

Mrs. John H. Haynes,  
Oakland, Maine.

Written by Mary A. Hallock

In the path of the Redskins .  
A True Story of the Minnesota Indian War of 1862.

We arose at daybreak on the morning of June 17, 1862, as my father wished to make an early start to the farm, some four miles from the little frontier town of Garden City, where we lived. It was a beautiful morning. The showers of the evening had revived all nature, after a dry season, and the drops still lingered on the foliage and flowers, taking on a thousand hues in the rising sun.

"Now, Mary, my dinner, and I will be off," said my father, and waved a hasty good-by as he drove away.

My mother and sister went into the house; but I lingered outside to enjoy the beauties of the morning. The hills echoed with the songs of birds, the air was fragrant with the odor of wild flowers, and the beautiful Watan-wan (Crooked River) wound its way through the little village, glistening in the morning sun. But alas! there was work to be done, and I moved reluctantly and went into the house.

We went through with the routine of morning work, and by nine o'clock we were at the schoolhouse door. The few scholars passed in, all but myself. For, just as I was about to enter the building, Father drove past toward home. He seemed in a hurry, and I wondered what had brought him back. Doubtless Dave could not help him, and he had thought it better to wait until he could.

Being glad of an excuse to go home again, for I was very tired, I followed father, and I was soon at his side. He stopped for me to get in; but, to my questions, he seemed indifferent. When we reached home, he went straight to mother and told her what had brought him back, as near as I can remember in these words:

"I had gotten as far as the cross roads and had turned off toward the Hay-field, when I heard a queer sound at my left in the undergrowth. 'Surely,' thought I, 'that is Dave come down ahead of me and is trying some of his fool tricks on me.' So I stopped and prepared to reconnoiter, but was saved the trouble; for, from behind a tree stepped the tallest Sioux Indian I ever saw. He was decked in war-paint, though unarmed, and dressed in true Indian style. He motioned me to get out of the wagon, at the same time pointing to the din-



ner-pail. I did as he requested, and stood before him, waiting further orders, which came at once. Motioning me to sit down beside him on the grass, he then by signs and a few words of English made this plain to me--that he was in a starving condition, and, if I would give him my dinner, he would tell me something that I ought to know. I asked if half my dinner would not do. No, he said, in order to get to his destination, he must have it all. So I gave him all there was in the pail, and, from the way he ate, I knew he was very hungry. I waited impatiently until he had finished, wondering much what he could tell me that would prove a just reward for taking away my dinner. When the last morsel had been devoured and he had lapped out every dish to get the last crumb and had drained the coffee-bottle, he stood straight as an arrow, as though about to make a speech before a council of chiefs, gave a few grunts, and hitting his breast hard with his fists to show me now that he was a very big Indian, proceeded to enlighten me.

He had walked and run by turns from fifty miles west of the Sioux agency, a distance of sixty miles, with nothing to eat except roots and berries, and was on his way to the Winnebago agency to warn relatives he had there, a daughter and grand children, that the Sioux were intending to raise the next day and kill all whites and Winnebagoes west of the Mississippi River. He had started as soon as he found out, but had got so hungry that he could have gone no farther but for my dinner. He then told me to take my squaw and papooses in the wagon and go east; for, at sunrise to-morrow, every white would be killed. He took great pains to impress me with the fact that, if he was found out in coming here, they would kill him the worst way, pinching up his flesh and making passes to cut it out, picturing to me a death by being cut up alive.

"All this was done quicker than it can be told; and, when he had finished, he took a pipe out of his blanket, threw it at my feet, and leaped away into the woods like a deer. The river was near. I heard a splash, and, going to look, saw him, blanketless, climbing the bank on the other shore, and he was soon out of sight."

*Council*  
My parents held a council over the matter. Did the Indian tell the truth? Who could tell? They are very treacherous, and it might of been a Sioux bent on killing some enemy he had among the Winnebagoes, or just a truce to get something to eat. But why the war-paint? If they were really on the war-path, no Indian would dare refuse to paint. If that was so, this fellow would have to come in

war-paint, if at all, however dangerous it might prove to him. Moreover, our baby was ill and hardly out of danger; and, if we should take her on a long journey, she might die. /

Well my father thought it best to talk with some of the neighbors about it before deciding. Baby Dorothy was not so well that afternoon; so I stayed with mother. Father came back from the neighbors and said they had concluded it was some half-crazy Indian, and that it wasn't best to borrow trouble about it, anyway. So we dropped the matter. It always seemed to me afterwards that I walked in a dream that day after Father's return. What he said impressed me sadly, and I could see it did Mother, though she said no word.

