

A SOLDIER'S ATONEMENT

Edward B. Clark



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 At the time when the United States and Mexican governments made that temporary treaty which allowed the troops of either to invade the territory of the other when in the pursuit of hostile Indians fleeing across the border, James Tracy was a second lieutenant in the 19th cavalry. It was during the height of the Geronimo trouble, and Tracy, with his troop, dismounted, and after a soul and body wearying march on the trail of the wily Apache, found himself in the heart of one of the dreariest, most God-forsaken mountain countries in the whole range of the southern country.

The troop was exhausted and practically without water, the men having not a drop to drink save what was in their canteens. They had cut loose from a river in the early morning, expecting to find another when the day was done, but not as much as a rivulet had they found. There was no coffee that night and there wasn't a light heart in the whole outfit.

Tracy was unhappy. It wasn't wholly his suffering condition and that of his men which weighed upon him. Just before leaving the Arizona post he had received news that his younger brother, John, had been committed to state's prison in a far northeastern state. The officer had seen his home only once since his graduation. He had stayed away purposely. His brother had been a trusted bank employee. Then came suspicion, then conviction and a sentence. John Tracy protested his innocence of the crime charged against him, and his family, knowing the lad, believed in him, but the circumstantial evidence was overwhelming, and in spite of the efforts of the aged father, who spent his time and his money in the boy's defense, he went to prison.

Before the troop had left Fort Banks with its nose to the red-hot trail of Geronimo there had joined as an enlisted man a strapping young officer who said that he came from St. Louis. His name was Barlow, and he was assigned to the troop of which Tracy was the junior officer, and he went with it on its chase across the border after the Apache chieftain.

Barlow on every occasion possible attached himself to Tracy's person. Whenever there was a scouting party detached from the main body and put under the second lieutenant's command Barlow asked that he might be assigned to it to share in the scouting duty. He was a reserved fellow and apparently of superior education. There were no camp jokes for him. He was grave and taciturn. Tracy had noticed the evident attachment of the man to him, and as he was a capable soldier and willing to dare and to do anything he was glad to have him a part of his outfit when on detached and dangerous service.

On the morning following the night that the troop was practically without water and in a country devoid of all green things save the forbidding cactus, the troop commander told Tracy that he had better make a short reconnaissance, feel out the country for the enemy and, above all, try to locate water. To attempt a march under that hot Mexican sun with the men, and with any idea of effective service, was foolhardy.

Tracy told his captain that he would take but one man with him; that they would strike southward, where it was thought a better prospect of water lay, and that they would return as soon as a find was made. He selected Barlow for his companion, and the two struck out through the black, sun-seared country.

They went on for three hours. Not a drop of the element of which they were in search. Their tongues were blistered. They drank sparingly of the water in their canteens, pressed on for another hour and then knew that they must return.

