Several dark forms were seen flitting amid the gloom, and an arrow struck with a dull "chug" in a cotton-wood tree alongside Buffalo Bill and New York Ned.
BUFFALO BILL’S BOY BEAGLE;
OR, New York Ned’s Redskin Trail.

By the author of “BUFFALO BILL.”

CHAPTER I.
THE DOUBLE DANGER.

“Hist, boy! That wasn’t the wind whistling!”
“No; it sounded like somebody hootin’ for help!”

Both stood huddled close to their horses under the welcome shelter of a thick growth of cottonwoods, near the Big Sandy River, in Southwestern Wyoming.

The first speaker was Buffalo Bill, the government scout; the other, Ned Harlow, who knew the streets of New York and was fast getting to know the trails of the far West.

They had but just reached the shelter of the timber belt, and they had not yet begun the making of a camp for the night which was at hand.

The sound which the roaring wind brought to their ears was so like a human cry for help that both the scout and his young partner were startled by its cadence.

It was the beginning of a winter storm—the first nip of the bitter season which was at hand.

It had been “spitting” flakes of snow for half an hour, but the storm seemed to be holding off until night should close in and make it harder to endure.

Out on the open plain which they had been eager to get away from before the storm should break upon them, a terrific gale was blowing—such a wind as may never be known except upon the ocean, the lone mountain peak and the boundless plains.

From this the timber afforded relief the moment they rode within its sheltering shadows.

Yet it was growing cold at an uncommon rate, for in the morning the air had been as mild as that of September, although the first winter month was at hand.

The cry—if it was a cry—had been borne to their ears on a spiteful wind gust. Otherwise they could not judge as to the direction from which it came.

For two full minutes, at least, they waited for its repetition.

“Let them shout again, if it is anybody, for we can’t stand here till the snow starts in to bury us,” said Buffalo Bill, at last.

There was plenty of food for the horses near at hand, and the creeping river a little further on would give them water, and they made quick work of providing for the animals.

By the time they were cared for a sudden flurry of
snow whitened the air and sifted through the foliage overhead.

"We're none too early," said the scout. "You have been here long enough to get used to some kinds of roughing it, but you haven't faced a Wyoming snowstorm, so there's still some experience for you that you haven't tasted yet.

"This region and the streets of a big city aren't much alike in a winter storm."

"I guess that's right," said the young fellow. "But I can't run against some tough rubs in New York on a cold night, if he don't happen to have the valley ball bag to break into a hotel with, and he's lost all his chink through a hole in his pocket.

"You mustn't forget, Buffalo Bill, that I wasn't very well heeled the last six months I stayed in the big city, and that I've got out here if I hadn't had plenty of cheek and bigger luck."

"I don't forget, Ned, that you fetched plenty of pluck with you, and that the mission that brought you shows the stuff you're made of to start with. Ah!—that cry again. And there is no mistake about it this time, nor the direction of it."

New York Ned, as the scout had fallen into the habit of calling him, started in the direction from which the cry had seemingly proceeded. Buffalo Bill, at the moment, had his arms full of dead wood which they had begun gathering for a fire.

"Here!" the scout called, sharply.

The young fellow halted.

"Take your rifle. Never go to investigate anything empty handed in this region."

Ned took the reproach good-naturedly, for he well knew that he had the fault of heedlessness as yet uncurbed under the training of the greatest of scouts.

He snatched his rifle from the tree against which it was resting and plunged out through the swirling snow and roaring wind.

Buffalo Bill made his heap of fuel and kindling, and hesitated as he was about to touch a match to it.

"I reckon I'll see what the boy has to report before I kindle the fire," he muttered, acting under that instinct of prudence which had come from years of tough experience.

He continued to collect the dry fuel, which was abundant on all sides in the timber.

The snow would soon make the work more difficult, and the scout believed that the storm was to be a hard one.

The pile of combustible material was heaped high, and then the scout set about pitching a tent for shelter, for he never went on a journey at that season unprovided for the sudden and terrible storms which were always liable to come on in winter time in that locality.

There was no need of driving stakes for the tent there. He cut a few saplings for poles and left the stumps to serve in place of stakes.

He carried canvas instead of deerskin as being lighter. A good bale of skins were bundled along for warmth during the sleeping hours.

With his long years of practice in pitching camps it was not a long job for Buffalo Bill. He worked fast, and when he had the tent all ready he for the first time began to wonder why New York Ned did not show up.

"The boy is brave as a lion," he reflected, "but I can't seem to make him understand how easy it may be for him to lose his life by a little slip of carelessness."

By this time twilight was falling, and with the increasing density of the falling snow it would soon be quite dark.

The storm, indeed, was becoming furious.

The wind howled and moaned through the branches overhead, while the snow sifted down in a mass as dense and fine as sand. And, cutting as it was even under the shelter of the trees, what must it be out on the open plain?

Buffalo Bill waited several minutes longer, but not in idleness, for food must be prepared for their night meal.

"This won't do," he exclaimed, at last. "I must know what is keeping the boy."

A signal call almost escaped his lips. And again the habit of caution held it back.

"I'll follow him up. That cry, whatever it may be, hasn't been repeated since he went to find out the cause of it. I can stand almost any kind of a noise better than I can such silence when I'm wondering all the time what's the cause of it."

Rifle in hand, the scout hastened with swift and soft tread in the same direction as that which his boy pard had taken.

He was brought suddenly to a halt as New York Ned's tall, slender figure loomed up in front of him.

"Look at that, Buffalo Bill!" exclaimed the young fellow, holding something up to the gaze of the scout.

"An Indian arrow—Cheyenne!" exclaimed the scout, snatching the slender wooden shaft from the hand of his boy pard.

"Poisoned, at that!" he added, with a glance at the tip.

"It just missed nipping my shoulder, and stuck into a tree yonder," said New York Ned.

"It would have fixed you if it had hit. That explains what we thought was a cry for help. It was a decoy trick."

"Maybe; but I think there's more to it. You wouldn't have been fooled by an Injun howl, would you?"
THE BUFFALO BILL STORIES.

"I don't know, if the wind was joining in the music. My ear isn't proof against all kinds of tricks, and you mustn't think it, Ned."

"They wouldn't fool you easy, I reckon. But, you see, I've no reason to think that thing was meant for me. It was a chance that fetched it so close. It missed the mark it was intended for, and in passing zipped near me and stuck where I found it."

Both spoke in tones which could not have been overheard five yards away. The eyes of Buffalo Bill, which could not have failed to observe the unusual flutter of a leaf, were roving in every direction while he spoke.

"How far from here was it?" he asked.

"Over near the stream, a little above us, and on the other shore."

"Do you mean that you crossed over?"

"No; that's where the one was that sent the arrow."

"And you were on this bank?"

"Yes."

"You saw their camp?"

"I didn't know there were Indians in it. I smelled the smoke of their fire first, and then saw them moving about. I wanted to get a better look at them, and to find out what they're about, so I waited. Then I heard that cry again, only nearer than when we first heard it. Right after that the arrow zipped over and pretty near nipped me."

"It is a queer go, boy. I suppose you skipped then?"

"Not much. I just moved a bit so that there was a tree to shield me, and waited. But I didn't hear nothin' more, and there wasn't any more arrows slung at me, so I thought I'd come back and report."

"That certainly appears as though they didn't see you, and that the arrow was meant for somebody or something else. It is something of a puzzle, all but the Cheyenne part of it. Nothing queer about running across a party of them most anywhere north of Mexico and south of the British Provinces. They're the most restless nomads of their race, and a tough lot to have trouble with. I had no idea of running across any of them right at this point, though.

"Let me see. We must be about a mile north of the Union Pacific. The Big Sandy stage line from the north is a little west of here, I reckon. They don't follow the old trail since the railroad was completed.

"We'll make something out of this before long. Meanwhile we'll have to get along without a fire or move further up the river before we camp for the night. Can you stand the cold, Ned? And to have a cold nibble for supper?"

"I can stand anything, Buffalo Bill, if I may have a chance by and by to try a shot at those redskins! And if one drops, I want you to show me how to take his scalp!"

CHAPTER II.

TWO BULLETS IN ONE INDIAN.

The last spoken words of New York Ned had a bitter ring in them which it was not good to hear from a healthy young fellow.

The scout looked at him keenly, but said nothing.

He wheeled and led the way back to the camp.

"What! Got the tent put up?" exclaimed Ned.

"There was time enough while you were gone, and it's a wonder that I didn't light the fire."

"How happens it that you didn't?"

"I like to wait until everything is sure before I take risks. Before we are through with this business you may know why. Look how the snow is piling in on us, and the wind howling like a thousand devils out in the open."

The snow was indeed coming down at a rate that must soon block any exposed trail. The cold was becoming more cutting every moment.

They crawled into the tent and partook of dried meat and cold corn bread, of which Buffalo Bill had an ample supply.

They had fresh venison also, and coffee; but these could not be made ready without a fire, which the scout did not deem it prudent to build until he knew more about their redskin neighbors across the river.

They were to learn more of them sooner even than he expected.

A gray gloom closed down upon the scene.

Buffalo Bill was strangely silent as they partook of the rather cheerless meal. His boy pard seemed to be equally disinclined to talk.

"Now I'm going to take a look across the river at those Cheyennes," the scout announced when they had finished eating.

"I'll show you where I was when the arrow clipped by me."

"No, boy, you will stay here until I come back!"

It wasn't often that Buffalo Bill spoke in such an imperative fashion to a friend and companion, and the face of New York Ned flushed slightly in the darkness. But he did not venture to disobey the injunction.

For a quarter of an hour Buffalo Bill's boy pard sat in the darkness of the small tent and listened to the roar of the wind through the trees and the sifting of the snow against the canvas.

Then a rifle shot thudded dully through the storm.

New York Ned stepped out of the tent, rifle in hand.
Up went his rifle; but it fell again as he recognized Buffalo Bill.

“Quick, Ned, make for cover!” said the scout.

The young fellow did not need a second injunction, for he saw several dark forms fleeting from tree to tree amid the gray gloom.

Ned up with his rifle again, but before he could fire Buffalo Bill caught him by the shoulder and shoved him behind a large cottonwood near which he had paused.

Even as this was done something struck in the trunk of the sheltering tree with a chug.

It was another arrow, and it was the second close call for the young borderman. This was no chance shot, either, but intended for him.

A rifle blazed near him at almost the same instant, and a hideous shriek from the Indian who had directed the arrow told that Buffalo Bill was good for a running mark with a white veil of falling snow between.

“Now on with you, Ned,” again commanded the scout.

“We have got to get out to the edge of the timber so those blood-letter’s can’t get on all sides of us without exposing themselves. If we pick off two or three of them it’ll make them keep their distance.”

Ned obeyed again, the blood in his veins racing as it had never raced before.

It wasn’t even a hint of fear that made his heart beat so loud. Rather, he was impatient that Buffalo Bill seemed to shield him from every risk when he was anxious to get a shot at one of the redskins.

For, during the six months that he had been training under the noted government scout and guide, New York Ned had not before found himself mixed up in a red-hot brush with the red nomads of the West.

And, as already hinted, it was his ambition to fight Indians, and to make his name known, even dreaded among them.

Not that such an idea had been stirred in the breast of the New York boy because he had read unreal tales of such exploits. The truth was, he had never read such a story in his life.

The real reason was a deeper one, and it will be made clear by the events which were to follow.

They soon reached the edge of the timber, as the scout intended, and by that time there was no further sign of pursuit. But that made Buffalo Bill none the less cautious.

They found shelter behind trees that stood close side by side.

The wind was at their backs, blowing from the open plain, and it cut with a fierceness that could not long be endured without protection.

“How did they happen to sight you?” Ned asked.

“I was watching them across the river from shelter on this side and didn’t think it likely that any of them had crossed over.

“What I was after was some notion of what they were hanging around here for, and I thought also that I might see something that would give me a hint as to the cause of those cries that we heard when we first got here, and the poisoned arrow that just missed you.

“Of a sudden I thought I heard something more than the snow and wind swishing around me. I shifted my position, and just then a redskin ran right in front of me.

“I should have let him go rather than to shoot and stir up the whole hornet’s nest, but he saw me, and up with his hatchet for a throw. But the lead was quicker, and of course my shot stirred ’em all up.

“I didn’t fancy running toward our camp and drawing the crew on to you; but they were so close to you anyway that I reckoned it would be safer to let you know what was up, and for us to both keep together.”

“How many do you think there are on this side?”

“I didn’t glimpse more than half a dozen. But there is no telling.”

“You have killed two, and I haven’t yet had even a try for one. I tell you, Buffalo Bill, I want a scalp!”

“You’ve got one—your own. Lucky if you keep that if you don’t take good care. But we can’t stand this a great while. We’ll freeze.”

Ned made no reply. He was warmly clad, but the blast at his back was terrific.

At times he had to hold firmly to the tree to keep from being blown from his position.

Not a sound came to them except the howling blast.

But they felt none the greater security because the foe made no noisy demonstration.

“We’ll have to get further under cover of the timber, redskins or no redskins,” said the scout, at last.

“Follow right in my tracks, and walk backward. You won’t run against any trees if you keep close back to back with me. Now—we move.”

They started together, and soon they were where the wind did not cut so sharply. For a short time they stood back to back, to guard against attack from either direction.

Then Buffalo Bill said:

“Can I depend upon you to attempt nothing rash on your own hook if I leave you alone for a few minutes?”

