

1,000 REDSKINS AGAINST 51 WHITES

BY EDWARD B. CLARK



WASHINGTON.—The senate of the United States has in its keeping an official document which contains one of the most splendidly graphic stories of Indian fighting ever written. The story in part is the account given by Gen. George A. Forsyth of his fight with the Sioux and the Cheyennes under the famous chief, Roman Nose, in eastern Colorado in the year 1865.

Gen. Forsyth went into the army from his native city, Chicago. He is now living in Washington. The odds against his force in the fight with the band of Roman Nose were 20 to 1, and as the senate document has it—though this part of it was not written by Forsyth—the battle "was a splendid example of the hardihood, courage and capacity to adapt themselves to circumstances which so generally mark the conduct of American troops on the frontier."

One of Gen. Forsyth's subordinate officers in the battle was Lieut. Frederick H. Beecher, a nephew of Rev. Henry Ward Beecher. Lieut. Beecher fought heroically and died just as the repulse of the Indians was assured.

Gen. Forsyth's description of the charge of Roman Nose and his red band follows:

"In a few moments after our preparations were completed Roman Nose and his warriors swept around the bend of the stream, out of and well beyond rifle range, with a front of about 60 men and a depth of six or eight ranks. Each warrior was, with the exception of his cartridge belt and box and moccasins, perfectly naked and hideously painted. They rode bareback, with only a horse-hair lariat wrapped twice around the middle of their horses and passing loosely over each knee. Riding well in front of the center of his line, Roman Nose led the charge with a reckless gallantry that may have been equalled but could not have been excelled. Six feet three inches in height, and perfectly naked save for a superb war bonnet on his head, a crimson silk sash around his waist, and his moccasins on his feet, showing immense breadth of shoulder, but, nevertheless, sinewy and slim, both in waist and flank, he sat well forward on his barebacked charger, with his knees under the lariat that twice encircled his horse's body, and his rifle held just below the trigger in his left hand, its barrel in the hollow of his arm, while the same hand grasped both his horse's mane and bridle, leaving his right arm free to direct his men, and as he came charging on at the head of his command he was the very beau ideal of an Indian chief.

"As soon as the charging warriors had fairly started toward us our immediate assailants, who lay under cover on the two banks of the river opposite an island, opened a rapid fire on us from both sides, with the intention of covering us to such an extent that we would not dare to rise from our rifle pits to open fire upon the attacking force, and so for a few seconds bullets fell everywhere around us.

"This I looked for, but I well knew that once the charging Indians came within range of the bullets of their own men their fire must necessarily cease. Glancing back over my command, I saw that they had all turned in their rifle pits toward the foot of the island, the direction from which the charge was coming, and crouching low, with their knees well under them, their rifles closely gripped in their sinewy hands, their bronzed faces set like iron and their eyes fairly ablaze with wrath, they lay with nostrils all aquiver, impatiently awaiting the command to fire.

"Suddenly the fire from the Indian riflemen ceased, and placing my back against my rifle pit and leaning on my elbows against its sides, I shouted: 'Now!' and Beecher, McCall and Grover echoed the cry.

"Instantly starting to their knees, with their rifles at shoulder as they rose, and with one quick glance along the barrel, 40 good men and true sent the first of seven consecutive volleys into the onrushing savage horde. Welcoming the first and second volleys with reckless yell, the charging warriors came gallantly on, but at the third the most of them ceased to shout, and I could see great gaps in their ranks and men and horses going down, but still the mass of them bravely held their course, Roman Nose leading them and wildly waving his heavy Springfield rifle over his head as though it were a wisp of straw, he alone shouting his defiant war cry as he swept toward us.

"At the fourth volley their great medicine man, who was leading the left of the column, went suddenly down, and for an instant the column seemed to check its speed, but only for a second, and then with a mad rush it came bounding and leaping onward. The fifth volley seemed to pile men and horses in heaps, and at the sixth Roman Nose and his horse went down in death together.