We watched that night by turns beside the wooden cradle that held the light of our home; for what family of children is there that does not consider the baby as such?

My sister, Eva, and I had planned some very wonderful surprises for baby Dorothy when she should be well enough to be carried out of doors. One was a grape-vine cradle we intended to weave and attach to the low branch of a tree just outside the door. Another was a great secret of Eva's. There was the prettiest piece of pink calico over at Boynton's store, light pink with great dark-pink roses in it; she was going to get Dorothy a new dress from this and make it so that she could wear it the first time she was able to swing in the grape-vine cradle. Dear sister Eva, I often think how lovingly she planned that dress. It was to be a great surprise, and neither of us--aged twelve and nine--had developed a taste that showed the impropriety of dressing a baby in calico with figures as large as tea-saucers.

Father said he would try haying again in the morning; and, if no Indian came along to claim his dinner, he would be through with the business, he hoped. He never went, though; for, soon after daylight the next morning, mounted men came to town, telling that Indians were burning buildings and killing people ten miles away. They could not tell just how bad it was, as they had hurried away; but, later in the day, other messengers came with news of the worst Indian massacre the world had ever ~~known~~ known. "Every one killed from Birch Cooley to New Ulm, and the Indians on their way east as fast as they can kill!" cried the messenger.

Now was the time for us to regret the act of yesterday--not believing the Indian's story, and my poor father felt this. He at once told us to pack a few



a few things and we would go. We were hurrying to do his bidding as fast as we could. So paralyzed were we with fear that we made slow work of it. So did everyone who tried to flee that day. We were ready to go when there were loud words outside. A strange man was unharnessing the horses. Handing one to father, he mounted the other with the words: "Ho, there's no time to fool". So father came to us and said: "Pressed into service. I can not stay with you," and he tried to act as though it was <sup>a</sup> common occurrence to be pressed into Government service, and that it was a little matter leaving us to the mercies of the savages.

But it was poor acting; for we could see how he hated to leave us.

Every able-bodied man and every horse that was able to carry a man was pressed that day to scout the country and gather settlers into the towns and to fight Indians wherever they found them. Now all there was left were women, children, and old men. Of able-bodied men, there had been few at best, nearly all having enlisted and gone South.

Our town was situated on the very frontier, cut off from all town east by small bands of Indians, who were killing all stary settlers, while the large body was doing wholesale murder in the large settlements. New Ulm was thirty miles away, and on the east lay the Winnebago reservation, which no one dared to cross, not knowing what their attitude was toward the whites. What few men there were got together and deliberated on what was best to be done. They appointed a Lawyer Smithson, a man with only one arm, as superintendant of affairs. As I look at it now, it seems to me that there never was so great a coward lived before or since that memorable time. Perhaps he did the best he could with five hundred women and children to pilot to safety and nothing to do it with except a very few guns, some amunition, but lots of lead in the bar. He gave us the lead and some bullet-molds from the armory, and ordered us to run bullets for dear life, which we did for the rest of the day. Probably there was one hundred and fifty guns in the armory, no one but women and young boys to use them, and nothing more bullet-proof to get behind than ~~common~~ common plastered walls.

When night came, all hope had died. We never expected to see another dawn, as we knew that the woods were full of Indians all around us. What could we do?

I have often questioned since whether it was right to take every team of horses and every man and leave us in such a place as that. As it turned

out, it was best.

I remember a German woman came walking into town, carrying two little children, with two others who could hardly keep up walking. She had started with her team, her husband being away, and, when she got a mile from town, an officer came ~~up~~ up and took her horses, and she had to come on foot. She could not talk English very well, and it was hard to make her understand.

Our leader said, for the night, he thought it best for all to take care of themselves the best they could. He could suggest nothing for safety only this: a few families get together in houses as near the river as possible, and, with what arms they had, to do the best they could. "For my part", said he, "I don't expect to be alive in the morning."