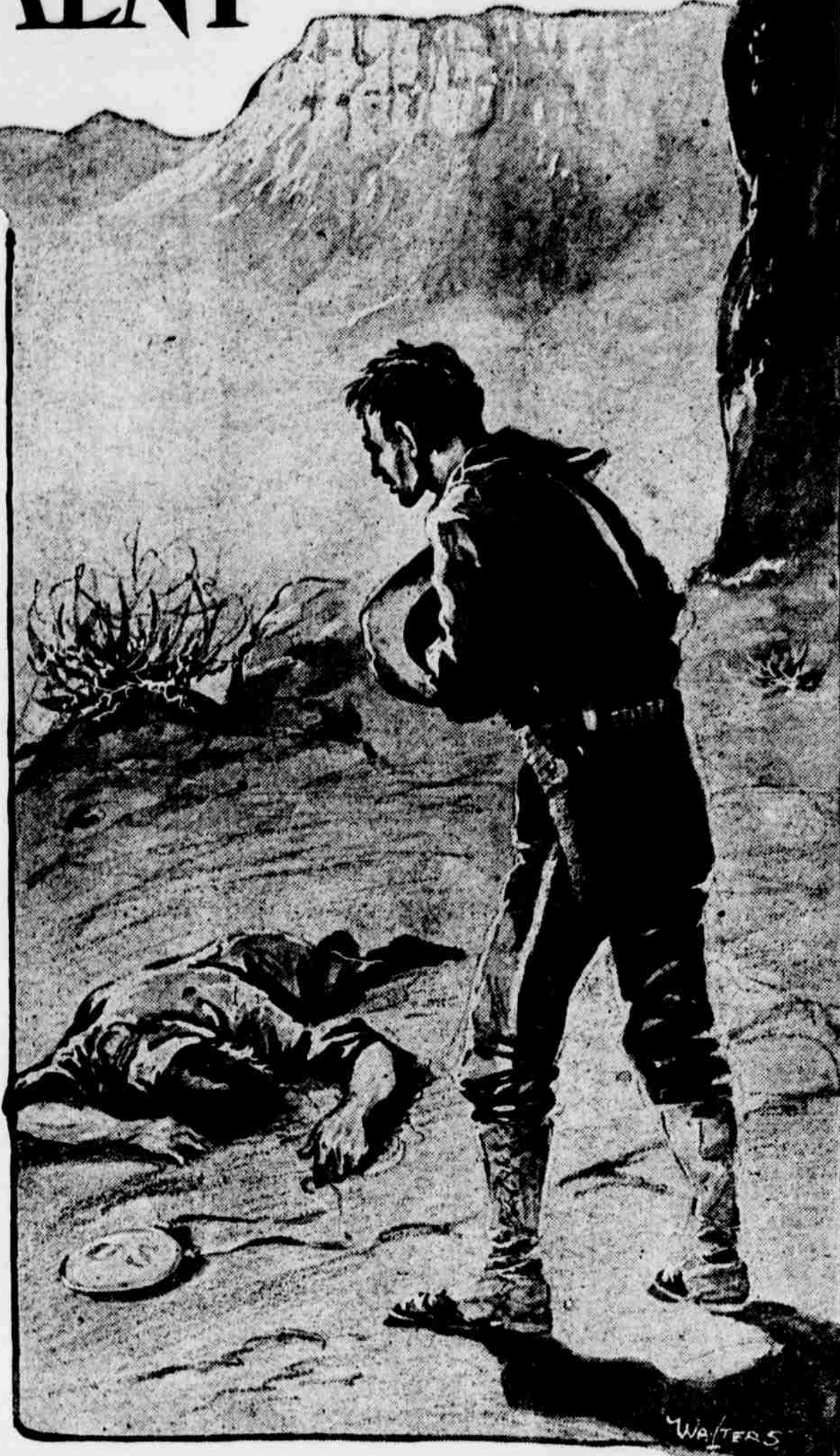
Back they started. They followed their onward trail as well as they could, but at times it was lost, and then circling was necessary to take it up again. At noon they lost it and could not find it again. There was a great jagged rock rising to the westward which neither recognized.

"Lieutenant," said Barlow, "we're going wrong. We never came this way. The sun doesn't bear right. It should be more to our right. I believe that we are going almost directly at right angles to the camp."

They circled again and again, but no trace of the trail. Then the conclusion forced itself on Tracy that they were lost. They wandered on until the sun went down beyond the black rocks. Then they each drank sparingly of the precious contents of the canteens, and lay down on the gray desert to sleep.

The sun came up like a red-hot round shot. Tracy and Barlow ate the last of their single ration, and took one swallow of water apiece. Then on they went again. Twenty-four hours passed. The sun came up once more, and with its coming they staggered forward. The canteens were empty. They looked for the cactus whose leaf yields a juice that helps fight off the demon of thirst. They could not find it. The only vegetation were occasional clumps of stunted prickly pear cactus, the juice of whose leaves accentuates thirst.

Another twenty-four hours. The men cheered each other on like the soldiers they were. Tracy began to feel the coming of delirium. Oh, for a draught of water! He looked at Barlow. The man's eyes were burning, but they had a courage in them, and something else in their depths which Tracy never before had seen there. On and on and on. They could go no further. Suddenly Barlow turned to Tracy and said in a voice that was choked from the clutching of thirst's hand at his throat: "Lieutenant, I was afraid that we might be tempted to drink this long ago, so I saved it for the last extremity. Lieutenant, I have one good drink of water apiece left in my canteen."