"A hundred feet farther and they will be upon us! But

now the column hesitates and shakes, and the sea of pour in their last and seventh volley just as a few of the warriors reach the foot of our little island, and then springing quickly to their feet, with wild cheers and imprecations on their foes, the frontiersmen suddenly pour almost into the very faces of the mounted warriors a rapid fire from their revolvers, while the Indian column suddenly divides on each side of the island and breaks in all directions for the shelter of either shore, the now completely defeated and panic-stricken savages, cowering to their horses' backs, fearfully demoralized, and seeking only safety in eager and headlong flight."

Gen. Forsyth was shot three times, but he dragged himself about to care for the wounded. Lieut. Beecher, shot in the side, turned to Forsyth and said, quietly and simply: "I have my death wound, general," and then as the commanding officer tells the story, he replied to his subordinate: "Oh, no, Beecher, no, it can't be as bad as that."

"Yes. Good night!" I heard him murmur once: "My poor mother! In the sunset his life went out."

"Good night. Good knight!"

After the failure of their attempt to override the little band of soldiers the Indians besieged the whites for nine days and the second chapter of the story has much of the stirring interest of the first, as it is told by the officer in command in that campaign on the eastern Colorado frontier.

With Col. Forsyth were 51 officers and men. Before the Indian lines were broken, as they charged down on the detachment the bullets of the Cheyennes and the Sioux mowed 24 victims, one-third of them being killed and the others badly wounded. Col. Forsyth had a bullet in his right thigh, his left leg was broken below the knee and his scalp had been torn open by a ricocheting shot.

Let Col. Forsyth tell the story of the siege:

"Orders were issued to unsaddle the dead horses, to use the saddles to strengthen our works, to connect the rifle pits and to deepen them still more and to cut off large steaks from the dead horses and mules and to bury them deep in the sand to avoid putrefaction.

"Having made the wounded as comfortable as possible with water dressings (the surgeon had been mortally wounded,) and a strong guard having been posted, I ate a few mouthfuls of raw horse flesh and dozed away until morning. The Indians, evidently believing that we would try to escape in the night, approached at early daylight to take up our trail. Owing to some one accidentally discharging his rifle they threw themselves flat on the ground and we succeeded in killing only one of them. The next day was very hot and we that were wounded suffered intensely.

"During all this time I noticed that there was a steady beating of drums and death chants among the women in the main camp of the savages. It was a weary enough day for we were out of food save horse and mule meat, which we had to eat without cooking, but fortunately we had plenty of good water. At noon, Scout Grover informed me that the Indian women and children were beginning to withdraw and I concluded at once

causing the bone to part and protrude through the flesh, much to my savagely expressed wrath.

"On the sixth day I called the well men together and told them that as there was no certainty that our messengers could get through they were entitled to a chance for their lives. I believed that most of our enemies had withdrawn, and as the men were well armed I doubted if any ordinary body of Indians would dare attack them on their way to Fort Wallace. As for the wounded, we must take our chances if attacked.

"For a few moments there was a dead silence, then rose a hoarse shout: 'Never! Never! We'll stand by you, general, until the end,' McCall saying: 'We've fought together, and, by heavens, if need be, we'll die together!'

"The next two days—the Indians only keeping a vidette in sight, and most of them having disappeared—seemed to me to be almost interminable. We all became weaker for want of food.

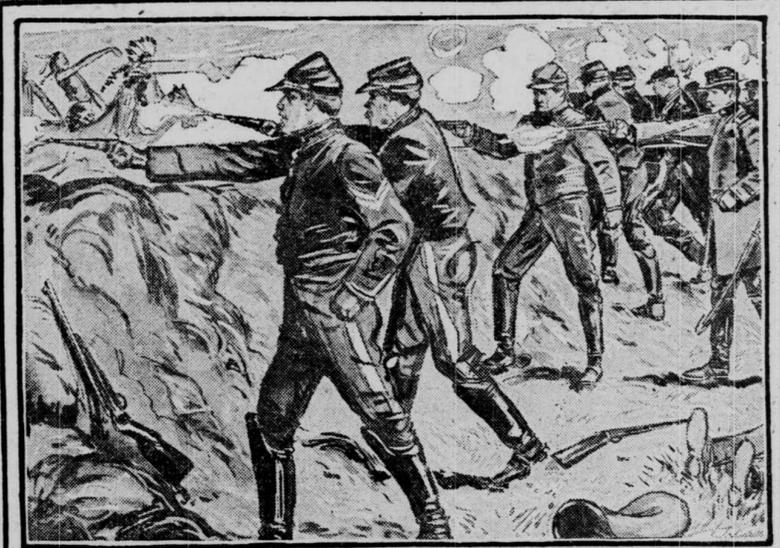
On the morning of the ninth day one of the men lying near me suddenly sprang up, and shading his eyes with his hands, shouted: 'There are some moving objects on the far hills.'