Now, that was real consoling, especially to the children, who naturally think older people ought to know, particularly when that older one happens to be a lawyer. I lost confidence in lawyers then, a confidence I never could wholly regain, though the wisdom of ages has obliterated some of the prejudice caused by this one's cowardice.

By night, every one looked as though he had been through a severe sickness. Haggard and pale and hollow-eyed, the people wandered about, mothers with babes pressed close to their breasts, hardly a word spoken by any one.

It often comes to me how bravely my mother bore it. She would show no sign of weakness except when she looked at the baby. Terrible stories had come of how they tortured the poor little things; and, when she came where Dody was, she would cry in such a pitiful way. Then, I would take baby away out of her sight, and she would soon be herself again, trying to be brave and trying to keep others so.

That first night we went to the house of Solomon Welcome, who lived on the bank of the river, very near the mill-pond. No one slept except the young children. Before night, I had my plans laid; so had many others: if the Indians came, at the first war-hoop, tie the babies to us and jump into the mill-pond. The mothers had cords ready and would have carried out this plan, all but my mother. She said she could jump in herself, perhaps; but she couldn't take the baby. So I took her place, tied a cord around the child's waist, then slipped it around my own, so that, if the time came, all I would have to do would be to tighten it up, jump from the window, and it was only a few steps to the water's edge. There were three mothers who sat and kept that sad



vigil that night.

I was a child of a few words. The mothers talked in whispers and I heard one say: "Do you think Mary will do it?" and she came near to me and saw by the dim light what I had done.

She went back to them and I heard smothered sobs, very pitiful to hear; so each came to the window in order to see better. They did the same as I had done; they had had their cords in their pockets before. I think no one spoke again that night, only to hush the children.

It was a weary night. We could hear the distant boom of battle; for the work had begun at New Ulm and Fort Ridgley. We thought it even nearer.

Morning came at last. New messengers had come in the early morning, and just a look into their faces told as plainly as words the kind of news they had brought. A little later, it was thought best to try to get away farther east while the battle was on at Ridgley. The bulk of the Indians would be there, and we might be able at least to get out of the valley onto higher ground. Our condition could not be worse, whatever we did, and there is always a certain stimulus in action; it revives hope and starts the stagnant blood. Preparations were begun; stores were thrown open to people, who were free to take whatever they needed for immediate use, to eat or to wear.

I have heard it said there is a funny side to every thing but death and taxes. However, it seemed a few, in selecting from that stock of goods, save this adage the lie; for certainly the ludicrous side was very much in evidence. One woman took nine or ten Hoop-skirts, and, when asked what she intended to do with them, said: "My gals have never had real store hoops, nothing but grape-vine or barrel-hoops, and they've just cried for 'um. So now, while ~~there~~ I've got a chance, they are going to have a plenty. I'm tired and sick of sewing any old thing into skirts so they shan't go flabby; for my young ones are just as good as any one's, I'll just let you know."

Later her four girls appeared in the line, bedecked in enormous hoops; and one, about ten years old, had one skirt on over the outside, as the easiest way to carry it.

Another woman took a bolt of table-linen, saying: "I've been put down by tony neighbors long enough, and now, I'll show them fine Boston folks that I can set just as fine a table as they can, and have just as stylish company as they can." This woman lived in a dugout.

One old man took a codfish. Later, we learned he was from Maine. Another

took fourteen pounds of plug tobacco, while another possessed himself of a very tall silk hat, which he wore in great state, with overalls and in shirt-sleeves. Last, a woman carried away three mouse-traps. "We could not imagine what she was going to do with them, when a boy spoke up: She's going to catch Indians with them."

Well, when the teams were counted, there were twenty-five ox-teams and ten horses to about four hundred and fifty people to start from there. There would be room for the sick and old and children. Mother and the two little ones rode with a neighbor; the rest of us walked.

Each pedestrian had a light load of provisions. About three o'clock in the afternoon, we started with the hope of getting to Vernon before dark.