Barlow shook the canteen, and Tracy heard the splash of the water within.

"Drink, Barlow," said Tracy. "Drink; you saved it and it should be yours. Drink, drink. I say. It may give you strength to go on. If you get back, boy, and the men strike water, ask them to come after my body."

Tracy was reeling. His brain was awash and his whole system on fire.

"Lieutenant," said Barlow, "I had more in my canteen than you had in yours when we started. Men in an extremity like this should share and share alike. I'll take my cup and we'll divide the water."

"Is there enough for the two and to do any good?" asked Tracy.

"Yes," said Barlow, "one good drink for each."

"Drink first," said Tracy. "I'll not touch a drop until my command is served."

"All right, sir," said Barlow.

Tracy turned away for a moment. He heard the gurgle of water. Would it never come his turn to drink? Barlow spoke: "Lieutenant, I'm afraid I took more than half. Here is what's left."

He poured the water gurgling from the canteen into the cup. There was a good round drink. "Take it, Lieutenant," said Barlow. "I had more than that."

Tracy seized the cup and drained it. Oh, the joy of it! New life went surging through him. His eyes cleared. He looked at Barlow. There was no new life in the man's eyes. His lip was drooping.

"Barlow," said Tracy fiercely, "you deceived me. You never drank a drop."

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BEEF TEA AS AN INTOXICANT

We find it difficult to believe the cable report that Liverpool physicians are very much exercised over the case of the traveling salesman with delirium tremens induced by too much beef tea, says a writer in the New York Times. Food analysts and nutrition experts have long been aware of the high stimulating power of meat proteins, which, Dr. Chittenden says, are approximated by one sort of protein from the vegetable kingdom, that of oatmeal. The vegetarians, in fact, base their most effective arguments in the fact that the stimulation from meat is in a way like that from alcohol, effecting tissue change or metabolism rather than affording nutriment. Beef tea is the highest stimulant among the meat juices. Physicians have long since abandoned the notion that it is a food capable of repairing tissue, for laboratory tests have proved that it causes more rapid wasting of the body than no food at all.

Something like a smile came into Barlow's face.

"Forgive me, Lieutenant," he said, "but there was only enough for one." And then he staggered and fell forward. Tracy caught him in his arms, and, weak though he was, managed to support his burden.

"Lieutenant," whispered Barlow, "go on. You are strong enough and may reach camp. If you do, just come back and bury me here."

Then the man drew his officer's head close to him and whispered something. Barlow almost let fall his burden. "Yes, it's true. I was the gully one and your brother was innocent and a sacrifice. Take this," and he drew a paper from his blouse and put it in Tracy's hand. "Forgive me, Lieutenant," he said, and as he spoke his empty canteen swung from his side and struck against Tracy's knee.

"Forgive you? Yes, Barlow," he said.

The enlisted man looked up, smiled and died.

Tracy let his burden gently to the earth, and then he pressed on, for now there was an added life in his veins and an added interest in living. He reached the top of the ridge and looked down. The camp was below him. Not the old camp, but the old troop and a new camp and by the bank of a stream.

Refreshed with food, sleep and the yet more precious water, Tracy recovered. The paper which Barlow had given him contained proof of his brother's innocence. Tracy led a squad back to the point where he had left Barlow. They found his body. There was peace in the man's face. He was given a soldier's burial, and on the little wilderness grave Lieutenant Tracy planted a cross and a little, fluttering flag.

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INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

(By E. O. SELLERS, Director of Evening Department, The Moody Bible Institute, Chicago.)

LESSON FOR OCTOBER 5

MOSES' CRY FOR HELP.

LESSON TEXT—Numbers 11:10-15, 24, 25. GOLDEN TEXT—"The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working."—James 5:16.

