaches are full of love for our white friends, and we would like to take them by the hand."

"Yes, and you'd like to take us by the hair, too, which you've forgotten to mention," said Hinman, with a snort of disgust.

"Now, Senor Apache, you travel back to your compatriots, and tell them that we're a kind of a solitary outfit that don't believe in promiscuous handshaking, nor have we any desire to be treated as big chiefs. Vamos!"

Our inhospitable reception of the messenger was the signal for hostilities to commence. No sooner had he communicated the result of his mission to the band, than three of them drove the ponies up the trail to the mesa, where they could graze secure from our fire; the others taking shelter among the rocks that lined the sides of the basin. We could easily have killed some of the ponies, but we had no desire to injure dumb brutes; and, besides, we preferred to have the first overt act come from the enemy.

We had not long to wait. Harris incautiously exposed his head for a moment; keen eyes were searching the crest of the mound; the crack of a dozen rifles awoke the echoes of the basin, and he dodged back with a bullet hole through his hat that evidenced the skill of an Apache marksman.

"How about your superstition?" growled Hinman, as he commenced to arrange lumps of lava into a sort of breastwork on the crest in front of him.

"The spirit ain't commenced to spit out fire yet," Winston replied, tapping the butt of his Winchester in a suggestive way.

So far we had not pulled a trigger, and finding us so undemonstrative, our foes gradually grew careless of their personal safety. They commenced to expose themselves in the most tempting way, openly passing from one rock to another in a spirit of bravado that presaged an epidemic of sudden mortalities in the band should it continue. We were only waiting for enough of the band to show themselves to make simultaneous targets for each man's aim, and the chance soon materialized.

Four of them soon stepped out from behind their shelters, and commenced a disgusting series of antics for our edification. We improved the opportunity; our rifles spoke simultaneously; and two of them measured their lengths on

the sand, while another scrambled to cover with a halting motion that indicated a serious weakness in one of his extremities.

After this lesson no further active hostilities were indulged in by either side. We were careful to keep well under cover; they commanded the water supply, and we were willing to play a waiting game.

When the sun dipped below the horizon we separated, taking stations at such points around the crest as would best enable us to command the entire outer circle of ascent. The horses were secured anew, and we settled down to a night of anxious alertness.

Several hours passed without incident, the only sounds breaking the deathlike stillness of the scene being the uneasy stamping and pawing of the horses as they endeavored to achieve a more comfortable footing on the steep slope of the inner side. Old Barney, the mule that carried our blasting outfit, was particularly restive, and I was strongly tempted to lead him up to the crest and secure him there for the night. A disinclination to lead a mule loaded with explosives up a dangerous ascent in the darkness prompted me more strongly to leave him where he was, however, and I contented myself with slipping down to him and ascertaining that he was securely tied.

The atmosphere had been very heavy and sultry all the afternoon, and I was not surprised to see the heavens giving every indication of a storm before midnight, which augured ill for the security of our position, as it would enable the Apaches to scale the mound with but little danger of detection.

The advent of the tempest was soon after heralded by a vivid flash that illuminated the basin beneath as though an enormous arc light had suddenly been turned upon it, followed by a chorus of reverberations that voiced the intentions of the murky heavens. I took advantage of the light to search the ground beneath me, and I was sure that I detected several dark figures about midway of the slope.

In a few minutes the rain began to descend in a saturating torrent that resembled a miniature cloudburst, and the side of the crater was converted into a watershed, down which innumerable tiny streams trickled to the lake below. Flashes of lightning of dazzling brilliancy were followed by crashing peals of thunder that seemed to shake the universe, while the impact of the raindrops on the lake resembled the steady roar of some mighty cataract.

Suddenly that intuitive consciousness—as certain as ocular knowledge itself—of the presence of some other human being near me warned me to be on my guard. Rising slowly to my feet, I waited for the next flash as a double medium of enlightenment.

It came, and with it a stinging pain in my shoulder and the bear-like hug of a pair of sinewy arms about my body that told only too plainly the nature of the crisis.

Instantly recovering from the effects of the knife thrust and the surprise, I made a mighty effort that freed me from the grasp of my enemy, and, springing backward, I grasped my heavy rifle by the barrel and endeavored to beat him to the earth with it. Round and round we circled in the darkness, the constantly recurring flashes revealing to me the demoniacal visage of a brawny Apache brave as he danced just without the deadly sweep of the gun. The blood was flowing from the wound in my shoulder, and a creeping numbness began to invade my entire body, warning me that my powers of defense were rapidly waning.

Suddenly a volume of light seemed to leap out of the heart of the little lake at the bottom of the funnel-shaped hole; the mass of lava beneath my feet trembled and shook as though stirred by an earthquake, all accompanied by a deafening roar that hushed even the tumult of the storm. I was hurled to the ground as though prostrated by the hand of a giant, my head coming into violent contact with a lump of lava in the fall, which deprived me of consciousness.

When my senses returned another day had dawned, and I found myself the center of an anxious group, from which none seemed to be lacking. I was lying beside the little spring, and from the surfeit of moisture in my hair I concluded that some of its product had been recently applied to my aching cranium.

"We've been waiting for you to wake up, so you could help us to hunt up the fragments of old Barney," said Hinman, as I opened my eyes.

"Where are the Apaches?" I asked.

"Gone! The evil spirit, in the shape of our blasting outfit, spit thunder an' lightning at 'em, an' they 'pulled it' for the hills as fast as their ponies could travel."