“You don’t seem to have so much confidence in me tonight as usual,” said Ned Harlow.

“That’s because you’re a bit too anxious to start a record as a scalp-taker.”

“You know why I feel that way.”

“I’m going to look out for you all the same. I don’t fancy the idea of having our tent destroyed or lugged off by the varmints, and I would like to go back and leave
you to wait here while I see what they are up to. If the coast seems to be clear we'll pull up our tent and maybe find a spot where we can pitch it with a better chance of defending ourselves if attacked."

"Well, go ahead."

"You will stay here until I return?"

"If you're not gone too long, and the redskins don't come down on me and drive me off."

"All right. I won't try your patience a great while. The city boy isn't trained to wait for things to happen. He wants to pitch in and make them happen."

"That's right," said New York Ned.

Buffalo Bill slipped away into the gray darkness as silently as a shadow.

The scout approached the tent cautiously.

It was as he had left it. The heap of dry fuel in front of it was merely a white mound, the snow had covered it so completely.

He looked close for tracks, but found no new one near the tent. These made by himself when he left the place were almost completely obliterated by the snow that had fallen since.

He crept into the tent cautiously.

It was empty; nothing had been meddled with.

"Those Cheyennes are on the lookout for somebody or something bigger than that youngster and me."

"They act mighty queer. Some of them seem to be posted on both sides of the river, and they were shooting at somebody besides Ned when that arrow came so close to him."

"Then that cry we heard wasn't a decoy for us, because I don't believe they had a suspicion that we were camping in the timber."

"Another thing—most of the Cheyennes have rifles. They use arrows because they don't want to make so much noise. They are on a still-hunt of some sort, and they're mighty sharp after it to be roving around in such a storm as this. At the beginning of a big snow-storm they like to be in as snug quarters as they're able to find. And they are pretty keen at detecting the approach of a bad turn in the weather."

Before returning to his companion the scout made a circuit of the tent on the hunt for fresh tracks.

He found none.

He was about to start back to rejoin New York Ned when there was borne to his ears, above the shrieking blast, a chorus of savage yells, proceeding from a point not many hundred yards down the river.

"That's business!" exclaimed the scout.

He flung caution to the winds, so far as the risk of the danger of possible ambushed Indians was concerned.

He went back on the run to where he had left Ned Harlow.

He suddenly brought himself to a halt.

Just in front of him stood the slim New York boy in the act of sighting his rifle at a redskin who was not twenty paces distant.

The Indian was in the act of bending to examine some tracks in the snow.

The redskin suddenly straightened, uttered a yell and dashed toward young Harlow.

Two rifles spoke as one. For, had Ned missed, the Indian would have buried his tomahawk in his brain.

But Buffalo Bill might have saved his shot. There were two bullets in the Cheyenne's brain!

CHAPTER III.

THE STALLED RAILWAY TRAIN.

New York Ned snatched his hunting knife from its sheath and sprang toward the fallen Indian.

The hand of Buffalo Bill caught and held him back.

And never before had the young fellow felt such a grip of steel.

"Let go—his scalp belongs to me!" cried Ned, his voice husky with a strange kind of rage.

"No, boy, I advise you not to do it. Don't begin. I know that it is like the taste of blood to some animals—it'll give you a sort of fever for more."

The young fellow hesitated, a stiffen frown darkening his handsome face.

"Don't do it, Ned!" said Buffalo Bill again; and the boy turned away, saying:

"Well, not this time. But I killed him, didn't I?"

The scout bent over the dead savage and saw two black spots on his forehead.

"Yes, Ned, you killed the redskin."

Just then another sound broke upon the air.

It was the shrill blast of a locomotive whistle.

At the same time the rumble of an approaching train shook the earth.

Then Buffalo Bill knew that they were closer to the track of the Union Pacific than he had supposed.

The sounds came from a point not very distant from that where the savage yells of a moment before were heard.

"There's something for us to do of more account than taking a redskin's hair," said Buffalo Bill.

"That was a railroad train!" exclaimed Ned.

"Yes. We're nearer to the road than I thought. I believe it has something to do with that train that those Cheyennes have been behaving so queerly to-night."

"Come, boy; I reckon you have the nerve to take a hand in the business, whatever it may be. Perhaps our help will come just in the nick of time for somebody."

"I'm ready."
They started at a run through the timber, following a direction which would take them to the banks of the Big Sandy.

The snow was already quite deep in many places. The hollows were full, and as they could not see where they were the two scouts sometimes plunged in to their hips.

The wind was harsher as they neared the river.

Soon they were in sight of the black current, which was already beginning to curl with the intense cold.

They followed the course of the stream until they emerged into a space where the timber along the bank had been cleared.

Here the wind tore across the river with a fury that was terrific. With the woods on one side and the other open to the snow-laden blast, drifts several feet in depth had already been formed.

Just before them lay a long train of passenger express and baggage cars, the windows twinkling with lights.

The snow was piled so deep upon the track at that point that the locomotive had been brought to a standstill.

Buffalo Bill could see that the locomotive was facing him, and that the track was blown almost clean of snow at the nearest point, where it curved away from the river toward the open plain.

"It looks as if the train was merely stalled in the drift," said the scout, as he halted for a moment to make observations.

"I supposed that it was stopped by some redskin work," returned Ned Harlow.

"So did I. There were yells in this direction only a few minutes ago."

"I heard them."

"Now there doesn't appear to be an Indian in sight. That doesn't make it that they're not up to mischief. It only gives the business a mysterious look, the same as everything that has been connected with their behavior tonight."

Buffalo Bill did not stop long to speculate about the matter.

"Come," he said. "We'll strike down on to the track and go along up until we meet the train. Then if there's anything in the wind we'll be likely to strike it."

On either side of the track the timber had been cut for a space of the usual width. Further on, where the open plain lay on one side of the track, the wind and snow had a clear sweep.

The trees, acting after the usual manner under such conditions, made the snow fill in on the track for a considerable distance, although, as has been stated, it was swept clean for most of the way.

Buffalo Bill led the way, and although he moved rapidly it was nevertheless with caution.

Ned Harlow realized that redskins were likely to be hiding behind the trees near the track. But he did not show the slightest fear. The truth was, he did not feel any.

"You might keep to cover and let me follow the track," suggested the scout.

"And why not you as well as I?"

"Because I've got to look for obstructions on the track."

"I reckon it needs both of us," said New York Ned, and he kept along at the side of Buffalo Bill.

"You won't live to carry out the mission you came here to fulfill, for you don't take decent care of your life. A man isn't a coward because he refuses to take unnecessary risks. You've satisfied me that you have got nerve enough to make a good Indian fighter, and now the thing for you to do is to take care of yourself."

"Remember, one of those poisoned arrows would wind up your career without giving you any show for revenge. Then your work would come to a miserable end."

"Your advice is good, but it leaves all the risks on you. A poisoned arrow would fix you just as dead easy as it would me."

"Hiss!"

It was a prolonged gasp from the locomotive, which was trying to push through where the trainmen had been shoveling the drift.

Buffalo Bill suddenly pointed at the track just ahead.

The little snow that had not been blown off from the spot was trampled hard by more than a score of feet.

That was not all.

Two lengths of the rails were torn up!

"That tells the story," said the scout. "If the train hadn't been stuck in the drift yonder it would have been thrown off the track and the cars overturned here. There is just enough of an embankment to have done the business."

"Ha!—to cover, boy, quick!"

An arrow whizzed across the track, passing so close to Cody's face that he felt the wind from it.

Ned was prompt enough to obey this time. They sprang away from the track, and the only reason that they did not have to take chances in dodging a small shower of arrows was that only one of the redskin pickets had seen them, and he could not give the alarm to the others without telling the people on the train where they were.

This cautions proved to the alert mind of the scout another point concerning the yells which he had heard a short time before.

This was, that the cries had been merely to announce the coming of the train, and that after the latter had come to a stop in the drift the Indians had been as silent as death.

While they had made some noise, yet they had at no time endangered discovery by the train which they had plotted to capture and destroy.
But there was still more to the affair, as the scout and his boy pard were soon to discover.

"Now what?" demanded Harlow, as they gained the shelter of the trees.

"We've got to go on and tell the people of the train what there is ahead of them, of course."

"Go ahead and do it, then, and leave me here to signal if the reds try any new game. They might get together and rush up the track, thinking we're likely to give warning."

"All right, boy. You're as well off here as anywhere, and it is well enough to have somebody on the lookout at more than one spot. I'll come back to you pretty quick, anyhow."

These words were exchanged in tones which could not have been heard six paces away above the howling of the storm.

Buffalo Bill darted from tree to tree, eyes and ears alert.

He was fearless, yet never incautious.

He was soon in sight of the glaring headlight.

As he advanced toward the train, the snow being so deep here that he could not go faster than a walk, he heard a whiplike crack from the opposite side of the iron trail.

Crash! A bullet had smashed the powerful lens of the headlight and shattered the lamp within.

Instantly the light was extinguished.

The engine was making such a splutter at the safety valve, while the fireman shoveled coal into the furnace, that neither of the engine men could have heard the shot, muffled as it was by the thick-falling snow.

But the engineer knew instantly, of course, that the headlight had been extinguished in some manner.

His hand was on the lever, and he was on the point of running backward a little way to gain headway for the chance of ramming through the remainder of the drift.

Seeing the light was out, he spoke to the fireman to see what had happened to it.

The fireman jumped off just as Buffalo Bill came up.

"Ho, there!" exclaimed the fireman. And he fumbled for a revolver—for all the train men on the Union Pacific at that time went well armed.

"Easy with the gun, man," said the scout, without offering to checkmate the other by getting the drop, as he might have done without half trying.

"What put out the headlight?" the other demanded.

"A Cheyenne bullet. And your lights will go out by the same means if you don't see that the train and passengers are taken care of."

"Cheyennes—Injuns?"

"They've torn up the track ahead, and the snowdrift saved you from a smash-up. You're stalled here, in spite of your boots, man, and you want to take care of your people before the real picnic begins."

The scout would have passed on to enter the train and alarm the passengers and brakemen, but the fireman caught at his arm.

"Who're you, that tells us the yarn?" he demanded, with evident suspicion.

"William F. Cody, government scout—or Buffalo Bill, if you like the name better."

And the handsome man of the plains passed on, leaving the wits of the fireman pretty well stirred up with the tidings and the messenger, whom he had never chanced to see before.

The next moment he was warning express and mail messengers and brakemen. Then he entered a passenger coach, where he paused for a moment, struck by the novel scene and sounds, which were strangely out of keeping with the wild storm and lurking death that hemmed them in.

A man sat on the arm of one of the seats playing a violin. Facing him in two of the seats were three persons whose voices chimed with the music in the sweet words and tender melody of "The Suwanee River."

CHAPTER IV.

THE SNOW BARRICADE.

Never in his life had it been harder for Buffalo Bill to speak a word of warning than it was when he beheld the peaceful and happy scene which was to be so rudely interrupted.

Indeed, in the passenger coach, where all was light and warmth, it seemed to him that the conditions which he had just left outside could be no more than a hideous dream.

The great scout had faced every kind of hardship from boyhood. Yet there was in his nature a love of comfort and luxury, a tenderness for the life of home and love.

The one who was playing the violin was a rather natty young fellow, who was somewhat seedy clad, nevertheless, if his clothes were to be looked at with a critical eye, for they were well worn and frayed.

But he wore a tall hat, set jauntily on the back of his head, and his boots shone like the sun.

He knew how to fetch the softest cadences out of the instrument, and there were many in the car who were more touched by the melody, and the tender memories it stirred within them, than they cared to show.

The three singers were a middle-aged man, with a refined face, a young girl and a young man, who resembled him and each other, and who were evidently brother and sister, and a third man of about thirty years.

The face of the latter was noted last by the scout as he briefly paused in the doorway.

But the face held his gaze the longest, for it had a
familiar look to him, although at the instant he could not place it in his mind.

To most persons it would have been a pleasing face, and of the three voices that were singing, his was the most powerful and perfectly trained.

Yet the impression on the intuitive mind of Buffalo Bill was such that he was half impelled to spring upon the stranger and pull him forcibly from the side of the innocent young girl who looked so confidingly up in his face.

Buffalo Bill advanced into the coach with his easy stride, nor did he omit to doff his hat to the ladies in the seats as he passed.

He advanced directly to the seat where the group we have described were gathered.

Bending toward the father of the girl—for there could be no doubt as to the relationship of three members of the little party—the scout said, in a low tone:

"I bring you warning of immediate danger. You are probably known to many of the passengers. Rise and announce to them that this train is blocked by torn-up rails ahead, and threatened by a strong party of redskins.

"Avoid, if you can, creating a panic. There will have to be a fight, but if you are cool and under fair discipline you can keep them off until daylight. Then there will be a fair chance to escape."

The face of the gentleman paled, but otherwise he controlled himself.

With the same caution which the scout had used and inspired, he asked:

"You do not belong to the train crew, sir?"

The government scout again disclosed his identity.

"Indeed—then I feel that we may be more than a match for the Indians, for we shall have your distinguished leadership."

"I will do what I can, but to a certain degree much will depend upon the conduct of the passengers."

"I will announce the warning," said the gentleman, whose name was Homer Harrington.

The man rose, the jaunty musician having abruptly wound up his tune.

