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# POLACK CLOTHING COMPANY

1316 Farnam Street, Omaha.

### TRAGEDY OF THE NEMAH.

Terrible Fate of Two Nebraska Pioneer Females.

FIENDISH WORK OF REDSKINS

Summary Vengeance Meted Out to the Perpetrators—Perilous Journey Across the Flood—Murdered by the Indians.

An Early Tragedy.

"I'll cross the stream to yonder cabin though it costs my life."

The firmly compressed lips of the speaker indicated that he meant just what he said. Imagine for a moment a sheet of water covering a valley more than two miles in width, from two to thirty feet in depth, rushing, surging and roaring as though the imp of hades were battling for their kingdom, the rain falling in torrents, and nothing at hand but a "dug out" skiff and an ordinary hand paddle to battle with the current that carried trees and logs and debris on to the great gulf of the south, any of which would have borne a dozen men without sinking them out of sight, and one gathers the hazard attaching to the venture as well as the idea that a motive stronger than life impelled it.

During the fall of 1862 a half dozen families sought homes in southern Otoe, in the country skirting the Little Nemaha river, a mile or so to the west of what is now the thriving little city of Talmage. Robert Gest, the head of one of the families, selected the site for his home upon the river banks, in one of the beautiful native groves for which the Nemaha is famous. The knoll upon which he built his house was above high water mark. Indeed, at the time my story opens the logs of the cabin were untouched by the turbulent waters. But they could not remain so long and the river rising every moment. The situation was truly appalling. Something must be done or a trust reposed would be betrayed. Here a reasoned Joe Downes as he and a brother of Robert Gest's looked upon the scene, and discerned the faintly curling smoke rising from the chimney of the house, giving evidence that there were loved ones within, possibly frightened out of their wits by the terrible fate that seemed to be in store for them.

By accident Joe and his comrade tumbled upon the skiff referred to before, a mile or so down the river. It had evidently become loosened from its moorings from some point above and washed ashore. As though prompted by intuition they towed the bark along until they reached a point opposite and the little cabin they so much desired to reach. Here they held a brief consultation. It was decided that Joe should make the venture alone, and in the event of disaster, which meant certain death, the other would be able to return to Brownville, from whence they came, and bear the sad news to his brother and other friends. Now, with the observation that the cabin was on the north bank of the river, and Downes and his comrade on the table-land skirting the valley to the south and west, a clear conception can be had of the peril in the undertaking the brave men contemplated.

But a word in explanation of why these men were there under such distressing circumstances. Like all early

settlers in Nebraska, they were poor, and occasionally fortune compelled them to seek the river towns for work, that they might be able to provide bread and butter for themselves and families. Downes and Gest were inseparable friends. A week or so prior to the breaking up of winter and the freshet that made the Nemaha a great lake of water, accompanied by a neighbor and a brother of the latter, they went to Brownville to get out "cord wood" and work in a saw mill. The rain had been such as to alarm Gest, who had left his wife and daughter, a young girl approaching womanhood, to look after the home property he had gathered together. They were brave little souls, knew no fear and did the work left them to do faithfully and well. Owing to the location of his house, however, and the madly overflowing streams, he stated his fears and persuaded Downes and his brother to return home, knowing that they cared nothing for a walk of thirty miles across the prairie; so, just as the sun was disappearing behind the western hills, in the early spring time, they started on the homeward journey, arriving at the place described at an early hour the following morning. The scene was enough to strike terror to the hearts of the bravest. A sheet of water nearly or quite a mile in width, hissing and surging, separated him from his friend's loved ones. He had given his word that he would care for them if he found them in need or danger, and the sequel will show that he kept it to the letter.