"Every man was on his feet in an instant, and then some keen-eyed scout shouted: 'By the God above us, it's an ambulance!'

"The strain was over. It was Col. Carpenter with a troop of the Tenth cavalry."

Not long afterward the sub-chiefs of the warriors who had surrounded and fought Col. Forsyth's band admitted that the Indians in the fight lost 75 killed and many wounded. There were 1,000 warriors in the band that attacked Forsyth's force of 51 men—and in the end the white men won.

It was a great fight, and the fact that the white men won proved a sure indication of final victory on the frontier, which came about a short time later. The records of the war office in



that the Indians had decided to give up the fight. Accordingly I penciled the following dispatch:

"Col. Bankhead, or Commanding Officer, Fort Wallace: I sent you two messengers on the night of the 7th inst., informing you of my critical condition. I tried to send you two more last night, but they did not succeed in passing Indian pickets, and returned. If the others have not arrived, then hasten at once to my assistance. The Cheyennes alone number 450 or more. They are splendidly armed with Spencer and Henry rifles. We are living on mule and horse meat and are entirely out of rations. If it was not for so many wounded I would come in and take the chances of whipping the reds if attacked. . . . I can hold out here for six days longer, but please lose no time. Very respectfully, your obedient servant, George A. Forsyth.

"P. S.—My surgeon having been mortally wounded, my wounded have not had their injuries dressed, so please bring a surgeon with you."

"I confided this to two excellent men, Donovan and Piley. They left our intrenchments at midnight, and as they did not return I was hopeful that they had escaped the vigilance of the Indian sentries and were on their way to Fort Wallace. It was these two men who fell in with Col. B. H. Carpenter's command two days later and gave the first intimation of our plight.

"The wound in my thigh having become exceedingly painful, I asked some of the men to cut the bullet out, but as it lay very near the femoral artery they all declined to attempt it. Taking my razor, which happened to be in my saddle bag, I managed to cut it out myself, greatly relieving the pain, but the wound became putrid, but one of the men shot a little gray wolf that helped out somewhat.

"I had the men raise me on a blanket to get a better view of affairs and suddenly the Indians sent in a fusillade of about 20 shots. The man who held the corner of the blanket upon which rested my broken leg dropped it,

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PUZZLE FOR TRAFFIC MEN.

Basket So Large That a Car Which Will Hold It Has Not Yet Been Found.

San Francisco.—The traffic officials of the Northwestern Pacific are much perplexed over a basket that they have been requested to receive for shipment from Ukiah to Brooklyn, N. Y. It is said to be the largest basket in the world and this must be true, for there is some doubt whether it will pass through the tunnels of the Sierra. The basket is of Indian manufacture and was designed as a storehouse for grain. It is shaped like the usual bushel measure, is mounted on poles to make it inaccessible to rodents and has a huge basketwork cover. It is



Big Indian Basket Which is to Be Shipped to Brooklyn.

wider than the door of an ordinary box car, yet it could not be shipped on a flat car, as it would be liable to destruction from the sparks of a locomotive.

The contrivance was purchased from the Indians by Dr. J. W. Hudson of Ukiah and by him sold to the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Science to be installed in its museum. The doctor paid only \$25 for the basket, but it is likely to be worth a fortune before it reaches the Atlantic coast.

Taking it for granted that the basket can be moved at all by rail the tariff officials are searching the classification sheets to determine under what rate the shipment would move. Some claim the basket is merely a basket, while others contend that it should move under the classification that includes "parts of grain elevators."

Traffic Manager Geary is of the opinion that the thing is a corn crib and should be so billed. In any event, it is too large to get in any ordinary box car and must, therefore, take a minimum weight of 5,000 pounds, although it weighs only 200 pounds. Under this interpretation of the tariff it would cost \$175 to move the granary to Brooklyn.