It was sultry day, and very dusty, so that we could not see ahead. A queer-looking sight, you would say. The ox-wagons came first, then the few horse-teams, and last the long line of those on foot, ranging in age from eight to eighty; for, when the old were able, they took turn walking. We children felt quite fearless; for we were going away somewhere out of danger, and the older ones, as we tramped along, would speak words of cheer to us. "When we get on that hill," said old Mr. Smith, "won't we give it to them! We have guns enough and bullets enough, and plenty of pluck to kill every infernal red."

Then, we children would display our store of bullets, the fruit of our labor that day, which we had tied around our necks in sacks or deposited in the depths of our pockets; and not one would give them up to others, than the possessor of a gun or to a leader, as we had been ordered.

If the ammunition was all in one wagon, there was danger of the gunners getting separated from that; so it was thought best for everyone to carry his own. Then, the men carrying guns could be supplied from anywhere in the ranks.

We felt quite proud of the part we were taking in this flight for freedom; and, as a good many carried powder-flasks, we took on the air and importance of portable magazines or armories, with pride I think, lent strength to our tired bodies before we had walked that ten miles to Vernon.

We forded the Blue Earth River, one and one-third miles from our destination, as the sun was sinking in the west; and, before we were ready to take up the line of march again, it was nearly dark. The rest of our journey lay through the dense woods.



We had not gone far before the sharp crack of a rifle broke on the stillness, then another and another. "Break ranks!" cried our leader. "Run for Vernon to the hotel on the hill!"

The ox-wagons were forsaken, and the children put on the ox-teams, which started off at great speed. No one could keep track of any one else, each one for himself. Away we went, up hill and down, over the little bridge, and now in sight of town, the hill, and a barricade. Oh, how we ran!

At last, the ones ahead entered the barricade, the sight of which lent wings to our feet. Finally, we were inside the walls.

Now that I had time to breath and think, where were Mother and the rest? In my fright, I had forsaken them. What a coward! I went out and found mother almost ready to faint, with the baby in her arms. Some friend helped her in. I went in search of others. Perhaps they were inside, though I feared not. At last, I found them. The man who brought them had not time to get them in or overlooked them. Taking five-year-old Willie in my arms, I led them back. Then, the big door was closed, and we felt safer than we had since the first news was received.

The barricade had been built roughly by the people of Vernon, the day and night before, around the tavern on a little hill. There were about eight hundred people inside those walls that night, counting the residents of Vernon and vicinity, who were already there. Those who were disabled, were put inside the house, and the remainder stayed outside.

The firing had ceased now, and there was no sound save the low murmur of voices, the occasional cry of a child, quickly hushed by its attendant, a fretful word from a sick person; outside, the low of tired cattle, the barking of dogs, the hoot of owls; but, in the direction whence the firing had come, all was still, though we knew that the Indians were near and that the firing was their work.

It was very dark now. Out under the pale stars, we could discern outlines of people. Inside the house, it was very dark. How I wished to get to my poor mother in those densely crowded rooms! Somewhere, I could hear little Dorothy cry and mother trying to hush her. Mother said afterwards that she stood up all night swinging baby back and forth in her arms, with hardly standing-room, and she could get no water to give her to drink. Once when she cried out louder than usual, a woman, Mrs. Smith, spoke out quite loud so all could hear: "I hope, if the Indians come, they will take that crying baby the first thing they do."

I am not a firm believer in retribution; but, when the morning came, it brought a messenger, with the awful news that two families three miles west of us were murdered. One family was that of a brother of this woman. The other was a family named Jacobs. Poor Mary Jacobs, a daughter, was nearly dead with consumption, unable to rise, so the Indians took her on her bed out into the yard and made her family stand and see her burned alive, they setting fire to her bed. Then, they killed the rest. Mr. Smith was shot; but his wife and boys and baby girl were tomahawked. Ten people were massacred near us, and it was this firing that we had heard.

Poor Mrs. Smith, when the news came to her, she fainted. Mother did all she could for her. We could see her sorrow for what she had said, ever after that, she helped tend our sick baby and was the best friend we had during those trying times.

By nine o'clock, we started again, going east. There was a larger crowd now, as every one in the stockade went, and it seems we got a chance to ride oftener than the day before.