Buffalo Bill would have passed on into the next coach, but at that moment the man whose face had impressed the scout so unfavorably, said to Mr. Harrington, with a sneering laugh:

"What, in the name of wonder, is the secret that sporty gent is peddling out?"

"I pray you, Mr. Bagley—" began Mr. Harrington, his face flushing.

Buffalo Bill had turned back, and stood with his keen eyes boring into the man's insolent face.

"I can't name you, sir," said the scout, speaking deliberately, "for it may be that I never knew you by a better name than the one you seem now to be sailing under.

"But I will say to these other gentlemen what I am perfectly sure is true—that you are no better than a miserable prairie puppy, masquerading in the skin of a mountain lion!"

"Look here, ladies and gentlemen!"

As these last words left the lips of Buffalo Bill the latter caught at Bagley's tourist cap, gripping a handful of hair at the same time, and gave a yank that tore away cap, wig and a pair of dapper side-whiskers!

The man sprang up with a yell which could not have been outdone by one of the skulking redskins outside.

Cries of astonishment went through the car, and the young lady at the side of Bagley drew away from him as if she had suddenly found him transformed into a snake.

Harrington was the only one among them all, excepting the always cool Buffalo Bill, who maintained his composure.

With a single glance at the face of the one who had been stripped of his disguise, Mr. Harrington turned his back on the man and held up his hand as a sign for silence.

"Listen, please," he said, in a clear, distinct voice. Every eye was turned toward him.

"I have to tell you, gentlemen, that you are likely to have use for the weapons which, no doubt, all have brought along for this journey. The train is threatened with a raid by a party of Indians.

"The danger is immediate, as I am assured by Mr. Cody here, the famous government scout. But as he is to lend us the aid of his skill and courage in the defense, he begs that you all nerve yourselves to face the peril as men should who have women, and even children, to protect."

There were half-suppressed cries from some of the women in the car; but there was no panic.

Just then Buffalo Bill caught the report of a rifle outside.

He recognized the intonation as that of the weapon used by New York Ned.

"It is a signal," he said, in answer to the glances which were turned upon him.

"Out with all the lights in the train!" was his next command. And, while several sprang to turn out the lights, the scout bounded toward the next car.

There he quickly sounded the warning, and so through the others until he reached the last, which was a smoker.

There he found more men assembled than there were in the other coaches altogether.

With the swift precision of a born leader, the scout not only confirmed the occupants of the smoking car of the impending Indian attack, but he had them quickly organized for a defense which should at least make the attempt of the redskins a costly one.

The train men who were outside, shoveling snow off the
track, had already been informed of the danger by the fireman. Indeed, by the time Buffalo Bill reached the smoking car a rumor of the threatened Indian raid had preceded him.

The lights were all turned off inside the coaches, only two or three lanterns, turned low, being allowed.

None too soon.

The Indians, tired of waiting for the train to reach the place where they had torn up the rails, had, many of them, skulked back to the vicinity of where it was stalled in the snow.

Hearing the signal shot from New York Ned, who had an eye and ear for all their movements, they had made a stealthy approach to a point for immediate attack.

It was then that the lights were turned off.

A moment later a chorus of whoops and yells filled the air, telling the passengers that they had been warned none too soon.

It might seem that the interior of a stanch railway car should be a tolerably safe place from Indian bullets and arrows.

But such is not the case. The many windows leave all the interior, except the space of barely two feet above the floor, exposed to their marksmanship.

The defenders can fire out only through the windows, and then they have to expose their own heads to the fire of the enemy, who may find concealment behind the trees near the track.

As the Indians began their whooping, they also commenced shooting at the windows.

The scout had already cautioned all to keep out of range, which could only be done by crouching on the floor.

The howls of the savages, the shrieking storm, the crack of rifles and crash of breaking glass, all made up a din which was trying to the stoutest hearts among the passengers.

Buffalo Bill consulted with the conductor and other members of the train crew. The snow was heaped so high at the sides of the track that the men outside the train found themselves better protected from the shots of the foe than were those within.

Buffalo Bill had already observed this, and his orders were ready and decisive.

"Barricade the cars with snow!"

"Good idea," said the conductor.

"The wind is piling it in here as fast as you’ll need it. Help the storm along a little with your shovels, as you can without exposing yourselves. The redskins will have to take some risks, then, to get in any telling shots, and then we’ll have a chance to show them the other side of the game."

The crew set to work with a will, heaping great blocks of the hard-caked snow against the car which was near the middle of the train’s length.

The snow barricade grew apace.

There were plenty of shovels, and a number of the passengers lent a hand in the work.

The Indians kept yelling and firing occasional shots at random. But thus far not a shot had been returned.

This, too, was in accordance with Buffalo Bill’s orders. Meanwhile, what of the man whom the scout had unmasked in the seat with Mr. Harrington?

And what of the jaunty stranger with the fiddle? They have their parts to play.

CHAPTER V.

NEW YORK NED ON A TRAIL.

Buffalo Bill’s boy ward had too much sense to expect his companion to return immediately when he heard the sounds of the Indian attack on the train.

"He’ll have to stay there to keep the people from losing their heads," reflected the young Indian fighter.

"That leaves it up to me to look out for number one, and maybe try for a hand in the scrimmage. I’ll never feel easy till I have a scalp from one of those red fiends. Would they be tender about taking mine if I gave them the chance?"

"I reckon not much. And they wa’n’t tender about the scalp that they took now most a year ago—the one I’m bound to find, or avenge. It was Cheyennes that did it, too—I didn’t tell Buffalo Bill that. He watches me so like a hawk that I reckon he means to do all the business himself, and not give me any show. He seems to be afraid that I’ll git bloodthirsty if he lets me have all the rope I want."

Harkow did not wait longer for orders from Buffalo Bill, for he knew that the latter would expect him to act on his own discretion in the absence of immediate instructions.

He proceeded to make his way toward the train, keeping on the alert for lurking Indians.

He approached the point from which the firing of the redskins mostly proceeded. When he was close to the trees behind which they were concealed, as he could see by the flashing of their guns, he waited to see if the fire was returned from any of the inmates of the cars.

"No; they don’t do any shooting," muttered New York Ned.

"That shows that they’re acting under Buffalo Bill’s orders, for he would be sure to advise them to hold back their fire until some of the reds exposed themselves.

"Sometimes I think Cody is too cautious. Then, the first I know, he does something more risky than I’d ever think of, even if I had a crazy spell. But he’s great, just the same!"
He knew that he ought not to do any shooting while the Indians were thus bunched in one place, for it was better to let them use up their ammunition if they found any sport in doing so, until Buffalo Bill ordered some return demonstration to be made.

But the young fellow could not bear to stand idle so near the music.

So he kept moving about, finally going to the other side of the train.

The storm did not abate. It was a matter of much difficulty now to wallow through the snow, even where it was not drifted.

Ned presently came upon some tracks which seemed to have just been made. They led away from the track into the edge of the timber.

He followed them cautiously.

The sound of low voices brought him to a halt.

Creeping silently forward, the young trailer was soon so close to the speakers that he might almost have reached out and touched them. He fairly held his breath to hear what they were saying.

At the same time, he was more amused, because the voice of one of them had a familiar sound. He was sure that he had heard the voice before.

"Better not try it, Mack," said the voice. "He has the name of being a hard man to down, ye know."

"But I will try it. So am I a hard man to down, as you ought to know, Burt."

"Aw, yes, a desp’rit hard man, Mack. But it was a ragged old joke on ye, pulling off that wig and side-whiskers, the way he did, really now. Right before the girl that you was trying to mash, at that. Egad, but if I had been as tender-hearted as I was before I came to the West I should have been moved to tears on account of ye, really now."

"You needn’t try to make a joke of it, Burt. That Buffalo Bill did a thing to-night that he’ll die for, if it is the last end in life that I have to work for."

"Aw, I dare say, and it’ll be a hard, lingering death for him at that."

The one called Mack, who, it may as well be stated, was no other than the Bagley whom Buffalo Bill unmasked in the seat with the Harringtons, uttered an oath, and from the tree behind which he was standing, New York Ned saw him reach for the collar of the other.

But the one called Burt, who was the fellow with the tall hat and the violin, sprang nimbly out of his reach, exclaiming, in the same bantering tone which he had used all the while:

"Aw, don’t be rough with a man, old fellow, just because he don’t feel like taking an affair too seriously, really now."

"I told you this was no joking matter," snarled Mack Bagley.

"Aw, of course it isn’t, Mack. But what was it that you wanted to say to me, anyhow? No joking this time, old man."

The other lowered his voice, yet Ned could hear every word, for the wind blew so as to fetch them straight to his ears.

"It was about the stuff in the express car of this train. I heard the messenger say to the mail agent that there was more than a hundred thousand in treasure in the express safe."

"Aw, that’s a pretty slick sum, really now," drawled Burt.

"This Indian raid may put the whole of it into our hands if we only play our trumps at the right time."

"How’s that, Mack?"

"Why, the barbarians don’t know the value of money, and it would do them no good if they got it all. At the same time, they’ll come in handy to take the curse for robbing the car and safe—that is, if they only win in the fight with the train crew."

"Yas, that’s so, Mack."

"We could easily give the redskins a little better show, by some easy trick, and then, while the passengers and trainmen had their hands full, we’d step in and scoop the treasure."

"Quite a scheme, really now."

"Will you help carry it through?"

"Aw, fifty thousand might come in handy for me some time, come to think of it. Let me see, Mack—you say the stuff is in the express safe?"

"Yes."

"How’d ye get it out? Simple question, I know, but the thing would bother me, really now."

"There are sledge-hammers on board the train, and we could smash the safe as we’d crack a walnut."

"Never thought it would be so easy as that, Mack."

"Will you go in and help win?"

"To be sure, Mack. But the Injun part of the programme, that bothers me, really. But I suppose that’s because I’m what you Western people call an Eastern tenderfoot. I don’t grasp the ideas so quick as you people do out here."

"The Indians will do their part pretty soon, I reckon. There, hear them hoot! That means that they’re working some sly game, and want to take the attention of the train people, so they won’t be suspected."

"I don’t see how you stagers out here can tell what those barbarians mean just by a hoot, egad!"

Mack shrugged his shoulders and tried to get a fair look into the face of the eccentric young man called Burt.
THE BUFFALO

The other half suspected that the affected speech and airs of Burt were put on for some secret purpose.

Yet it all seemed so much like a natural peculiarity of the slow speaker that it seemed foolish to distrust him.

"There, now, hear that, will you?" Mack suddenly exclaimed, as a sputter of rifle shots broke upon the air.

"Sounds lively, doesn't it?" said Burt, carelessly.

"It sounds as if our chance might come most any minute."

"What part in the programme did you expect me to take hold of, Mack?"

"Let's sneak up and see if the express car is deserted. It strikes me that every man on the train will be likely to help repel the attack. Buffalo Bill has told them that their lives are more sought for by the reds than the contents of any safe."

"You know that scout makes a great show of defending women and children, while he makes less account of protecting plunder."

"You seem to know a good deal about the record of that Buffalo Bill, Mack."

"I know too much about him. We were face to face once before the occasion of to-night, but I had a different make-up, and I don't think he recognized me. Yet I knew, the instant he set eyes on me, that he suspected something was wrong."

"Likely he spotted the wig and false whisker. Anyhow, he peeled 'em off rather sudden, didn't he, really now?"

Mack uttered an oath.

"You have said enough about that, Burt—it looks as if it seemed funny to you, the same as, I suppose, it did to the rest of the people in the car."

"But it was deemed comical, really—"

Flip! went the clinched fist of Bagley, aimed straight for the younger man's face.

New York Ned, listening and watching with every sense alert, expected to see Burt measure his length in the snow under the crack which seemed to be sure to hit the mark.

But it was not landed.

Burt was slow and drawling in the use of his tongue, but the notions of his body and limbs were quick enough to make up what he lacked in rapidity of speech.

He dodged the fist with the greatest apparent ease.

The momentum of the blow nearly plunged Mack headlong into the snow, and yet the other had changed his position only just enough to elude the attack.

"It was like a pickerel or a trout in the water," was the silent comment of New York Ned. "He dodged so quick that you couldn't be sure that he moved at all."

The young Indian hunter expected to see Burt make some move toward hitting back, but in this he was disappointed.

The young man continued to stand in the same careless attitude, the white cloud of snow swirling about him, his shiny hat tilted on the back of his head, his hands in his pockets.

"Come, Mack," he protested, with the same drawl, "I didn't know you had such a touchy temper. You can't seem to take a joke from an old friend without getting hot under the collar. That's foolish, Mack. You called me out here to make a business proposition, as I understood it, and not to work me for a knockout in one round.

"What can I do to help you get the treasure in the express company's safe?"

Bagley breathed hard, muttering oaths.

"I don't half trust you, Burt!" he exclaimed.

"All right, then work it out alone."

Burt turned on his heel, as if he were going back to take part in the defense of the passenger coach.

Mack laid a hand on his arm.

"No, no, Burt," he said. "My temper is quick, but I believe you are straight, after all. I want you to help me to crack open the safe."

"And will it be share and share alike in the stuff that's in the safe?"

"Share and share alike."

"All right."

They moved toward the express car like coyotes after prey.

New York Ned trod in their very footprints.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MYSTERIOUS CAPTIVE.

In the whole career of Buffalo Bill, this night of storm, Indian warfare and mystery was more crammed with unusual events than any other.

It seemed as if everything was being crowded into those hours between darkness and dawn that could make the night a memorable one.