Seizing the paddle the skiff was pushed from the shore, and Downes commenced the most perilous venture of his life. It is useless to attempt to describe his battle with the driving current and surging waves. At times it seemed that mortal could not control the frail bark, but for all that he did, and in due time landed at the door of the cabin. In Joe's language, as he told the story in after years, he was more scared as he knoeked at the door than when in the boat, battling with the terrible current, but of reaching the cabin, "I felt," he said, "as though I was to see something awful. It was a presentment, and it came upon me all at once. I called to Lizzie, Bob's wife, but got no answer, and I didn't wait longer on ceremony. I surged on the door and it went in with a bang. Talk about horrors, boys, there lay Lizzie and Ruth in the middle of the floor, as cold as marble, and I thought I'd faint. It was an awful sight. It didn't take me long to see that they had been murdered by Indians. Yes, they had been scalped, and I swore to hunt their murderers down if it took me a life time. Fortunately they had overlooked Bob's rifle, and I collected together what little ammunition I could find, fixed up a pile to eat and prepared to return to where I had left Bob's brother. There was an old-fashioned fire place in the house, and the "great log" still furnished a little fire. I knoeked it to pieces and soon had a refreshing blaze. But I didn't tarry long to enjoy its comforts. I was heart-sick and wanted to get away. I laid Lizzie's and Ruth's bodies in a corner of the room and covered them up as snugly as though I was putting children to bed. I think they must have been dead fully a day. I have wondered a thousand times since why the red devils did not burn the house. I had no trouble in reaching the shore on my return trip, for I simply helped the current after clearing the channel of the river, and landed nearly three miles below the house. Charley met me as I stepped upon the shore. He intuitively divined that something was wrong, and his face in

death can never be whiter than it was then.

"For heaven's sake, Joe, what's the matter," he exclaimed.

"Matter enough," I replied; "Lizzie and Ruth are dead!"

"Dead?"

"Yes, dead! murdered! and by Indians."

"Good God, you can't mean it."

"Too true, my boy," I said. "Go to Brownville and tell Bob as quickly as you can. I shall take the trail and never leave it until I have avenged their terrible death. I did not even particularize to Charley, but took him hurriedly by the hand, pressed it good bye and bent my steps toward the Big Blue to the south and west. By this time the sun was high in the heavens. The rain had ceased to fall, and the chirping robin and sprouting grass would have lightened my heart under ordinary circumstances. As it was, I was bitter and longed for revenge. My time came much more quickly than I expected. I had walked rapidly, and as the sun was disappearing for the day, my eye caught unmistakable evidences of a trail, and before darkness mantled the earth I spied a party of five Indians in bivouac, on the Big Nemaha, not far from the present site of Tecumseh. I dropped to the ground undiscovered and laid there until long into the night, but I never lost sight of a movement. I was so sure that I had struck the right party that I did not consider uncertainty a single moment. Well, I did the work, no matter how, and before the dawn of day I had scalped my first Indian, not only one, but five of them, and was ready to meet Bob at his desolate home. No doubt at all boys, but what I had struck the right party, and I tore their necking scalps from their heads because I found Lizzie's and Ruth's, and I did not think of barbarism even once. Oh, well, if you must know, I did the work with my hunting knife, and did not have to call my trusty rifle into play. The "red devils" did not sleep very close together, and I found it very easy work. Long in the afternoon, the following day, I sighted Bob's cabin, now known as the old McCann place, but he was there before me. Our meeting was touchingly sad. The "white man" had greatly surprised, and the south bank of the river could be reached by wading here and there. Together we performed the last sad rites for the dead, but we separated within a month and I have never met him since."