As the day wore on and the weaker ones gave out, the chances were fewer. By night, my feet were blistered so that it was impossible to wear my shoes. Mary were in the same condition. We camped that night on the Maple River, and had gone twenty miles by urging the oxen and camping late. I think the intention was to keep right on; but a Mrs. Nelson, a neighbor, was taken sick. They carried her into a vacant house, deserted, as we had deserted our homes, and everything <sup>possible</sup> was done for her. There was no doctor with us, and she died before morning, in great agony. They dug a grave for her, lining it with leaves and small branches of trees, and we children got all the flowers we could find and layed over the boughs. Then, they laid her down to rest. "A low prayer, a dust to dust, ashes to ashes," and we turned away, leaving ~~her~~ our dear friend to rest beside the gently flowing river, beneath the waving grass and fragrant flowers, no more to listen to the war-alarms, no more to dread the Indians' tomahawk. There was a look on the faces of the older ones, especially the mothers, that I did not understand; but, since years of experience have come to me, and, after hearing more of the bloody work of the redskins, it is plainer to me--that look of grief so mixed with triumph. If they had said the word, "safe," it could not have been plainer.

We followed the Maple River all that day. The heat was intense. It seemed



as if the air was on fire. There was dreadful suffering in the van. There was no milk for the children, and the provisions had dwindled down to bread; for many had brought nothing along, especially those who had come in from the farms. The poor babies had to be fed on bread soaked in water, and our baby was too sick to eat that. Surely she could not live long so, and my grief was wild when I heard one woman say to another: "Mrs. Marston's baby won't live through another night if we can't find milk for it." I thought of Grandma Granger; she could do anything surely. I went in search of her, calling her name, and asking had any one seen her. No one had. So I ran back to our wagon, where I met Ellen, our doctor's daughter. They, too, wanted milk for their baby, and she had come to confer with me in regard to ways and means. "I am going to find a cow," she said. "Come on." Taking a pail, we ran down the road and spoke not a word until far enough from camp not to be heard and called back. Her father had been pressed into service, and they were in the same condition that nearly all the rest were.

"I'll tell you," said she, "the babies must have milk, and, in order to get it, we must call the cows."

Although she was two years younger than I, she had attained a position in my estimation that made me look on her as somewhat of a philosopher, partly, perhaps, because she was the doctor's daughter, and partly from the fact that she had been appointed leader of our children's prayer-meetings at home, after a very general revival of religion, which place she filled with much enthusiasm, and I think we always looked up to our spiritual leaders. However that was, I was very willing to do her bidding and had great confidence that something would come of it.

We looked across the river into the meadow, to be sure that no cows were there. Then, in the gathering darkness, we sped along over the road we had come, and, when we were far enough from camp so that there was no danger of being heard, we took turns in calling as loudly as we could: "Co, boss. Co, Boss -- Co, boss," and took no thought of the Indians.

At the supreme moment of excitement, if an Indian had appeared, we would have asked him if he had seen a cow.

At last, tired with calling and weary with discouragement, we sat down on a grassy knoll by the road and gave vent to tears. Anon, one of us would resume the call; but, through our tears, it sounded more like a wail of distress

than anything else, its echo dying away and merging into other sounds of the night.

Now, there was a different sound. Surely this was not a faint "mo-mo."

We called again. Yes, there came the same sound; it was an answering "mo-mo" and coming nearer. Soon, a white object appeared from the direction of the sound. We took to our heels and ran toward camp, looking over our shoulders at the sound of wheels wafted to us on the night-wind. We were braver now. Surely Indians didn't travel with buggies, drawn by white horses; and, retracing our steps, we came alongside a team and heard: "Hello! who is this?" Giving one leap, I was in Grandma Granger's arms. But the old man at her side was not her husband. She soon explained their delay. When the caravan, she said, got to old man Fosset's there wasn't room for him anywhere, and their team had been taken as ours had, and he was too feeble to walk a step; so Grandma Granger walked with the Fosset girls.

"I took the old gentleman in," she said, "and just as we started, I thought: 'well, we have got to go slow anyway; so we had better take the cow along,' and we tied her behind." On hearing this, I hugged and kissed the old lady so hard that she bade me get down and let her alone.