In less eventful lives than that of the great scout affairs sometimes seem to crowd together in the same way, and for any man it is a hard test if he comes out of the ordeal with a clear head.

The poisoned arrow which had come so close to ending the life of his New York boy pard had mystified Buffalo Bill more deeply than he had said anything about.

Amid all the excitement of the attack on the train, and the part he had to play in its defense, that mysterious incident had not once fairly gone out of his thoughts.

He knew that the poisoned arrow could not have been intended for New York Ned.

The express train on the Union Pacific, for which it
Inter appeared that the redskins were lying in wait, was not due to arrive, so it seemed that the poisoned shaft could have had nothing to do with the meditated hold-up of the train.

At whom, then, was that mysterious arrow directed?
It may appear to be a small matter to puzzle the great scout when what would seem to be more important events were transpiring.

It was because of the mystery enshrouding it that he could not get it out of his mind.

Then, too, the redskins had uttered a series of derisive or terrifying yells, which they would have hardly indulged had they not wished to impress a human foe.

"It is a miserable puzzle that is bound to keep nagging at me until I find the meaning of it," was the thought that more than once flashed through his brain.

After making sure that the train crew and passengers would make a substantial snow barricade, that should practically bury the passenger coach which had been chosen for the purpose, Buffalo Bill went into the car to see that everything should be made snug inside.

He was accompanied by one of the brakemen, Mr. Homer Harrington, and the son of the latter.

A single lantern was placed on the floor of the car, which barely lit it enough to enable one to pass through without stumbling over the seats.

The scout advised that the seats be_unshipped from their bases and put up against the windows, to stop stray bullets.

Besides, as the glass in every window was broken more or less already, the cold came in so as to make it uncomfortable for the dozen or more women and children.

These were all huddled at one end of the car, close to the stove.

The seats were quickly placed up against the windows, as the scout had directed. Already the snow barricade outside reached more than halfway to the tops of the windows, so these were protected both from without and within.

The removal of the seats at the same time afforded more space in the car for the garrison.

"I believe, Mr. Cody," said Mr. Harrington, as he surveyed the preparations, which were now about completed, "that we have a pretty effectual defense, and one that the Indians will find it hard to get over."

"It shuts them out and shuts you in," was the scout's comment.

"I have not yet explained that I had this place prepared first for the present comfort and safety of the women and children, and second as a final citadel for the male passengers and train men to go to as a last resort.

"I would advise that the men use the other coaches first, barricading the windows as they can from the inside, but leaving a lookout and places to use as loopholes.

"In that way the redskins may be kept at bay as long as possible, and the other sections of the train saved from destruction.

"The Indians would set fire to the other cars in a short time if they were abandoned, and that would endanger this one, in spite of the snow heaped upon and about it." "That is true. You seem to forget nothing, Mr. Cody." "Forgetting is losing when you are dealing with a pack of Cheyennes."

"Have you any idea how many there are of them?"

"Ordinarily they make their raids in small parties, doing the work quickly, and then skipping to another point to escape punishment. But to-night they seem to have made their preparations with greater deliberation than usual.

"There are not fewer than a hundred warriors; there may be four times that number within signaling distance." Mr. Harrington could not keep back an exclamation of dismay.

"What hope is there for us?" he asked, speaking in a low voice, so that he might not be heard by his daughter.

"If they can be kept back until daylight, and the train preserved from destruction, you know there is the chance of another train arriving.

"Snow blockades on either side of you is likely to delay other trains, and there lies the worst aspect of the situation. It may leave you subject to a siege, and for that you are poorly prepared.

"But I shall hope to do something to avert that calamity, with the help of my pardner, who is even now wondering what has happened to me."

"Then you are accompanied by another scout?"

"Yes, and a brave young fellow he is."

New York Ned would have felt an honest pride could he have heard that praise from the man in whom he felt so much confidence.

"Before returning to him," Buffalo Bill added, "I wish before going, Mr. Harrington, to ask you about the man who was in the seat with you, and seemingly on such friendly terms with your daughter—the one with the make-up of false beard and wig?"

Harrington's face darkened.

"I was deceived in him, I'm afraid."

"Was he traveling as a member of your party?"

"We met him first just before starting eastward from Sacramento, California."

"Then you haven't known him for any length of time?"

"For only about five days."

"Were you brought together by any business interest?"
"He claimed to have an interest in certain mines in which I had purchased shares."

"I judge that he tried to make himself agreeable to your daughter?"

"Yes, and in that I must say that he succeeded. She is even now greatly distressed over the manner in which you stripped him of his disguise."

"Then she thinks I acted hastily?"

"Not that. But she felt considerable confidence in him, and it is hard for her to believe that there may not be some good reason for his assuming the disguise."

"There's good reason, sure enough," smiled Buffalo Bill. "You know his record, then?"

"I was sure at the first glance that I had met him before, but I couldn't place him then, and I can't yet."

"He was probably made up in some other guise the other time. But it is always easy for me to size up a man of his pattern."

"And about the dandy-looking fellow, who was playing the violin?"

"We knew nothing about him, except that Mr. Bagley called him Burt—sometimes he spoke of him as Wally Burt, so I assumed the latter to be his last, instead of his first name, as I at first supposed."

"When I came in you seemed to be having a pleasant time together, and entertaining the other passengers at the same time."

"We delight in music. Burt seemed to have a fine car, and Bagley a fine voice."

"I thought so. And your daughter—Miss Nella, you called her—sang charmingly. I hated to break in with such ugly news."

"After pulling off Bagley's disguise I didn't stop to observe how he disposed of himself. But I haven't seen him since."

"He left the car just after you did, sir?"

"Did he say anything more to you?"

"Not a word."

"And the man with the fiddle?"

"I think he followed Bagley out of the car."

"Then they seem to be pards. Neither of them has lent a hand in preparing for the defense. I don't like the looks of it."

"Now I will have to leave you for the present. I have given full instructions to the conductor and other trainmen, and they are the sort to do their best. They will stand by their train, like all true railroad men, and die at their posts if they must."

A moment more, and Buffalo Bill had plunged out into the shrieking wind and swirling snow.

It seemed as if the storm had increased in fury.

"A hard look," he muttered, "for other trains to get through here for the next twenty-four hours. That length of time may be the doom of the passengers in yonder. I feel that their lives are all in my keeping, and that the load is a little too heavy for one man to carry."

For some minutes not a shot had been fired by the Indians. Indeed, the silence was unbroken save for the tumult of the storm.

Buffalo Bill went toward the rear end of the train, to where the track was blown clean of snow.

From there he plunged into the timber, cautiously penetrating among the dense growing trees, where the redskins had been concealed while firing upon the train.

All the while he was haunted by the mystery of the poisoned arrow.

He kept on for some distance, until he beheld a brightly blazing camp fire just ahead.

The fire was surrounded by savages, and in the center, bound to a tree, was the strangest looking person that the scout had ever beheld.

CHAPTER VII.

BUFFALO BILL A PRISONER.

The Cheyenne captive was a white man, with a shaggy, unkempt beard, sharp features and eyes which were strangely sunken in their sockets.

The top of his head was covered by a mat of short, yellowish hair, while around the sides there grew a fringe of long, tangled, iron-gray locks.

The effect it is impossible to describe.

It lent the haggard face a weird aspect.

The prisoner was clad in trousers and hunting shirt or tunic, the former patched up with various kinds of cloth, and the other garment of wolf-skin, with the hair on the outer side.

"He looks like a wild man—and that I reckon he is!" was the mental comment of the scout.

A dozen of the Indians were grouped near the prisoner, and they were jabbering in their own tongue with great evident excitement, yet in such a low tone that Buffalo Bill could make out only now and then a word, although he knew their dialect well.

At length one of the Indians, whose complexion indicated that he was a half-breed, advanced to the side of the prisoner and gave the latter a sharp slap on the cheek with his open palm.

The captive gave his head a grotesque twist and opened his mouth to utter a snarl that resembled that of an angry beast of prey.

"You have chance for life, Yellow Hair—hear?" said the half-breed in good English.

Another snarl was the only response.

"Yellow Hair speak if he want to live. We give him chance."
“No,” the other replied, at last, in a hoarse voice.
“You not want to live?”
“No.”
“We see.”

The half-breed made a sign to one of the Indians with whom he had been talking.
The redskin evidently understood the signal which had been agreed upon.
He darted to the camp fire and selected a brand which was blazing at one end, while the other was wet with snow.
He handed the firebrand to the half-breed.
The latter seized it and swung it in a circle in the air until it burned more brightly.
Then he thrust it close to the face of the captive, so that the beard began to crinkle and smudge.
“Now what Yellow Hair say?”
Not a word came from the captive.
The brand was thrust closer yet.
A tiny tongue of flame flashed up along one cheek of the prisoner, singeing the whiskers close.

The captive let out a wild yell of pain, that rang weirdly above the roaring of the wind through the trees.
“The red fiends!” Buffalo Bill hissed, almost audibly.
He half raised his rifle; and for a second the life of the half-breed hung, as it were, by a hair.
But the scout restrained the impulse for the time, well knowing that if he were to yield to it then he would have half a hundred redskins swarming over him before he could get clear of the camp.

Indeed, he was in danger enough, standing as a silent witness of the strange scene.
“What Yellow Hair say?” repeated the half-breed.
“I cannot—I cannot!” said the captive.
“Poison arrow not kill, we try fire, eh?”
“No, no. Kill with bullet.”
“Do what we say we not kill, not burn; we let Yellow Hair go. Then he have vengeance—see?”
The prisoner seemed to be animated by that last word—vengeance. A strange fire leaped into his sunken eyes.
“Vengeance!” he mumbled, and then was silent again.
“Say quick—burn some more.”
But the captive’s head sank, and he half closed his eyes as if he were again indifferent to his fate.
The half-breed brought the firebrand back to the face of the prisoner again, and once more the tangled beard smoked and sizzled.
“Yellow Hair give up—quick—burn some more—heap!”
“I’ll—I’ll have to let him have it, if I die for it!”

This was the silent resolve of the fearless scout, whose eye glanced along the barrel of his rifle, with the firelight glinting on the weapon.

The firebrand was again thrust up to the face of the captive.
Flash! Another cruel tongue of flame darted up, licking the grizzled beard and scorching the fringe of long hair.

There was another howl of torture from the victim, and then there was a spurt of flame from among the shadows, a crack that seemed to be in their very midst, and the half-breed leaped into the air and fell dead at the very feet of the prisoner!

For a single brief instant a strange silence rested on the scene.

The Indians were too astounded by the unexpected shot, that seemed to come almost from their very midst, and by the death of the half-breed, who was a sub-chief, to even give out the yell which most emotions with them were sure to call forth.

But there was one keen-eyed warrior, who was standing beyond the prisoner, who had seen the flame as it spouted from the muzzle of Buffalo Bill’s rifle.

He knew that there was nothing supernatural about the sudden killing of the half-breed. He guessed that there was a keen-eyed marksman at the other end of the deadly weapon.

With a yell, he flung his tomahawk toward the tree which shielded the scout.
The latter was in the act of darting to another cover as the hatchet whizzed past, chipping off a slice of bark from the protecting tree.
The missile sped within four inches of the scout’s face, and stuck and quivered in the trunk of another tree just in front of him.

Well did Buffalo Bill know that this was no time nor place for him to engage in an open fight with the overwhelming odds that were against him.
But he had no choice.
The snow was so deep that he could not run at a rapid pace away from the redskin camp.

In the camp, however, the snow was trodden down, and this gave the pursuer a monstrous advantage for the distance that could be covered by half a dozen swift leaps.

At the same time, the direction of the redskin’s flight across the inclosure told the others where to look for the killer of the half-breed.

Instantly the camp was in an uproar.
More than thirty warriors were yelling at the very heels of Buffalo Bill.

He wheeled quickly, and there was a revolver in each hand. The weapons began to spit flame and death into the shadowy ranks of the foe, mazy as they appeared amid the swirling storm.

Three of the Indians fell.
THE BUFFALO BILL STORIES.

Several stumbled headlong over the ones who were down.

But the others pressed on, yelling like demons, leaping over the prostrate bodies, kicking the snow up like foam, flinging themselves fairly upon the death-dealing weapons of the scout.

In a moment they were at too close quarters for him to continue shooting.

He thrust the revolvers into their holsters, and with the same movement drew a knife, which ripped open the stomach of the redskin who was in the act of grappling with him.

But, in the darkness, the Indians did not know how dearly the prospective victory was costing, therefore they were more reckless than they would have been otherwise.

Buffalo Bill found it impossible even to use his knife. He dropped it on the ground, and caught an Indian who was leaping upon him by the hips, and lifted him from the ground.

The warrior thus seized was a rather light, limber fellow, and Buffalo Bill gave him a swing and let go.

The redskin was hurled fully a dozen feet, and his kicking legs knocked down one of his comrades in his flight.

But they came too fast for the scout to dispose of them, lightning-like though his movements might be.

Three of them got hold of the scout at once.

He planted his fist in the mouth of one of the trio, sending him down like a log.

But the other two clung fast, and before he could fling them off three more came to help.

Down went the government scout in the snow.

His savage foes swarmed on his prostrate body like vultures, raining blows and kicks, until his consciousness grew faint and maze.

He did not become insensible.

But he knew that he was being bound and swathed up in thongs and strips of hide, until he felt as if he had been melted and run into a mold.

Buffalo Bill was a prisoner to the Cheyennes!