This lesson is taken from the book of Numbers, "the book of journeyings," or aptly called the "book of murmurings." The events of Exodus and Leviticus cover perhaps one or two years, whereas those recorded in Numbers occupy about 38 years. Read in this connection Ps. 95:10 and I Cor. 10. From Sinai to Kadesh-Barnea are found four general murmurings. The first was at Taberah, 11:3, and the events of today's lesson which occurred at Kibroth, 11:34. The other two were at Hazeroth, 12:15, 16, and Kadesh, 13:26. This book is full of impressive warnings about worldliness.

Moses Was Human.

I. Complaint and Controversy, vv. 10-15. Moses was great but he was human. No man is faultless, and in this lesson we have another incident illustrating the weakness of Moses. Yet despite all this we find inserted in the very next chapter God's estimate of his character, 12:3. Moses had been subjected to a terrible strain, the details of his leadership, the constant murmuring of the people under this load he gave way, just as he had previously yielded to impulse, Ex. 2:12, and as he did subsequently, Ch. 20:10-13. The Israelites are a striking illustration of the natural discontent of the human heart. Any affliction, and discomfort or privation, and we forget God's marvelous works on our behalf. His wonderful goodness. That God was displeased is indicated by verse 10, but that did not imply that Moses, too, was to lose his temper, to resort to murmuring, and to accuse God of being responsible for the burden or that he would not help to share the load, v. 11. God placed great honor upon Moses by calling him to this task of leadership, and now he complains, and doubts for a moment God's sustaining grace, 2 Cor. 12:9; Phil. 4:13. The language here used, vv. 12-14, is wonderfully suggestive. The utter weakness of the Israelites, the promised goal, the hunger of soul and body, the sorrows of affliction are all graphically set before us. Moses' own weakness is revealed (v. 13) by his words, "where should I have flesh to give?" He seems to forget absolutely God's dealings with Israel before they reached Sinai (Ex. 16), as though God expected any such thing from him. The height of his petulance and bitterness is reached when he exclaims, "kill me I pray thee . . . and let me not see my wretchedness," v. 15.

Burden Distributed.

II. Comfort and Counsel, vv. 16-18, 24, 25. Moses had been warned not to bear the entire burden of leadership by his father-in-law, Jethro, Ex. 18:17, 18. Now that he is unwilling to take the full honor of undivided leadership God most graciously grants his request and appoints others to share the burden and responsibility. There was no more power, however, but more machinery. God distributed the burden and revealed the fact that Moses' power was in proportion to his burden. Human nature always looks for the arm of flesh upon which to rely, but such a reliance usually brings a curse not a blessing upon those who seek it, Jer. 17:5. God dealt in mercy with Moses. Notice how gently he passes by this exhibition of infirmity and notwithstanding this lapse, bears testimony to his faithfulness (12:7). Yet he is impartial in chronicling his faults and thereby giving us an incidental and thereby giving us the truth.

What a suggestion in the words "I will come down and talk with thee," yet that is the privilege of the believer in Christ, John 14:16, 17 and 18:13. God calls a "tent meeting," v. 16 R. V., but before he meets them they must sanctify themselves, for so only is one prepared to meet God, Ex. 19:10, 15, 22. These people had been lusting for the food of Egypt even as to-day many who have professed to accept Christ are forever longing for the pleasures of time and sense. They forget the bitterness of past slavery in the privations of the present, entirely forgetful of the goal of luxury and freedom, Rom. 10:28, 2 Cor. 4:17. God granted their request, v. 18, to their sorrow, v. 20. The whole trouble was then "rejected the Lord," v. 20 R. V. The granting of material prosperity tends to leanness of soul, Ps. 106:15. It frequently happens that God does not answer our prayers because he knows that to answer them actually and literally would spell disaster in our lives.

Conclusion. This lesson brings Moses very near to us. Such a remarkable man as he is he sometimes seems to be far removed from our actual experiences in life. Yet as we consider him faltering for a moment beneath his staggering, crushing burden of responsibility, with strength and courage gone, we share our sympathy with him and he seems to enter into the actualities of our daily life.

God reveals himself as one who understands perfectly, one who knows exactly all that his servant felt, and one who in tender compassion had not a word of rebuke.

DIZZY, HEADACHY, SICK, "CASCARETS"

Gently cleanse your liver and sluggish bowels while you sleep.