This, in a word, is the story of the most memorable event of a remarkable man's life. Soon after, Downes answered his country's call, and enlisted in the First Nebraska for three years, or during the war. At the close of his service, distinguished for its valor, he returned to Nebraska City, and often made "the trip of the plains" as guide or scout for some freighters. His bouts with border ruffians and Indians, of whom he was an implacable enemy, would fill a volume as widely interesting as the life of Boone and Carson. He knew no fear and considered no compromise with what he believed to be wrong. In '73 or '74 he returned to friends who still live in the vicinity of Talmage, and continued with them until his death, which occurred about three months ago. He lived to be over sixty years of age. During the winter months he would trap along the "Little Nemaha," and would occasionally take a trip into the mountains, where he would remain for several months at a time. He found a congenial spirit in Uncle Fred Deutch, who also died within the past year, and they often joined in hunting and trapping expeditions. Uncle

Deutch passed away a few months before Joe was called, and his friends express the opinion that the death of his comrade hastened his end. Be that as it may, Joe Downes found watchful friends in Lane Osborn and John Walker, who never lost an opportunity to do him a kindness, and they saw that his remains were tenderly laid to rest.

### PEPPERMINT DROPS.

A man in a peck of trouble is in a measure to be pitied.

Well, I'm chairman, but where's the party!

Every man is sometimes a bait on some other man's hook.

The parcel clerk gives the business wrapped attention.

The man who registers at a hotel at night can be said to be on the "retired list."

It is getting so now that a weather prophet can't even predict a storm.

A spirit medium's business is naturally dull in summer, there is so little demand for wraps.

Grif makes the man and want of it the chump; the man who win lay hold, hang on, and lump.

Massachusetts comes nobly to the front with a law to dock every one who docks a credit.

Now that a castor oil trust has been formed, the wheels of commerce can be said to be well greased.

The oldest twins we know of are Wickedness and Want, and they will probably survive till doomsday.

The white horse is about the only thing connected with the Cronin business which delays, come-ine-ly.

The wife who retain a sure hold upon her husband's heart will never have occasion to take a grip on his hair.

There is one thing that the invincible western scout has never succeeded in lifting, and that is a morning.

It is easier for New York people to select the site for a monument than to secure a sight of a monument itself.

Almost everybody will agree that the American flag is a daisy. If so, then we already have a national flower.

"How long do mosquitoes live?" asks a correspondent. That depends a good deal on the kind of a fellow they light on.

The ethics of forgery are hard to reconcile. When a man forges a hand it is a crime, but when he forges ahead it is a credit.

The inconsistency of our war department is seen in allowing a Colonel Walker to be in the cavalry and Captain Rider in the infantry.

The widow is less selfish than the maiden, for while the latter is always looking out for No. 1 the former is satisfied in watching for No. 2.

By the way, Epporpaugh, I wish you would take off my hands a few of these invitations to make Fourth of July speeches this year.—Dewey.

William Dean Howells is writing some dialect in Harper's Magazine. It is a kind of succotash of Bostonese patois and Louisiana rice field lingo.

Monopoly, having shed its castor oil trait into the ring, now have to take a few knock-downs from the infant industries of this country.

They have an American elevator in the Eiffel Tower, but it is not really American unless it is run by a small boy whistles and smokes cigarettes.

Paradoxical as it may seem a Kentucky man Thursday died of water on the brain. We implore Colonel Watterson to never let it occur again.

"Wives should never conceal anything from their husbands," says a writer. If this advice was carried out it would create a revolution in feminine pockets.

Sitting Bull, who has been seriously ill of pneumonia, is reported "much improved." He can now be regarded as a member of the Improved Order of Red Men—but at the same time he is not.

"Judge a man by his eyes, but a woman always by her lips," said Benjamin Franklin. Now we understand how Benjamin happened to get so deeply interested in the study of electrical phenomena.

### THE CASTLE OF CHAPULTEPEC

It Once More Becomes the White House of Mexico.

A MAGNIFICENT MARBLE PILE

The Wonderful Double Staircase—Popocatepetl and Itzacchihault and the Curious Legend Connected With Them.

Where Maximilian Lived.

MEXICO CITY, June 10.—[Special to THE BEE.]—President Diaz has moved his official residence out to the Castle of Chapultepec, which becomes once more—for the first time since the unlucky Maximilian and his charming wife lived there—the "white house" of Mexico. Chapultepec is one of the loveliest spots imaginable. It is unique in itself as well as in its name, which signifies "The Hill of the Grasshopper."