CHAPTER VIII.

SENTENCED TO DEATH.

The camp which Buffalo Bill had so boldly penetrated was not the only one in the vicinity.

The party of Indian raiders composed, as the great scout had believed, a large number of warriors altogether.

They were divided up into half a dozen parties, and the timber between the Big Sandy and the railway track, where the train had been stalled, was dotted closely with camp fires.

The storm, in such severe guise, was something more than the redskins were prepared for.

Having started out on the expedition, and being on the ground with the train seemingly at their mercy, they were not disposed to give up the plunder on account of the snow and cold.

There was plenty of dead wood which they could pick up in spite of the deepening snow. There were so many of them that the struggle with the storm was not a serious matter as long as they kept within the shelter of the timber and had enough rations.

Buffalo Bill's capture was due to an act of open sacrifice, rather than a lack of caution or prowess.

He knew when he fired at the half-breed that there was not a chance in a hundred of his being able to get away before the overwhelming crew of foes would be upon him.

But to his mind he did the only thing there was to do under the circumstances.

The unknown prisoner was being cruelly tortured right before his eyes, and a shot would stop it.

It was in his power to put an end to the torture, and to his chivalrous nature there was but one choice.

He would stop the torturing process, and then fight if he had to.

He was caught; but for the foe it was a dearly purchased catch.

Five were dead—for Buffalo Bill shot to kill, not to maim.

Two had broken ribs, and another looked as if his face had been hit with a bombshell.

They bore their new prisoner back into the light of the camp fire.

Several of them recognized him.

They could hardly credit the evidence of their eyes.

They had at last captured the great king of the white scouts—the man whom had Indians had reason to dread, and whom many good Indians counted as a friend.

The scout was a little dazed by the blows and kicks which he received after he was down. Yet he was not long in realizing that he was a prisoner, and that for the time, at least, he could not hope to escape unaided.

When they discovered who it was that they had captured there was the greatest excitement in the camp. They seemed to forget their other prisoner entirely.

They were so delighted that they danced and yelled about the scout, whom they stood up helplessly against a tree, so that they could look at their prize all they pleased.

It was not the first time that Buffalo Bill had been captured by redskins, but he well knew that as time went on the score which they were piling up against him was growing longer.

To the hostile bands, and to the chiefs and tribes that
were forever giving the whites the most trouble, the name of Buffalo Bill was a terror.

Every year added to his reputation among them, and in the present case he had just been piling up a record that called for swift and terrible vengeance.

Ordinarily they would have waited until the end of their present raid, and taken him to their village before executing vengeance upon him.

But the storm added difficulty and uncertainty to everything, and they knew by experience that Buffalo Bill was a hard man to hold in captivity.

It seemed to them that the very elements of the air lent themselves sometimes to aid in his rescue when they believed that they had him safe.

After a due amount of yelling and hooting in celebration of their capture, they seemed to have worked off the froth from their exultation. Then they settled down to a formal powwow, to see what disposition should be made of the great white chief.

The Indian admires bravery and nerve, even in an enemy.

They admired Buffalo Bill—or White Buffalo, as some of them called him—even while they hated and feared him.

They considered that he was worthy of dying as a brave but defeated warrior should die. They were willing to allow him to choose the manner of his taking off.

The discussion which they held over the matter was soon ended, for there was no time to waste, as they wished to finish up the business with the stalled railway train before morning should dawn, or another train arrive.

They felt sure of their prey on the train, and the party was so strong in numbers that some of them were considering the idea of holding up the next train also, which the snowstorm and torn-up track would seem to favor them in doing.

Buffalo Bill could hear but a small part of what they said, as the conference was not held close enough to where he stood for the words to come distinctly to his ears.

But he was not long kept in suspense regarding their decision.

One of the chiefs advanced in a dignified manner, and paused before the distinguished prisoner.

"The White Buffalo should listen, for it is Running Snake that speaks," said the chief.

"Let him speak, then," answered Buffalo Bill, "for the ears of White Buffalo are good, and he will hear and understand."

"A council has been held to see how the White Buffalo shall die. It is decided.

"The White Buffalo is swift and sure to kill, and he never tortures or scalps his victims. He shall die as he makes others die.

"He has shot many warriors of our people, and so as many of our people as may wish to have a part in killing the great white chief shall have the chance to send a bullet or an arrow into his body now."

"Yonder is a small tree stump. The White Buffalo shall stand with his ankles bound to the stump. The warriors may then have a fair chance to shoot at him with their guns or bows. They shall not throw their knives or tomahawks, for that is not the way in which the White Buffalo would kill his enemies."

"Running Snake has spoken. White Buffalo should sing his death song, for he dies now!"

Buffalo Bill did not respond. But for a single instant his head was bent. Perhaps he was praying, for never had he seemed to be closer to certain death.

Several warriors advanced and carried the captive to the tree stump of which the chief had spoken, and in a moment the scout's ankles were made fast to it.

His wrists were bound behind him, and he was, besides, so completely wound up with a riata that there was not the slightest chance for him to escape.

The redskins worked rapidly, for they seemed to fear that something might happen, as there had done before, to rob them of their victim.

While these preparations were in progress their other prisoner remained in the same position that he had occupied while undergoing torture at the hands of the half-breed.

The body of the latter lay just as it had fallen, and the mysterious stranger looked down upon it with a face that evinced not the slightest emotion.

Buffalo Bill had good reason to believe that the stranger was either ignorant of, or indifferent to, the fact that he had been saved from further torture by the one who was now sentenced to death for the part he had played.

The scout was not the man to regret having acted a brave part.

Yet he could not help wondering, in a vague sort of way, if he had not thrown away his life for a comparatively worthless object, when he might have been a great help to others who had a more important part to play in the world.

Meanwhile, as Buffalo Bill calmly faced what he did not doubt was to be the end of his earthly career, his young padr, New York Ned, had something doing at a spot not many hundred yards from the Indian encampment.

He had followed Mack Bagley and Wally Burt from the spot where he had listened to their plot to rob the express car, back to the scene of the intended crime.

They did not expect to find the express car deserted by the messenger, for it was customary for the servants of the express companies to stick to their posts as long as it was possible to do so.

They found the door of the express car closed.
Chapter IX.

What happened to Buffalo Bill.

“ Ain’t you going to lend a hand in this business?” demanded Mack Bagley.

Burt had pretended to him that he had gone to see if there was any immediate likelihood of any of the train men coming to interrupt operations.

“It doesn’t need two men inside, really now. You go in and get ready to crack open the safe. You’ve got your jimmy, and I’ll hand up the sledge-hammer, don’t ye know. Aw, it needs one man here to keep an eye out, really now.”

“Maybe you’re right. I ain’t used to this kind of job. Mine was always in another line. But the hauls were quick and small in that. This promises better.”

Bagley climbed into the car through the window which he had broken.

Burt handed up the big hammer.

New York Ned, still doubting the eccentric dandy, kept him covered with his rifle.

It wouldn’t have taken much to prompt him to pull the trigger, for the conditions were such that he could not afford to wait the slow process of the law.

A dim light shone through the windows of the express car.

Mack disappeared with the hammer, and they soon heard him hammering on the safe with telling blows.

Burt came over to where New York Ned was concealed.

“Precious green, isn’t he?” smiled the dandy. “Now, Ned, you keep your eye on the windows of that car. If Mack offers to come out just advise him not to do it, don’t ye know. If he won’t listen to the advice, why, shoot.

“I’m going back to speak to the express messenger and one or two others—mail agent, probably. Then we’ll catch Mack, haul him out and give him a rubdown, don’t ye know!”

New York Ned had no time to dissent from this proposition.

But he had to wait a long time for Wally Burt to come back. The young fellow became suspicious immediately.

“I’ll go something heavy that Burt has just skinned and left Bagley to face it. And he thinks he has fooled me.”

“Well, I’ll hold up what game there is in sight, and maybe I’ll see Wally Burt later. And then he’ll find me harder to sell out than I am this time.”

New York Ned advanced to the express car, holding his rifle ready, and listened.
THE BUFFALO BILL STORIES.

He had stood in a somewhat exposed place until he was half benumbed with the cold.

It was not snowing quite so hard, but the wind and cold were more severe, if anything.

The heavy pounding in the car had ceased, but there was still enough noise to show that the robber was at work.

As Ned York Ned waited and listened, the night suddenly became hideous with yells and whoops from more than a full hundred Cheyenne throats.

"They're going to make a clean-up of it now!" decided the young trail boss.

At the same time he wondered that he had seen or heard nothing from Buffalo Bill.

"I didn't think he'd stay in the train to help defend it from the inside. I thought we could do more good from the outside. But if that isn't what he is about, then I don't see why he doesn't show up."

Just then half a dozen of the train crew came at a run through the snow close up to the cars.

"They're coming with a rush, and they'll strike where there doesn't seem to be anybody to shoot at them," Ned heard the fireman say.

New York Ned stopped the train hand and in a breath had told him of the man who was working to open the express safe in the car.

The fireman looked at the young fellow suspiciously.

"And what are you doing here?" he demanded, in a tone that told the young Indian trail boss the fireman suspected.

"Talking to a fool, I reckon," said New York Ned, turning on his heel. "Take care of your old express business, and I'll look out for my own."

With that the young fellow from New York made a plunge into the timber, and was quickly lost to the view of the train men, who were groping around in their minds to understand what he meant.

New York Ned knew by the sounds that the redskins were concentrating their attack upon a single point of the train. There was rapid firing from both sides, and for a few moments it sounded like a real battle.

He could see dark forms skulking from tree to tree and approaching the train at the forward end.

These Indians were not doing any shooting. It was plain that they were working some scheme under the cover of the noise made by the attack and defense.

Ned found himself right in the midst of those skulking forms. As some were in front of him, and others approaching from the rear, no tree trunk could shield him.

He attempted to get away from such dangerous proximity to numbers with which he could not hope to cope single-handed.

He had almost succeeded, by sheer good luck, for there was nothing else to favor him under the conditions, when he suddenly collided squarely with a big warrior whose eyes were intent on objects ahead.

Ned dropped his rifle and reached for the redskin's throat, to shut off the expected yell.

He was in time to reduce it to a guttural cry, and the both he and the Indian went down in the snow, locked in each other's arms.

Ned was a powerful young fellow, and he had done some wrestling for sport.

He found that the practice had stood him in good stead then.

He managed to get his antagonist to the bottom without letting go his hold on the savage's throat.

That grip gave Ned Harlow the advantage, but for a minute or two it was hard to keep it.

The redskin squirmed like a snake, but the choking spedily told on his strength.

The young Indian hunter soon realized that the muscles of his foe were relaxing.

There was a grip on one of New York Ned's wrists, but that got so loose that the young fellow got his left hand free.

Then he drew his knife.

A moment more and the snow was darkened by a splotch of Cheyenne blood.

Ned's heart beat hard and fast. For an instant his hand fingered the scalplock of the dead redskin.

But he sprang up without having done the thing which Buffalo Bill had tried to deter him from doing.

"I won't do it till he says the word. I don't like to displease him, after all he has done for me," was his thought, and he ran away from the spot where the dead Indian lay.

The next moment he found himself on the edge of an open space, in the center of which a camp fire was smoldering.

Everything indicated that a large number of the Indians had been gathered at that point up to a few minutes before.

The fact was, that here had been the encampment where Buffalo Bill and the "wild man" were captured.

There stood the tree to which the latter had been bound, with the blood-stained snow where the half-breed had been shot by the scout.

Near the center of the camp was the stump of a small tree—the same to which Buffalo Bill was bound by the ankles to await execution under the sentence from his captors' council.

Something—what it would be hard to say—impelled New York Ned to advance to that stump and regard it curiously.

Something lying in the snow caught his eye—something besides the stump.
Besides a spatter of blood which surrounded the tree stump.

He stooped and picked it up.

"My God!" gasped New York Ned. "What has happened to Buffalo Bill?"

CHAPTER X.

A BOLD BLUFF AND HOW IT WORKED.

It was not often that Buffalo Bill found himself in a spot where he could do absolutely nothing for himself.

As long as he could put up any kind of a fight, or exercise his gifts in strategy, he would not lose hope.

But from these resorts he was cut off.

"My last call must come some time, I suppose," he reflected. "And I reckon it will be queer if I should die a natural death in a civilized bed.

"So, probably, this is the call, and it doesn't wait until I'm past my prime, either.

"Well, if it must be, let it be. No sneaking Cheyenne shall see me quiver or hear me beg for my life."

The Indians were in a hurry to have it over with, for it was time to carry out their plans in regard to the capture of the railway train.

Nearly all the warriors were provided with guns of one kind or another. A few had only bows and arrows.

All ranged themselves in a semicircle halfway around Buffalo Bill, those with the arrows standing in front.

Running Snake waited for them to get in position, before he would give the signal to shoot.

Suddenly, as it appeared, a hoarse shout came from a point in the timber betwixt the camp and the river.

"Here are the red varmints, boys!" yelled the voice.

"Charge 'em, full tilt! Make every shot tell!"

Then, from various other points, as though proceeding from a line of men charging upon the camp, the cry was taken up and repeated in many tones.

"Charge 'em, boys!

Give 'em glory!

Make every shot tell!

Wipe 'em out!"

Instantly the Indians who were ranged in a semicircle and ready to fire upon Buffalo Bill scurried from the opening and ran away from the camp, every one of them silent.