As nearly as we could ascertain the facts the restive Barney had at last broken the rope with which he was tethered, and, in endeavoring to ascend or descend the crater, had missed his footing and been precipitated down the slope, exploding his load in the fall just in time to save me from the knife of the Apache.

The knife wound in my shoulder soon healed, but I never see the scar without being reminded how opportunely the spirit of the crater spoke to preserve me from a more deadly application of the steel.—Frank Leslie's Week

THE WORK OF CONGRESS.

Condensed Proceedings of the Senate and House in Extra Session.

The tariff bill was reported to the senate on the 4th by the finance committee, and Senator Aldrich (R. L.) announced that he would call it up on the 15th. The free homestead bill was passed by a vote of 42 yeas to 11 nays. The sundry civil appropriation bill was then taken up and the item appropriating \$2,333,333 for continuing the improvement of the Mississippi river was made immediately available.... The house was not in session.

The senate refused on the 5th to ratify the general arbitration treaty between the United States and Great Britain negotiated by Secretary Olney and Sir Julian Pauncefote, the vote being 43 yeas to 29 nays, four affirmative votes less than the majority of two-thirds required by the senate rules for the ratification of a treaty. Senator Mills (Tex.) made a strong appeal against ratifying the agreement, denouncing the conduct of England in the Graco-Turkish war. The remainder of the debate was of a running character. Senator Deboe (Ky.), Blackburn's successor, was sworn in and the sundry civil bill taken up, an amendment appropriating \$50,000 for the improvement of Pearl harbor, Hawaii, being agreed to.... The house was not in session.

In the senate on the 6th Senator Bacon (Ga.) introduced a resolution deprecating war and declaring that the policy of the United States was favorable to arbitration and inviting all other nations to make a corresponding declaration. The sundry civil bill was afterwards taken up and passed, after a debate on President Cleveland's order creating extensive forest reservations. The senate then adjourned until the 19th.... The house committee on rules reported a resolution providing that the house shall meet on Mondays and Thursdays until further action. The democrats and populists were solidly arrayed against the republicans on the resolution, but it was adopted by a vote of 101 to 83. Mr. King (Utah) tried to get a resolution considered for the annexation of Hawaii, but he was laughed at and the house adjourned until the 10th.

Farewell Banquet to Bayard.

LONDON, May 8.—The farewell banquet given yesterday evening by the American society in London to Mr. Bayard, former ambassador of the United States, was attended by 270 guests. The company included Ambassador Hay, Mrs. Hay and all the members of the American embassy, the lord bishop of London, Baron Russell, of Killowen, the lord chief justice and many other noted Englishmen. But there was a notable absence of the majority of the best-known Americans residing in London.

The Tibbe Will Broken.

UNION, Mo., May 10.—The circuit court of Franklin county has been occupied the last six days with the Tibbe will case. It was decided in favor of Anton Tibbe, who had sued to break his father's will, which had given one-half of his estate, amounting to about \$55,000, to the Evangelical Lutheran church. Henry Tibbe, the maker of the will, was the inventor of the Missouri corncob pipe and lived in Washington, Mo.

Large Imports of Mexican Cattle.

KANSAS CITY, Mo., May 10.—The importation of cattle into the United States from Mexico, as shown by the report of Albert Dean, in charge of the bureau of animal industry of the department of agriculture at Kansas City, was greater during April than ever before in the history of the cattle trade. March greatly exceeded in number the importations and previous month, but was beaten by April by over 27,000 head.

Improved Mail Delivery.

WASHINGTON, May 10.—A vigorous policy of extending mail facilities for the suburbs of the large cities, as far as possible, by both steam and electric cars, has been adopted by Second Assistant Postmaster-General Shallenberger. Many of the big cities will be given material additional service for the outlying districts if the citizens of those points co-operate with the department to make it a success.

Call Forced to Withdraw.

TALLEHASSEE, Fla., May 8.—Call was withdrawn in the race for United States senator and J. N. C. Stockton, a Jacksonville banker and supporter of Call, was placed in nomination. The result of the ballot yesterday was Chipley, 37; Stockton, 33; Rancey, 20; Hoeker, 3; Burford, 1. Chipley's friends have driven Call from the race and hope soon to elect Chipley.

Six Victims of Guthrie Flood.

GUTHRIE, Ok., May 7.—No trace has been found of the following persons, all colored, who are supposed to have been drowned in the flood: Francis Moore, Frank Miles, a drayman; Mrs. George Watts, and Vinnie Dabney, a 14-year-old boy. These, together with Mrs. Charles Ruffin and George Owens, whose bodies were recovered, make the death list six.

Mr. Ingalls' Side of the Story.

ATCHISON, Kan., May 10.—John J. Ingalls says that he refused to deliver an address before the literary societies of Central college, Fayette, Mo., because one member of the faculty objected to him on account of his open letter to Bishop McCabe in regard to prize fight reporting, and that he was not told that he was not wanted. Central college is a Methodist institution.

Recommends Collins' Impeachment.

TALLEHASSEE, Fla., May 8.—The joint committee of the legislature that has been investigating State Treasurer C. B. Collins, with reference to his dealings with the defunct Merchants' national bank of Ocala, will submit a report recommending that Collins be impeached. The report will show a shortage of over \$50,000.

Mississippi Breaks All Records.

NEW ORLEANS, May 10.—The river last night broke all its own records and is expected soon to be two feet above all previous high water, but it will find the defenses quite well prepared, each weak levee having been braced.