"You girls wait and show Grandpa and the girls to camp, and we'll go on," and she whipped up the old horse so fast that the cow had to dance along at a merry gate.

When we were alone, Ellen turned to me. "Mary," she said, "don't you think we had better hold a season of prayer?" Of course, I thought it best, and we knelt there on the grass, while she offered up the following prayer of Thanks: "O Lord God of Israel, we do thank Thee for this cow, and for the milk she will give us. We bless thee for making cows, anyway, and everything else. Bless this food to us and everybody else. Amen."

She was only ten years old, and the style of our prayer-meetings lingered with us.

"Now let us all rise and testify to the Lord's goodness," she ended.

As it was quite evident the "all" must apply to me, I rose with these very original remarks: "It gives me great pleasure to rise before this congregation and testify to the Lord's goodness, though, really, I don't think He is much of a Lord, if He goes and takes my little Dody, or lets



the Indians kill her. Of course, I am very thankful for the cow and hope I shall prove faithful to the end."

Years after, ~~with~~ Ellen and I would often laugh until the tears would come when we would recall this incident.

Mr. Granger and the girls soon came up with us, and, as he measured six feet and four inches in his stocking feet, it was hard for us to keep up with him.

On hearing the wagons, we noticed an unusual commotion. Something had happened. If they had missed us, we were saved any reproach by the existing excitement. The first one we met, was our leader, gun in hand.

"There is no use, girls," he said. "we shall all be killed; for a woman just came running into camp from Cobb River and says the Indians are burning and killing there."

Now that was where we expected to cross in the morning. The Cobb River was east, so our escape was cut off. My head swam. It grew pitch dark, and I knew no more until some one spoke in broken Norwegian. Ellen had fled to her mother, the leader was gone, and this man, Mr. Erickson, whose wagon was next to ours, came to my aid. "Mein Frea shall something do," and she brought water and revived me, so I crept inside the corral more dead than alive from fright.

That night, a terrific thunder-storm arose, accompanied by a drenching rain. It rained all night and until near noon of the following day.

All the protection we could secure, was to get under the wagons, and, before the rain was over, everyone was soaked to the skin.

How hungry we were! And it was poor excuse for food we had. We children went out and picked sheep-sorrel and wild-leeks, and ate them. We camped on the prairie and dared not go to the woods for berries, which were scarce, as nothing grew at that time of the year but wild gooseberries, though we would have been glad of them. Once we found some wild turnips, something like an artichoke, though not so good to eat. Later in the day, some men found a potato-patch. There were several bushels. They supplied the whole crowd with one apiece, which we ate raw, not daring to make fires late at night, and we were too hungry to wait till daylight.

The next morning a little infant died. They buried as the mother had ~~been~~ been, though with no boards to cover it and no flowers. We children sang a

song: "Lift your heads, ye golden gates,  
Let the little traveler in."

I think the faces of us children must of taken on the look that puzzled me on the faces of the older people when Mrs. Nelson died; but we were more candid, and said: "Safe, safe. The Indians can't get it now".

The father, bending low over the little mound, looked at us sadly and said a low, "Amen".

There was a three-mile stretch of prairie between us and the Cobb River, and, two or three times during the day, we saw smoke curling up through the trees, when another touch had been applied to some home or stack of hay. The woman who had come from there said she thought every home was deserted, the settlers having fled eastward. She was one of the brave ones who didn't believe there was danger until she saw the house next to hers burning. Then, she took her only child and fled to the woods and across the prairie, she knew not whither.

Night came on again. The wolf had entered the door, so to speak. We older ones were too frightened to eat or to feel the pangs of hunger; but the young children were crying from hunger. Every time the milk was given to the babies, it was pitiful to see the older children clamor for it and to hear their pitiful cries when they were passed by. I knew no hunger or anything else, only that we were to be murdered by the Indians. What were they feeding the babies for? Why didn't they let them die? For wouldn't it be better to lay them down among the fragrant leaves, as we had the little child that morning, than to be tortured to death?

We had heard the story of the scout at Vernon: how they had found near New Ulm six little babies nailed to a fence, head downward, and left to die, a cruel nail through each hand and foot. Some were not dead yet. At one place, a child was roasted alive in the oven to make the mother come out of hiding.