Get a 10-cent box.

Sick headache, biliousness, dizziness, coated tongue, foul taste and foul breath—always trace them to torpid liver; delayed, fermenting food in the bowels or sour, gassy stomach.

Poisonous matter clogged in the intestines, instead of being cast out of the system is re-absorbed into the blood. When this poison reaches the delicate brain tissue it causes congestion and that dull, throbbing, sickening headache.

Cascarets immediately cleanse the stomach, remove the sour, undigested food and foul gases, take the excess bile from the liver and carry out all the constipated waste matter and poisons in the bowels.

A Cascaret to-night will surely straighten you out by morning. They work while you sleep—a 10-cent box from your druggist means your head clear, stomach sweet and your liver and bowels regular for months. Adv.

Eye Alone Detects Icebergs.

There at present is no absolute method of detecting icebergs, except Captain C. E. Johnson and A. S. Gamble of the cutters Seneca and Miami, which patrolled the route of the transatlantic liners from April to May.

Captain Johnson refuted the prevalent theory that a sudden drop in temperature meant the proximity of icebergs. Little or no change in temperature was noticeable, he said. Nor can icebergs, as generally supposed, be detected with any certainty by an echo from a ship's whistle or bells, as, according to Captain Johnston, a perpendicular berg may give an echo from some directions, but a slanting face reflects the sound. About ninety per cent. of the Seneca's efforts to get echoes were futile.

The presence of murres (a kind of auk), the officer declares, indicated the presence of icebergs, but he advises mariners to pay no attention to other birds.

Luckily for Him.

The amateur adventurer had just returned from stirring scenes in Mexico, where he had fought under the banners of the revolutionists. He had come home wounded and was telling his friends about it.

"It was my first engagement, you know. The bullet struck me just under the heart."

"And you lived? How remarkable!"

"Oh, no; not at all! You see, my heart was in my mouth at the time."

At the Circus.

"Look at that woman! She's small enough to go through a man's hat."

"That's nothing to what my wife can do. She is small enough to go through my pocket."

Uniform in Makeup.

"What variety of sweet corn is this?" asked the summer boarder.

"The corn, tomatoes and peas," replied the hired man, "are all the same variety this year—canned."

Their Place.

"Who are those brothers you hear of in the chorus?"

"I suppose they are the ones they use in the hot weather shows."

There is in every true woman's heart a spark of heavenly fire, which beams and blazes in the dark hours of adversity.—Washington Irving.

DIDN'T KNOW

That Coffee Was Causing Her Trouble.

So common is the use of coffee as a beverage, many do not know that it is the cause of many obscure ailments which are often attributed to other things.

The easiest way to find out for oneself is to quit the coffee for a while, at least, and note results. A Virginia lady found out in this way, and also learned of a new beverage that is wholesome as well as pleasant to drink. She writes:

"I am 40 years old and all my life, up to a year and a half ago, I had been a coffee drinker."

"Dyspepsia, severe headaches and heart weakness made me feel sometimes as though I was about to die. After drinking a cup or two of hot coffee, my heart would go like a clock without a pendulum. At other times it would almost stop and I was so nervous I did not like to be alone."

"If I took a walk for exercise, as soon as I was out of sight of the house I'd feel as if I was sinking, and this would frighten me terribly. My limbs would utterly refuse to support me, and the pity of it all was, I did not know that coffee was causing the trouble."

"Reading in the papers that many persons were relieved of such ailments by leaving off coffee and drinking Postum, I got my husband to bring home a package. We made it according to directions and I liked the first cup. Its rich, snappy flavor was delicious."

"I have been using Postum about eighteen months and to my great joy, digestion is good, my nerves and heart are all right. In fact, I am a well woman once more, thanks to Postum."

Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich. Write for copy of the little book, "The Road to Wellville."

Postum comes in two forms: Regular Postum—must be well boiled.

Instant Postum is a soluble powder. A teaspoonful dissolves quickly in a cup of hot water and, with cream and sugar, makes a delicious beverage instantly. Grocers sell both kinds.

"There's a reason" for Postum.