One among them, before turning to flee, fired at the scout captive, and the bullet clipped through Buffalo Bill's tunic just above the hip, cutting off a piece of fringe and slightly lacerating the flesh underneath.

Just as the last of the redskins disappeared in the timber there sounded a rapid crack—crack in the direction from which the shouts had proceeded.

It did not sound to the cool and practiced ears of Buf-
"Then I saw you and that other queer-looking passenger who was tied to the tree yonder. I suspected what was going to happen to you, and it looked as if you needed a friend. So I fell on to that little bluff, as it were."

"You impersonated a dozen different men with your voice, Mr. Burt."

"Yes, I learned to do that sort of thing in a stage act that I was into one season in New York, don't you know. I didn't more than half expect that it would scare the Indians off so easily, really now. And then I happened to think there ought to be some shooting after I had blustered so much about giving it to 'em, and so I dashed out a couple of revolversful, just for the noise."

While they were speaking both were making as good time in getting away from the vicinity of the camp as the deep snow banks would allow.

All the while the mind of Buffalo Bill was uncommonly busy.

In his mind he had half accused this man of being a partner of Mack Bagley. And now he owed him his life.

It was a queer shift of events.

"What became of the other prisoner, Mr. Burt?" he asked.

"He slipped away the instant I cut his bonds."

"You don't know in which direction he went?"

"I didn't observe, really now."

"There's a mystery about him that I would like to solve. They were torturing him for some purpose when I first came upon the camp. I guess they would have murdered him by inches if I hadn't popped a shot at one of them. That is how I fell into their clutches. There seemed to be no help for it."

"You would have gotten into the same kind of a pinch just now if they had waited to make you show your hand."

"That's so, Mr. Cody. But I was always lucky in a way, don't ye know."

"Hark! There's something doing over there now. The reds are attacking the train. It is just the time of night when they like to do anything of that kind—betwixt midnight and dawn. You can never get them to take much of a risk at an earlier hour."

Buffalo Bill quickened his strides, but Wally Burt, with his tall hat on its back of his head, kept pace with him.

The scout found his rifle where he had dropped it when he tussled with the redskins just after he had shot the half-breed. Some of his other weapons were not to be found so easily, and he had to let them go.

They had not been away from the camp a few minutes when New York Ned arrived and made the examination of the spot which led him to infer that Buffalo Bill had met his death at the hands of half a hundred Cheyenne captors.

The scout led the way back to a point near the railway track, and halted in a sheltered spot to take an observation.

The firing, which for two or three minutes had been constant and rapid, was now more scattered. Still, it all seemed to come from a single narrow point of attack.

At the same time the keen eyes of the scout saw a large number of the skulking redskins spreading out along the whole length of the train. These were stealthy in their movements, and were doing no firing.

"Do you see what they're about, Mr. Burt?" asked the scout.

"Don't ye know, I haven't the faintest idea what they're driving at from the first."

"You see, there will be another train along, going in the same direction in the morning, and snow plows will push through."

"I hadn't thought of that, really."

"They mean to destroy the whole. They think the storm will make it a sure thing for them. It is the biggest attempt in the way of an Indian raid that has been made in a number of years."

It could not be supposed that Wally Burt had forgotten the intended burglary of the express safe by Mack Bagley. Yet he did not speak of the matter to Buffalo Bill. Indeed, in regard to that affair he had conducted himself in a somewhat suspicious manner, and it was little wonder that New York Ned suspected him of double play.

The real explanation of his conduct was to be made clear, however, by subsequent events, and these will be duly given in their place.

As they approached the train, Burt kept glancing furiously in the direction of the express car.

His quick eye took in the fact that the broken window by which Bagley had entered the car was barred with wood from the inner side.

"The express messenger, and probably some others, have come to take care of the treasure," was Burt's conclusion.

"Likely that Mack is hiding inside, not daring to breathe, and cursing me because I deserted him without giving him warning."

"Well, really now, I don't see but I'll have to leave poor Mack to chatter all by himself. 'The way of the transgressor is hard,' says Shakespeare. Or was it Scripture that said that? I've forgotten the source of the quotation, and will have to let it go."

Burt took off his tall hat, which was well plastered with snow, and wiped off the crown meditatively.

Zip! went an arrow clean through that shiny hat! It made a ragged hole, and Wally Burt whirled about, revolver in hand.

He saw a redskin in the act of firing another shaft to his bow.

Crack! went the revolver.

The Indian flung up his arms, and then went flying away amid the murky shadows yelling with pain.

There was another report before the redskin could get out of sight, and the luckless savage dropped in his tracks, to yell and run no more on his earthly hunting grounds.

It was the rifle of Buffalo Bill that spoke the fatal word.

The range was long, the light poor, the mark a shaky one.

But to the scout, with the vision that seemed never to err, there seemed to be no disadvantage that his marks- manship could not overcome.

"We want to keep the reds from getting possession of the train if possible," said the scout, in a low voice.

"You have proved to-night that you have the material in you for a great Indian fighter. Just now I want to wade in and put a check on the redskins if I can. May I depend on you to bear a hand in the scrimmage, Mr. Burt?"

"Yes, Mr. Cody, for I like a scrimmage, really now. It's exciting, don't ye know."

"'I'll give you your fill of it then. Come on.'"

They had reached a place where the snow had blown off.
BUFFALO BILL STORIES.

Buffalo Bill struck into a run, and Wally Burt, with his tall hat on the back of his head, sprinted close at the heels of the scout.

At the steps of the car in which the women and children and most of the passengers had taken refuge, as explained in another chapter, half a score of Cheyennes were gathered, ready to steal into the coach and begin their bloody work.

Buffalo Bill and his companion "waded in."

CHAPTER XI.

THE STRUGGLE IN THE PASSENGER COACH.

On the outer side of the snow barricade a large number of Indians were keeping up the bluff of a noisy attack.

Their rifles cracked, and arrows whizzed.

To the defenders within the car it seemed terrible enough; yet from those random shots, very few of which ever got through the bank of snow, there was little danger.

The men who for some time had remained outside, between the coach and the bank of snow, had been driven in by the cold as soon as they had to stop work with their shovels.

It was not storming so fiercely as it had done the first half of the night, but the cold was becoming more severe, and the wind did not abate.

The moon had risen behind the clouds, and with the landscape mantled with white, it was not dark by any means outside of the timber shadows.

The doors of the passenger coach were shut and locked.

The most alert of the train men were kept on the lookout to guard against strategy and surprise, such as they might expect from the crafty foe.

But they little knew the tricks and traps which fill the brain of the Indian warrior.

There is no other race like them in the world.

The first they knew there was the sound of blows with hatchets and clubs on the doors at each end of the car. The panels began to splinter.

The door was ready to fall. In another moment the Indians would have been swarming into the coach from two directions.

It was then that Buffalo Bill and Wally Burt dropped into the game.

Cody had one revolver left, and he began to make that go at close range.

Burt struck into the chorus, and although lack of practice made him wasteful of lead, yet some of the pellets found human lodgement, and the redskins began to tumble down from the platform.

That door fell with a crash before the Indians realized that something was boring into their ranks from the rear.

Four of them rushed into the car with hideous yells.

Crash! went the door at the opposite end at the same moment.

Then a terrible pandemonium reigned within the narrow confines of the passenger coach.

Women and children screamed from the corner where they were sheltered by piled up seats, boxes and traveling bags.

The male passengers shouted in words that nobody could understand. The train hands uttered commands and oaths.

Revolvers cracked at close quarters, and the bullets were about as likely to hit friends as foes.

The sights and sounds were beyond the power of pen to depict.

Into that mass of maddened, struggling humanity plunged a man of medium proportions, whose every motion was full of grace, as well as of strength and effect.

Buffalo Bill pressed upon the heels of the savages at one end of the car. He could no longer use revolver or rifle.

He still had a hunting knife, and this he brought into service. Blood began to flow there in the passenger coach.

It was a wild fight, with barely light enough for the combatants to distinguish friend from foe, and that was all.

Mr. Harrington and his son, the latter a young fellow of twenty, and totally unused to everything of the kind, fought side by side to keep back the redskins which were swarming in at the end of the car opposite that by which Buffalo Bill and his companion had entered.

Ethel Harrington, peering fearfully out from her retreat, could see that her father and brother were getting the worst of the struggle.

Desperate as was their resistance, the undisciplined crew of passengers and train men were not equal to the same number of Indians.

Ethel uttered a low wail of horror as she saw her brother falling back and back under the onslaught of a stalwart warrior.

The latter was a giant in stature, and so hideously painted that he was the most ferocious-looking in the entire crew.

The girl sprang up, beside herself with apprehension for her father and brother.

She hardly knew what she was doing when she sprang out from behind the protecting pile of small baggage. She had nothing that she could have used as a weapon to help in the unequal struggle.

She uttered a scream as her brother fell, with the giant redskin on top of him.

The savage had the young fellow by the throat, and the next moment a knife gleamed in the air.

The hand of the redskin shifted from the throat of his victim to the latter's scalplock.

Ethel flung herself frantically upon the Indian, and for a moment even her strength, desperately exerted, was sufficient to thwart the redskin in his designs.

She flung her arms around the savage's neck and drew them so tight that he uttered a gurgling cry as he attempted to tear them loose.

At the same time he released the scalplock of young Harrington, and would have slashed at the clanging, but delicate, hands which held him back with such frantic force.

At that instant another figure bounded into the car at that end—a form that was tall, slender, but athletic and powerful in its proportions.

It was New York Ned!

He gave a single glance into the beautiful but agonized face of the girl who was in the act of sacrificing her life in the hopeless effort of saving that of her brother.

The face was one to have awakened the admiration of any young fellow. And the circumstances were such as to,
arouse all the courage and chivalry of which his nature was capable.

At a bound he reached the redskin, who was kneeling on the body of young Harrington.

One long arm of the New York boy shot out, and his finger seized and entwined themselves in the redskin's scalplock.

A yell of rage and terror burst from the savage's lips, he flung Ethel Harrington back against the heap of baggage by a sweep of one arm, he writhed and twisted to get free from that relentless hand.

Then a shriek of pain and despair came from the savage as he felt the sting of a keen blade encircling his scalp, then the wrench at the trophy which seemed to be tearing his soul from his body.

Yet New York Ned did not lift the scalp, although he had been on the point of doing so.

"No! no!" cried the sweet, appealing voice of Ethel. And he felt her hand fall softly on his arm.

He looked into her face. His had been hard and relentless a moment before. But now it softened, for her gentleness and beauty had the power to melt his resolve. He released the redskin's scalplock. But he did not give the savage a chance to renew his resistance.

The knife which would have scalped the victim was plunged to the hilt in the latter's breast instead.

The girl shrank from the terrible spectacle; yet she well knew that this powerful young fellow had saved the life of her brother, and her own as well, without a doubt.

At the same time, she admired his strength and nerve, which were so much more effective than that of her brother.

Her admiration showed plainly in her eyes as they met the gaze of the young Indian trailer, and although there was no time then for her to speak her gratitude or praise, her face told him what her words would have been could she have spoken.

Young Harrington rose in a weakened and half-dazed state.

New York Ned drew him back to a corner, where there was smaller chance of his being again drawn into a fight which would surely have ended his career.

The young fellow was cut and bruised in a dozen places, although none of his injuries were likely to prove fatal.

"You must keep back out of this, miss—I beg of you!" said New York Ned, in a low voice, as he paused for an instant at the side of Ethel Harrington.

"Yes, yes. But my father, just yonder—he seems to be growing exhausted. He does not spare himself—he keeps in the thick of the fight."

"The tall man with the iron-gray hair and beard?"

"Yes."

"Ha! He needs help now, bad enough! I'll take a hand in the work!"

As New York Ned spoke these words an Indian, who seemed to be fresh for the fray, sprang upon Mr. Harrington, and the latter was flung to the floor of the car, now becoming slippery with blood.

A tomahawk swung in the air over the head of Ethel's father. A second more, and it would have descended, cleaving the brave man's head in twain.

New York Ned leaped to the rescue; but a cry of despair came from Ethel as she saw him intercepted by another Indian, with whom he grappled in self-defense, unable to save the girl's father.

But another succoring hand caught the uplifted arm of the Indian, drew it back, gave the wrist a twist that caused the bones to crack and the victim to howl with pain, finally wrenching away the tomahawk.

It was the hand of Buffalo Bill!

The hatchet was raised again; but it was the scout's arm that directed it, and the savage became the victim of his own weapon.

Then the great scout seemed to sweep through the mass of struggling forms like a cyclone, ending every unequal contest, the Indian tomahawk in one hand, his own knife in the other.

The redskins fell back before him, the few that were able to retreat. He came to Ned Harlow in time to dispatch the Indian who seemed to be getting the better of the fight.

Ned raised his eyes to the face of the handsome scout, and a cry of delight and amazement burst from his lips.

"Buffalo Bill!—alive—alive! alive!" his young pard shouted, with a joy that told the Prince of Bordermen how well he was loved by his "boy beagle."

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CHAPTER XII.

NEW YORK NED, THE BOY BEAGLE.

Within the passenger coach the battle was ended. The redskins had gotten the better of the first part of the fight, but Buffalo Bill, ever a host in himself, turned the tide of battle.

New York Ned, too, as has been shown, played no insignificant part in the contest during the brief time that he was there.

He had arrived late because he had tarried in the vicinity of the Indian camp, in a vain attempt to learn something definite as to the fate of his beloved master and teacher, Buffalo Bill.