Montezuma made his summer house here, and an underground passage, still in existence, was made by his direction, to a point in the valley below, so that the Aztec chieftain could go and come as he pleased. Under the old cypress trees in the park, the Conqueror Cortez pitched his tent, after the celebrated "Noche Triste," or night of sorrow, when the Aztecs fell upon the Spaniards and massacred them. Here Maximilian and the unfortunate Carlotta made love as they promenaded

THE MAGNIFICENT MARBLE TERRACES which were built by order of the "Austrian Grand Duke." Here the American army fought a bloody but decisive battle—one which has made the queer word Chapultepec familiar to American ears. One might narrate numberless historical incidents connected with the spot, which abounds in memories, if space permitted, but the place itself demands some description.

Imagine a park of 1,000 acres, covered with a dense growth of cypress, many of the trees 500 or 600 years old. The grey Spanish moss festooned from limb to limb adds to the picturesqueness of the scene. In the center of this park—

which is surrounded by massive walls on three sides, the old aqueduct forming the barrier on the fourth, rises a precipitous mound, if such a term will express the idea. This mound is composed principally of rock and is probably 200 feet in height. There is but one road to the top, the summit being inaccessible except by this single route.

Upon the very apex

STANDS THE CASTLE, completely covering the space, so that no matter from which direction you look there is a sheer descent of nearly one hundred feet. The castle was built in sections and presents no singular feature of architecture except a peculiar double staircase that seems to have no supports.

When Maximilian first saw this staircase he remarked to the architect that he would not trust his own weight upon it, whereupon the designer, with his majesty's permission, brought a regiment of soldiers and marched them up and down the stairway ten abreast, thus demonstrating its strength. This staircase is the only one of its kind in existence, and is built of white marble and brass.

The terraces at Chapultepec are one

of the sights of Mexico. They are floored with white marble, with brass balustrades, and lighted by electricity. The upper terrace extends the entire distance around the castle and is twenty-four feet broad. Lovely little flower gardens are located at frequent intervals and here are blooming geraniums, fuchsias, heliotrope and mignonette, making the air rich with perfume and adding to the brightness and

### BEAUTY OF THE SCENE.

The great observatory of the National Astronomical society, which rises from the center of the building, always casts upon some part of the terrace a grateful shade, while adjustable awnings can be brought into use when necessary.

The view from Chapultepec! Who can describe it? What the Yosemite is to California; what Niagara is to New York; what the Yellowstone is to Wyoming—this is what Chapultepec is to Mexico. To the extreme right, as we look down the Paseo de la Reforma, rises Popocatepetl, grand beyond description, his snowy summit dotted with soft, white clouds. To the west of Popocatepetl is Itzacchihault, called "La Mujer Blanca"—the white woman—by the natives. This peculiarly shaped mountain is really wonderfully suggestive, by its shape, of a woman in a white shroud prepared for burial. The dead face, as seen from Chapultepec, is simply perfect in outline, and her hair seems to stream in silvery locks from the marble-like forehead down over the hier. Of course there is a legend connected with the White Woman. According to the Indians, the two volcanoes were once human beings, a giant and a giantess. One day they offended their Creator, who struck the giantess dead, turned her both into mountains and chained Popocatepetl, where he

MUST GAZE PERPETUALLY

into the face of his dead wife. He occasionally expressed his grief by floods of fiery lava tears, and in his agony would cause the very earth to tremble beneath his writhings. So runs this very interesting tradition.