TAFT'S GRANDFATHER'S HOME.

Torrey House, Built Before Revolutionary War, Still in Excellent Condition.

Boston.—Mendon has still standing half a dozen houses built before the revolutionary war, and most of them are in excellent condition.

The oldest, the Austin Taft house, situated east of the post office, erected



Old Torrey House, Mendon.

about 1722, has been thoroughly remodeled in the interior, but the exterior remains unchanged.

Other old homes include the Luther Taft houses, near the Kelly corner; the old Lee house, now occupied by Mr. Cromb; the old Davenport house on North avenue, and the Torrey house on the same avenue and adjacent to the present station of the Milford & Uxbridge street railway.

The latter house is of exceptional interest, as it was the boyhood home of Samuel Davenport Torrey, born in 1785, a well-known merchant of Boston in the West India trade, and the grandfather of President William H. Taft, who has repeatedly visited the old home, now owned by Marcus M. Aldrich, president of the Mendon Historical society, and occupied by his son.

Exactly when this house was built is uncertain, but when Mr. Aldrich acquired the title from the Torrey heirs, in 1875, the farm had been in the possession of the Torreys more than 150 years, and the house had been built then at least 135 years.

When William Torrey and wife, Ann, great grandmothers of President Taft, were married, they went there to live. Directly across the avenue, or old road to Upton, was a small building that was used by William Torrey and his son, Samuel D. Torrey, as a store. In that store it is assumed that the latter secured his first financial start that enabled him to lay the foundation of his fortune, making possible the education and social standing of his daughter, Louisa Maria Torrey, who married the Hon. Alfonso Taft, the latter being parents of President Taft.

Trade Terms.—"How much," began the lady to Baxter, in temporary charge of the coal yard, "how much is stove coal now?"

"That depends," said Baxter, with whom language is often a vehicle of confusion. "A la carte, it's seven and a half. Cul-de-sac, it'll cost you fifty cents extra."—Youth's Companion.

Method.—"Big Sister—Now, look here, Bobby, whenever I sing 'or the company, you yell. A-phen? you ashamed? Why do you act so?"

Little Brother.—"Because when I yell you stop singin', and pa gives me ten cents."—Cleveland Leader.

Peculiar Quake-Proof Building.

The earthquake-proof building of Prof. Boermeel rests in a massive bowl, and has a rocking foundation with a curved surface of somewhat less radius than that of the bowl. A half-spherical pivot fits into a cup-bearing at the center. At eight points near the outside of the bowl are spring buffers, which keep the house or other building from being canted too freely, and lessen the force of any shock transmitted. The structure on this foundation is to have a light steel

framework, and is expected to resist the severest earthquakes.

At the Top of the Heap.—"Talk about your monopolists," said the obese party on the north end of a trolley car going south, "the chap I buy coal of has the rest of the bunch beaten to a fluffy fizzle."

"What's the answer?" queried the passenger with the pale whiskers.

"He has taken up plumbing as a side line for the winter," explained the heavyweight.

MIXED KINDLINESS AND HUMOR

Example of Criticisms Made by Brahms, the Famous Composer.

Brahms, the composer, was noted for his kindness, but, writes Georg Henschel in "Personal Recollections of Johannes Brahms," he sometimes uttered a good-natured sarcasm to which the roughish twinkle in his eyes corresponded. A would-be composer had asked Brahms to be allowed to play

do you buy your music paper? First rate."

Another time Mr. Henschel accompanied Brahms to the house of Mr. X—

"You have no idea," declared Mrs. X—, "how hard a worker X— is. I am proud and happy to have at last prevailed upon him to go for a walk with our daughter every day for two hours, thus keeping him at least for two hours a day from composing."

"Ah, that's good, that's very good," said Brahms, instantly, looking as in-

to him from the manuscript his latest composition, a violin concerto. Brahms consented to hear it, and seated himself near the piano. The man played his work with enthusiasm and force.

When he finished Brahms got up, approached the piano, took a sheet of the manuscript, between his thumb and middle finger, and rubbing it between them, exclaimed: "I say, where

do you buy your music paper? First rate."

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