Finding the fringe from the scout's tunic at the spot where Cody had been bound to the tree stump, with the spatter of blood in the snow, had made New York Ned almost certain that the great scout had been overtaken by death at last.

He had been almost prostrated with grief, but on hearing the sounds of strife in the direction of the stalled railway train, he had started to take a hand in the fight.

It has been shown how he arrived just in time to save the lives, probably, of both Ethel Harrington and her brother.

Mr. Harrington had received some severe wounds, and two of the train men and three of the passengers had been killed in the terrible fray.

Of the Indians who had swarmed into the car until the tide of battle showed against them, more than a dozen lay dead in the aisle, and probably as many more, dead or dying, had been dragged out of the car by their comrades.

Buffalo Bill knew too well the numbers of the attacking force to believe for a moment that the Cheyennes would yet abandon the contest.

They would be almost certain, he believed, to keep it up, in one way or another, until the night was ended.

He lent his skill to that of a physician who chanced to
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BILL STORIES.

be among the passengers to the alleviation of the hurts of
the wounded.

But he did not remain long within the passenger coach, for there was no telling what might be transpiring at other
points.

The sounds of firing had ceased.

Indeed, an ominous stillness reigned outside.

It portended some black stratagem on the part of the re

pulsed redskins.

No concerted attack had been made on any of the cars excepting that where the people had been concentrated.

A few of the redskins had hacked at the door of the express and mail cars with their tomahawks, but, believing them to contain nothing but plunder, and wishing to make sure of defeating the train crew, they had all gone back to
join in the struggle where it was hottest.

They so heavily outnumbered the whites that they had not a doubt of being able to win.

Every brave among them was anxious to have a hand in the bloody work.

Besides, they knew there were women among the pas

sengers, and these they counted as the most valuable part of the plunder with which they might be rewarded for their valor.

Out in the snow, near the coach which had been the scene of the struggle just described, Buffalo Bill and New

York Ned paused to look and listen.

"Do you think they'll give it up?" asked the young trailer.

"No. There are too many of them. Besides, they have lost so heavily that they'll come back for their revenge.

"A smaller party would abandon the struggle. But these will not be overwhelmed by the loss they have suf

fered. Besides, they have made white blood flow, and that has maddened them."

"I noticed that Burt fighting in the car when I first got here," said New York Ned. "But when I looked for him again he was missing. Do you know, I believed that fellow was a pal of Mack Bagley."

"How was that?"

Ned told of what he had observed of the attempt to rob the express car, and of the part Wally Burt had played.

"That looked dark, certainly, Ned. But that fellow, with his queer drawl and dandy make-up, saved me from certain death not an hour ago."

"He saved you, Buffalo Bill?"

"He did, and by as neat a trick as I ever saw played."

"How did he do it?"

The scout told of the trick which Burt had carried out so successfully.

"That wasn't all," added the scout. "For he took a big risk in doing it. If there had been a slip, or if his nerve had failed at the last minute, it would have been his windup."

"I never would have looked for anything as nervous as that from Wally Burt. And yet——"

New York Ned hesitated.

"Well, what is it?"

"I used to know that fellow in New York. He did me a good turn once, when I hadn't a friend in the big city."

"When was that?"

"After my father came West to make his fortune, and I hadn't heard from him or received a cent of money for a

long while. I took sick, stayed in mighty poor lodgings, and had nothing for my breakfast, and the same kind of feed served in courses the other two meals of the day."

"Wally Burt played the fiddle in a cheap Fourteenth Street show place, where they don't charge any admission, but expect everybody to buy a drink and treat somebody.

"I sneaked in there because it was warm and I was cold. I suppose I looked pretty scraggly. The fiddle was whinin', and Burt was the prime scraper."

"I guess I pretty near fainted away, I was so cold and hungry. First I knew, somebody was feedin' of me with beer and soda biscuits. The stuff give me a brace, and then I noticed it was Wally Burt."

"After that he got me a job tendin' tables in the same place where he was. From there I worked into other jobs, saved money, and came West to find Buffalo Bill, to learn to track and kill Indians, in revenge for their killing and scalping my poor father."

The voice of New York Ned became very low, and a little unsteady. The killing and scalping of his father by Indians was something that he could not speak of without emotion.

"Then Burt showed that he had a good heart," said the scout. "I reckon we may have been unjust to him in sus

pecting that he was connected with Mack Bagley."

"But they seemed to be together. I guess Wally is a hard chap to understand."

"He plays the dandy, in a fashion, and that's a part in life that I don't like to see a man act out. But it seems to come natural to him. I reckon he is just a bit queer, with maybe pretty good stuff in him at heart."

"Where do you suppose he is now?"

"I haven't the least idea."

"That reminds me of Mack Bagley. I left him in that express car, hammering at the safe. Burt pretended to go to call the messenger and train hands to have Bagley caught. He wanted me to see that Bagley didn't get out while he was gone. But Burt didn't show up, and I reckoned he had skipped out to leave Bagley to face the music. When the train men came along, and I told them of the man in the express car, they seemed to suspect that I might be in the job myself."

"I left them without trying to convince them of their mistake. I wanted to shove 'em into a snow bank."

"They ought to have found Bagley by this time, unless they were thick-headed enough to let him slip away."

"That's right."

"We'll soon know, Ned. You're getting to be pretty keen on any kind of a trail—you are as good as a beagle hound. You are my Boy Beagle, Ned."

"Let me get on to the trail of my father's slayers, and you'll find out what I am," said the young trailer, under his breath.

He went ahead to investigate the express car.

As they reached the next coach, Buffalo Bill saw a dark form spring off the platform on the opposite side.

The scout leaped in pursuit.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE BOY BEAGLE'S HOT TRAIL.

Buffalo Bill did not think that the one who sprang off the car platform was an Indian.
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But the place was in shadow and the scout could not be absolutely certain on that score.

Whoever it was, he was nimble enough for a redskin, and a sprinter in the bargain.

The scout reached the other side of the train at two bounds, but he was not in time to glimpse the one of whom he was in pursuit.

On that side of the train there was enough of moonlight filtered through the clouds to render objects fairly distinct to the vision.

Buffalo Bill examined the snow for tracks.

There were too many of them. They were confusing. There were Indian tracks and others made by the trainmen, and all were recent.

It was not snowing very heavily, but there was wind enough to keep the snow that had fallen swirling in the air, and in some places it did not take long for tracks to fill.

But here it was sheltered from the wind, and none of the tracks which had been made within half an hour were covered.

The scout bent his face close to the tracks and poked at them with his bare finger.

Most of them had a little un trodden snow sifted like fine sand over them. It could be detected by touch when the eye would not have observed it in that light.

Buffalo Bill wanted to follow the one whom he had seen leap from the platform. He wished to do so more than he would have done had he believed him to be an Indian.

He found some tracks which had absolutely no snow sifted into them. They were as fresh as his own, which he had just made in springing from the platform.

Once on the scent, the keen-eyed scout followed that set of tracks with as much certainty as he could have done had they been the only ones on that side of the track.

They led him forward to the locomotive cab.

As he approached the cab Buffalo Bill advanced silently but with swift strides nevertheless.

He pressed cautiously into the cab.

There sat somebody on the right-hand side, on the seat that belonged to the engineer.

It was Wally Burt!—as Buffalo Bill had more than half suspected from the first.

The scout stepped silently into the engine cab, where a genial warmth still came from the boiler, although the fire under it must have been nearly out.

Burt lifted his head and yawned.

“Aw, hello, Cody!” he exclaimed, coolly. “Only decently comfortable berth I’ve struck to-night, really now. Come up here out of the wind if you want to get warm.”

If the man had been a redskin, or if there had been a dozen train robbers huddled there in the engine cab, Buffalo Bill would have known what to do.

But in this case he was stumped.

He knew that Wally Burt had just dodged him, and that the fellow had crawled into the cab to hide. There must be something crooked about him. It even looked as if he might, after all, be hanging around for a chance to get hold of some of the treasure in the express company’s safe.

If such were the case, what was Buffalo Bill to do about it?

Wally Burt, this eccentric and mysterious fellow from the East, had saved the great scout from certain death.

Should the scout bring to punishment the man to whom he owed his life?

Why, Burt had risked his own life to save him, and he had done the thing without stopping for an instant to weigh the terrible chances, as almost any man would have done under the circumstances.

The great scout dropped on to the seat beside Wally Burt, the dandy musician.

“Where’s your saddle, Mr. Burt?” he asked.

“Back in the car, if none of those blasted redskins have smashed it. I hope they haven’t, Cody, for it was a durned fine instrument, don’t ye know?”

“You did me a good turn to-night, Mr. Burt, and that makes me feel a more vital friendly interest in you than I would otherwise. So you will understand better why I put a few questions to you now,” said Buffalo Bill, looking squarely at the eccentric man by his side.

“Don’t mention that little favor, Cody. It just popped into my head to see if the trick would work; I didn’t think much about the rest of it, really now.”

“I didn’t intend to make a great talk about it. I don’t take you for the sort of man that cares to be praised all the time for what he does.”

“That’s it, exactly, Cody. Aw, it embarrasses a man tremendously, don’t ye know.”

“I wanted to ask you about this Mack Bagley. He was plotting to break open the express company’s safe and get hold of the treasure that is said to contain...”

“...Yes. He mentioned the matter to me, don’t ye know. I let him believe that I would go into it with him, and he swallowed the gag, actually.”

“Did you really intend to betray him to the express messenger, as you told New York Ned you would do?”

Wally Burt yawned fearfully.

“Excuse me,” he said, “but I’m so deuced sleepy that I’m afraid I may drop off into a snooze while you’re talking to me, actually. Did I intend to give the fellow away? Well, to tell the truth, I rather hated to do it, and I didn’t think it would be necessary, after I saw that the redskins were going to make things so warm for us. I was pretty sure that he wouldn’t get the safe open without something to blow it, don’t ye know.”

“Another thing, he would need help, and that I wouldn’t give him, of course. That’s how the matter stood. Not being necessary, don’t ye know, I decided to just leave him in the lurch and not have a hand in getting him into trouble.”

“If he had succeeded in getting the treasure, to be frank with you, Mr. Burt, wouldn’t you have accepted a share of it in consideration of your keeping still about it?”

“How you do take a fellow, Cody!”

“I ask the question more as a friend than anything else. If the express had been robbed the mail would have gone the same way, and as a government officer I might then have had to do something about it. You haven’t done the thing, and I think too much of you to get you into any trouble if I can help it.”

“Mr. Burt, you saved me from a miserable death. If you allowed yourself to be drawn into a business of this kind out in this part of the country you would meet with a miserable death before long.”

“So, in warning you now I’m doing just what you did for me—saving your life. Besides, I reckon there’s some
honor in you, and that's worth saving, too—it's worth more than life to many men."

Wally Burt pulled a long, quick breath; it sounded almost like a sob to the ears of the great scout.

But the fellow's voice was bantering and careless as ever as he said:

"You're deuced kind, Cody, really now, and I want you to know that I appreciate it, don't ye know."

"One good turn deserves another, they say. Do you know at the present minute what has become of Mack Bagley?"

"Blessed if I do. I started out to see what he had done with himself when you got after me, don't ye know."

"Then you ran from me?"

"Yes, of course."

"I thought so. Do you know whether Bagley is around the train or not, or do you think he skipped off when he heard the redskins warming to their work?"

"Gospel truth, Cody, I don't know."

"The express messenger, I believe, went to his car to look out for his stuff, with two or three train hands."

"Yes."

"Well, you and I will go and see how they fared, Mr. Burt. We have both of us got good and warm."

Wally Burt wiped the perspiration from his forehead, adjusted the shiny hat on the back of his head, and then followed the government scout out of the engine cab.

They went to the express car and found the messenger and his companions just coming out to reconnoiter.

They had seen nothing of the burglar, but they had observed that an attempt on the safe had been made with a jimmy and sledge-hammer.

Bagley had not had time to get into the safe, which was a stanch one.

A search of the car failed to find the intended burglar.

It was found that the door on one side of the car, which had been fastened only by a heavy bolt on the inner side, was unbolted. The man had undoubtedly escaped in that direction just as the guards had arrived.

The result of his investigation brought out unsatisfactory points for Buffalo Bill.

Wally Burt had neither admitted nor denied his intended complicity in the burglary of the express safe.

He had seemed to feel grateful for the kind interest shown in him by Buffalo Bill, yet he had cleverly avoided giving his confidence in return.

In other words, Wally Burt was as much a mystery as before, and it may as well be said here that he was to remain a puzzle to the great scout for a long time to come.

But that is "another story."

New York Ned had been the first to reach the express car, on account of Buffalo Bill going in quest of Burt.

Finding no trace of Bagley there he started out to look for the man on his own hook.

He soon found the fireman, who said that he had just seen Bagley going toward the passenger coach which had been the scene of the terrible combat with the Indians.

Ned thought of Ethel Harrington.

In truth, while he had kept constantly on the hustle all the while, he had hardly stopped thinking of Miss Harrington since first looking into her sweet face, which had appealed to him for help.

Around the coach which had been the scene of such a wild struggle only half an hour before a perfect silence reigned. One would not have dreamed that danger still lurked in the forest.

Whatever the Indians may have been doing, they were certainly giving the passengers on the train a rest for the time being.