Beyond Itzacchihault, extending as far as the eye can see, the beautiful valley, with Lake Texcoco—called Testico—nestling in its bosom like a great silver pearl imbedded in emerald setting. Lake Chalco, a turquoise among the sapphire hills, next comes into view, with a long, long stretch of the loveliest meadow lying between, in which the cattle are very contentedly browsing. Then comes the great city, with its cathedral spires, the dome of St. Brigita (Mexican for Bridget), and its "swell" church of Mexico and its hundreds of smaller towers shining clear against the blue sky. The great Spanish bull ring is in the foreground; to one's left the tree of Noche Triste, under which Cortez shed tears over the massacre of his soldiers. Beyond, the old Aztec causeway stretched away to Guadalupe, the "holiest shrine in all Mexico." The Paseo, or principal boulevard of the city, runs straight as an arrow from our very feet to the foot of the celebrated statue of Charles IV.

THE MOST COLOSSAL BRONZE

in the world. Over all this lovely scene is the most perfect atmosphere in the world. The air of Denver, but not so cold; balmy as the breezes of Thomasville, but not so heavy in quality; light and ozone as the New Mexico plateaux, without their discomfort; a paradise of flowers and perfume and ozone and health-giving air—Chapultepec stands alone, unrivalled.

The furnishing of the castle for the reception of President Diaz has been very elaborate. The private apartments are in the northwest wing; the

public rooms face the court yard, and the entire remainder of the building is filled with the soldiers and military cadets, among whom is general Diaz's only son. The chapultepec cadets are

HOWLING SWELLS, and of a Sunday on the Paseo they smite the heart of many a dark-eyed young senorita who, like her sex the world over, will always take to brass buttons in preference to the civilian garb. Each room in the president's private apartments is frescoed appropriately. The chess room has a chess board in the center of the ceiling, with the bishops, kings and queens in a mermaid dance about it, the pawns furnishing appropriate music from the four corners of the room. The private reception parlor of the president's wife is "done up" in pink silk with plush and brocade hanging to match. Every wall in the entire suite of rooms is covered with silk brocade instead of paper. The bed room occupied by the president and his wife was decorated and furnished at an expense of \$30,000. The dining room has a seating capacity that is limited to thirty persons. The magnificent solid silver that once belonged to the Emperor Maximilian is to be used, but the china and glassware are not in keeping with the royal magnificence of the silver; one of the soup tureens requires four men to carry it, when filled.

President Diaz is greatly loved by his followers, and he will doubtless make the castle of Chapultepec quite as brilliant as it was in the days when the Austrian Empress Carlotta drove their eight grey horses and golden state chariot up the hill, and made the castle ring, from alcove and gallery, from garbison to the entrance gates, with gayety. Mrs. Diaz is

A MOST BRILLIANT WOMAN, and an entertainer, really, should she take the notion. All Mexico has its eyes upon her, and it remains with her to add immeasurably to the social glories of the capital.

CHARLES H. WELLS.

A Seasonable Proposal.

She was enthusiastic about the National game, and I—to put it mildly—was somewhat of the same.

So as we watched the home club, one sultry summer day, My love grew ever warmer till it had to "say its say."

But 'twixt my heart's two throbbings (to her and for the game) My words got sort of twisted, though they were scarcely tame.

'Now, darling, if you'll listen'—"You're a sky-scraper, Steve!"

"I'll tell you how I love you!"—"That score I'd scarce believe."

'I've never loved another so well as'—"Rats! Struck out!"

"Say, Steve, and I'm as happy as you are!"—"Hiss!"—a post.

'I'll own I've made some errors, and pitched a little wild, But this same ball I'm playing—I love you.' Then she smiled.

'You'll not be left on bases, your double plays cost more. I, umpire, call the game, dear, and we will—'tis the score.'

Died at Prayer.

Mrs. Edward Hart, wife of a well known citizen of St. Louis, died suddenly the other night while kneeling at her bedside in prayer. She had been in perfect health and in good spirits half an hour before her death. The deceased was a devout Catholic, and one of her sons is Father Hart, rector of St. Leo's church. Heart disease is supposed to be the cause of her death.