Young Harlow made a complete circuit of the passenger coach, and finding no signs of Bagley, he went into the car.

The man had not been seen there.

He stopped to speak to Miss Harrington, but was told by her father that she had gone to the toilet-room at the end of the car a few moments before to get water for bathing the wounds of her brother, who was suffering acutely.

New York Ned waited some time for her to return.

Then he sent one of the other women passengers to look for her.

The woman came back with a startled face.

"She isn't there," she said.

"Not there! Then where is she?"

Ned rushed for the end of the car, but the word of the other was confirmed. What was more, it was easy to ascertain that Ethel Harrington was not in the passenger coach at all.

She had been seen to go out on to the platform, and had not returned.

New York Ned rushed out like a hound on a keen scent.

A brakeman had seen Bagley wallowing through the snow with something in his arms. It was too dark to tell what.

The Boy Beagle was off upon a hot trail.

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CHAPTER XIV.

ACROSS THE BIG SANDY.

Buffalo Bill and Wally Burt returned to the passenger coach where the passengers were assembled soon after the departure of New York Ned in pursuit of the captor of Ethel Harrington—for there seemed to be not the shadow of a doubt now that the girl had in some manner been taken away by the man from Sacramento.

Mr. Harrington and his son, to say nothing of the other passengers, for Miss Ethel was a general favorite, were wild over the girl's disappearance.

Buffalo Bill was not a man to go wild over anything; at least, he had been schooled in the hard discipline of life until he could keep outwardly cool under almost any circumstances.

But he was not the less prompt in action on that account.

Wally Burt showed his emotions over the affair in his own peculiar way, which gave no clew as to his real feelings.

"Peculiar thing for Mack to do, really now," was his comment.

The scout looked at him sternly.

"Did Bagley hint any intention of this sort to you?" he demanded.
Not a word. I didn’t suppose he’d have the nerve to try anything of the kind, really now.

“Will you join me in the pursuit of the sneaking villain?”

“Of course I will. Delighted if I could help you out, don’t ye know.”

“Come, then. If you have a chance to draw bead on Mack Bagley I will expect you to bring down the game.”

Wally Burt seemed unconcerned. He took off his silk hat and wiped the crown with his handkerchief, gave a hitch to his cravat, and announced himself as ready for the chase.

The night was nearly spent.

As yet no signs of dawn were visible, but there remained only about an hour of that eventful night.

It was a night that would never be forgotten by any of the survivors among train men and passengers of that ill-fated Union Pacific express.

As for Buffalo Bill and his Boy Beagle, they, too, had extra reason to hold the events of those hours of darkness and storm as the most vivid in memory’s storehouse.

For the end was not yet.

A consultation with the brakeman who had glimpsed Bagley at the moment of his abduction of Ethel Harrington brought out but little to assist in the pursuit.

It merely told Buffalo Bill where to look for his tracks, and these he would have been able to find in any case.

He soon located them, and found that they led away from the track into the timber directly toward the point where the largest encampment of the Indians had been at an earlier hour.

The trail soon became confused with that of some of the redskins made in their retreat a little earlier.

Buffalo Bill led the way and Wally Burt followed without the slightest show of reluctance.

In a short time they arrived at a point so near the encampment of the redskins that further advance would be attended with the greatest risk of discovery.

An examination of the trail seemed to indicate that Mack Bagley had joined the redskins.

Cody faced his companion.

“Mr. Burt,” he said, in a cautious tone, “have you any reason to suppose that Bagley was on friendly terms with the Cheyennes?”

“I never heard him say, really now.”

“May I depend upon your word in this case?”

“In every case, Mr. Cody, when I give it. There are times, don’t ye know, that a man doesn’t wish to make a straight-out statement about his own affairs. That doesn’t always mean that he isn’t acting on the square. But he wants the privilege of keeping his mouth shut, don’t ye know.”

“I understand that.”

“That’s all. Mack Bagley is no pal of mine, or I of his; that’s straight. I might not like to shoot him, but I’d a heap rather do it than have him shoot me, don’t ye know.”

“As for Miss Harrington, I’ll be glad to help rescue her. I knew Bagley took a fancy to her, and so did I, and so would you, Cody, if you played the violin for her to sing.

“But that’s neither here nor there. I have my own troubles, Cody, really now, and on those things I’ll have to ask you to excuse me, don’t ye know.

“That’s all.”

This was the most extended explanation that Buffalo Bill was to get out of the strange fellow for a long while, but it was enough, with the air with which it was given, to make the scout feel that in the main Wally Burt might be trusted.

“It might not be best to let him carry your pocketbook, if it happened to be better stuffed than his own,” reflected the scout.

“But there are men who would save your life but get your money. He looks as if he might have need of it.”

Whether or not this suspicion was true, Burt gave no further hint.

He might be hard up, but he was proud. He was no beggar.

“Will you wait here for me to reconnoiter the camp?”

Buffalo Bill asked.

“Anything to please you.”

“It won’t take long.”

The scout stole ahead, moving with the silence of a shadow.

But to his surprise he found that the Indians were no longer encamped at that place.

Had they beaten a complete retreat, giving up the destruction of the train entirely?

Even as the scout asked himself the question he was startled by a single prolonged and dismal cry that quavered in lingering echoes on the air.

It was still snowing, but the wind had abated, and a silence reigned such as had not prevailed before at any time during the night.

The cry did not come from the timber on that side of the railway track at all.

Instantly a new suspicion came into the quick brain of Buffalo Bill.

A swift reconnaissance confirmed the correctness of it.

The Indians, by a detour, had abandoned the timber on the side of the track nearest to the Big Sandy River, and gone over in a straggling host to the other side.

As soon as he was sure of this Buffalo Bill rejoined his companion, told him of the circumstances, and then resumed the pursuit of the trail of Mack Bagley.

In twenty minutes they reached the bank of the river.

The cold had been so intense that the stream had at some points frozen from bank to bank.

At a narrower and shallower point, where the current was swift and overhung by foliage of the trees, which protected it somewhat from the cold, the stream was still open.

At that point, but at the opposite shore, Buffalo Bill espied the outlines of a dugout.

“There must be others on this side somewhere,” he reasoned. And in this a little search confirmed the suspicion.

But they were further down the stream, and frozen in.

The scout still retained the Indian tomahawk with which he had slain one of the savages in the car.

With this he quickly hacked the ice away from the boat, and with the help of his companion dragged it up to the open water.
CHAPTER XV.

YELLOW HAIR—CONCLUSION.

Buffalo Bill had made such disposition of his horse and that of his boy bard, New York Ned, when they had first reached the timber, at the beginning of the storm, that he now found no difficulty in finding the animals, safe and sound.

They were half buried in snow, it was true, but they had been warmly blanketed, and the trees around them was a protection from the severity of the cold wind.

He mounted Ethel on one of the horses, and having dressed the flesh wound in the shoulder of Burt, he helped the latter into the saddle of the other animal.

They then lost no time in their return to the passenger train.

The joy of Homer Harrington and his son over the safe return of Ethel need not be described. And in the cool and prompt act of rescue Buffalo Bill, the prince of scouts, added to the host of grateful friends which grew larger every year he lived.

Meanwhile what of New York Ned, the Boy Beagle?

He had started out to follow the trail of the captor of Ethel Harrington, but having made an error at the start, it was not strange that he became confused and followed the tracks made by a redskin who had but just been making a reconnaissance around the railway track.

The Indian had sneaked away to join his comrades who, as Buffalo Bill was to discover at about the same time, had crossed over to the other side of the track.

Ned Harlow followed this trail so rapidly, and with such unerring certainty, that within twenty minutes he found himself dangerously close to the Indian encampment.

Here he was obliged to pause and proceed with more caution.

He wondered not a little that Bagley, whose track he supposed he had been following, should go toward the camp of the Indians.

It seemed to imply that the man was in league with them, and this there had before been no reason to believe.

As he reconnoitered the encampment, he observed signs that led him to believe that the redskins were on the point of going away from the vicinity, and it consequently appeared that they had abandoned their purpose of capturing the Pacific express.

In truth was, they had no thought in plotting for the hold-up of finding Buffalo Bill there to baffle them at every turn and to order every move of the defense.

This was, in fact, more than they had bargained for, so the giving up of the attempt was in reality due to the fame of the great government scout and guide.

As New York Ned observed their movements he suddenly saw an arrow shoot across the open space. Following its swift flight with his eye, he saw the shaft pass through the tunic of Running Snake, the chief.

The latter did not utter an outcry at the moment, but pulling the arrow from the wound he looked at the point.

Then he gave utterance to the loudest, most prolonged and dismal cry that had ever smote upon the ears of the young Indian trailer.

This cry quickly resolved itself into a death song.

Other warriors gathered around, took the arrow, looked at the point, and then echoed the wail which the chief had uttered.

"A poisoned arrow—the chief is doomed!"

This was the explanation which instantly occurred to the mind of New York Ned.

It was the true one. But at the same time it set him to wondering about a number of things.

He remembered the poisoned arrow which had nearly
hit him when he and Buffalo Bill first reached the timber belt the evening before. He remembered, too, that they had decided that it must have been a chance shot, so far as it having come near to him was concerned.

He now believed that the same hand that directed that poisoned shaft as had sent this, which was to be fatal to the Cheyenne chief.

Suddenly he saw the latter leap into the air with a strange, maddened cry.

Then the redskin fell upon the snow in the contortions of a painful death.

From the timber beyond there came a strange laugh of exultation. Then a score of Indian rifles cracked, all of them aimed at the spot from whence the cry had proceeded.

Then there was a sound of rapidly running footsteps, and New York Ned beheld a shadowy figure speeding by where he stood.

In a flash the young trailer was in pursuit.

The flight of the grotesque figure which he had glimpsed took him toward the stalled railway train.

Glancing down at the snow Ned saw that it was dotted with drops of blood, proving that the one who had shot the Cheyenne chief was wounded by one or more of the shots that were sent in return.

Ned was so close to the fleeing form that he saw the latter suddenly stagger and fall.

The next instant the young trailer was bending over the prostrate form, staring at the yellow mat of hair that covered the top of his head, and the fringe of iron-gray locks that surrounded it.

The yellow hair was a wig. Underneath, the head was strangely white and ridgy with scars.

"He has been scalped!" exclaimed the young trailer.

Then he bent close to the face of the man, whose tangle beard and wild aspect was singular in the extreme.

But, changed though that face was—though he had no thought of ever seeing it again in this world—despite all the circumstances which would seem to have made such a recognition impossible—New York Ned did recognize the face of the man lying before him.

"My father—my father—my father!"

The words burst from the lips of the young fellow, but not in a shout. Rather, his voice was low and tender, and he bent and kissed the terribly altered face of the one who, a little more than a year ago, had been his only friend, as well as parent.

After the first shock of the surprise at the discovery had passed New York Ned examined the wounds upon his father, of which there were several.

A number of the bullets had struck him in that random discharge on the part of the followers of Running Snake, who had been stricken to death by the poisoned arrow.

Yet it appeared that none of the wounds were of a serious nature.

New York Ned lifted the unconscious man in his arms, and with a strength which was remarkable in one of his age, he bore the burden all the way to the passenger coach and even up the steps unaided, and without pausing to rest.

In another moment he was telling Buffalo Bill of the wonderful discovery he had made, while the scout hurriedly examined the wounds of the, father of his Boy Beagle.

"It is the one the redskins called Yellow Hair, and who was a prisoner among them at the time I fell into their clutches earlier in the night."

Mr. Harlow—as the wild-looking stranger may now be called—soon recovered a degree of consciousness, although it was evident that his mind was in a disordered state, and that it had been so for some time.

The physician on the train gave the man his careful attention, and declared that he believed that Mr. Harlow's mental trouble could be permanently cured under proper treatment and nursing.

It may be stated that this prediction was fulfilled.

By the time New York Ned reached the train with his father day was dawning in the east.

Two hours later, the Union Pacific train which was due to arrive from the opposite direction have in sight, a snow plow showing the way.

A brakeman from the stalled train ran ahead and flagged the approaching train.

Doubtless an Indian courier had warned the Cheyennes of the approach of the other train, and this had influenced them the sooner to abandon the raid.

The passengers were shifted to the other train, which was run back to the next station.

A wrecking train and crew was sent a little later and the displaced rail respaced.

New York Ned accompanied his father to a hospital where, after an operation, the man was restored to sanity and health.

But he was unable to recollect, except in a hazy manner, anything of his experience since the raid upon the mining camp, where he had been, and his supposed death at the hands of the Cheyenne raiders.

He had been scalped, and the news of this, with his supposed death, had sent his son, Ned, to the West on a trail of vengeance.

It was supposed that the man wandered about with a mad desire for revenge, and that he repeatedly sought to destroy his red foes by the use of poisoned arrows.

This is undoubtedly the true explanation.

New York Ned remained in the West with his father for two or three years, and all the while he kept up his acquaintance with Ethel Harrington.

That their friendship should end in the usual happy way was but a natural sequence.

Wally Burt stayed in the West also, and something more may be told of him at a future time.

But next to his father, in the mind of the Boy Beagle, Buffalo Bill was the greatest and most wonderful of men.

THE END.

Next week's issue, No. 148, will contain "Buffalo Bill's Five FRIENDLYs; or, Wally Burt, the War Hawk of the Iowa Club." You must not fail to read this story, for it will introduce you to an entirely new character, one who will appear from time to time later on. Besides that, the story is of unusual interest in itself.
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