These things kept running through my mind, and I felt Grandma was doing wrong to feed Dody so well. Evidently, someone ought to see about it. I would go to her. No, my limbs were too weak to carry me. My head felt strange. All I could do was to sit there and think about it all.

Where was my father? Where was my sister Kate? She had gone twenty miles west of Garden City to teach school a month before. Doubtless, she had been killed or taken.



had been killed or taken prisoner.

Nothing had been heard from the scene of the battle. Even now, the Sioux might be on their way to where we were. Our flight out off, what was there for us? Not one in that crowd of eight hundred expected to escape.

It was nearly daybreak, the camp was quiet. I had slept only fitfully, hearing every sound. Now we were wide awake; for, over the prairie, came the sharp click of horses' hoofs, and, by the regular beat, we knew they were horsemen. Surely the Indians! We had orders to keep low if the tramp of horses or guns were heard; but my head ached, and I wanted to get where the cool air would blow on me; for it was very sultry. The situation was hardly plain to me. I must see if it was Indians.

Too dizzy to stand, I crawled out of the ring and off in the direction of hoof-beats, which were coming nearer.

"Friends, and not Indians," came a voice from the darkness.

Then the camp knew that our suspense was over. There would be news. One of the riders was Ellen's father, the Doctor, who had been pressed into service. They brought news that the Indians' powder had been wet by the terrible rain, and they had retreated into the woods surrounding the fort.

There was a good deal of killing on the outlying districts, which scouts were trying to hinder by getting the settlers into towns. They could do nothing for us except to tell us to wait for further news and to stand our ground as best we could. After distributing what rations they had among those who needed it most, they departed.

Some men, made bold by the news, went in search of food, and found some onions growing beyond a little patch of woods. We had a great feast; for, cooked with salt, they tasted fine. The next day, some turnips were found, which we ate raw. Later, the scout who was with the Doctor came back with the news that a company of soldiers had succeeded in getting through the Indians' lines into Fort Ridgley, with a small loss of men.

On being asked about the safety of our going back home, he said: "Surely you can not go east or south, and to stay here means starvation. But if you do, go back across the Winnébagos reservation, it will be safer there. The Sioux will not go only in large numbers, and you had better risk the Winnebagoes than the Sioux."

It was fifteen miles to the nearest line of the reservation. We felt

that, if that could be reached, the worst of the journey would be accomplished. It was thought best to keep together until the reservation was reached, then scatter as much as possible.

At dark we had gone five miles on the Indians' land. I will not linger to tell the particulars of our journey home. At dusk the second day, we all arrived at the top of Gerry Hill, at home. Here, we had orders to go quietly, each one alone, as much as possible, to crouch or crawl through the streets, and light no fires, nor candles after reaching our homes, as it was impossible to tell if there were lurking savages around. Now, this was a risky thing to do, if we had camped right there till morning, lives might have been spared. But hunger gnawed and the night was chill, and all longed for the protection of a roof; so they all went off in the darkness to seek shelter in some house in the village.

Mother brought Dody to me, whispering: "Here, Mary; she won't cry if you whisper."

You see I had taught her to whisper when Mother would have a headache; and, ever after that, if I whispered to her, she wouldn't speak loud or cry.

So I took her, saying: "Come, Dody, let's go by-by Pig-back," and that was her delight.

Picking my way down the long hill to the river, I waded across, cutting my feet cruelly on the stones. Then, I dared not stand upright and could not crouch with the weight on my shoulders; so, getting down on hands and knees, I crawled the half mile to our house, stopping to rest once and a while.

Near the school-house, there were loud cries. A man was attempting to drive through town against orders. I crawled nearer, as a little child cried: "O papa, don't go! The Indians will kill us!" Two men were trying to stop the man. It was the Erricson family, who camped next to us. He was bound to go home, and he did go; for, with his long whip, he would strike the men who tried to hold his horses. "In Norway, the folks ain't no fools," I heard him say, and they had to let him go.

We found a feather bed in the door-yard, and Mother and I got the children to bed; but we slept little, as we were very hungry now, and longed for morning, when we could cook.

The home of the Erricsons was two and a half miles northwest of Garden City. A small party of red devils had killed them that morning near daylight. They killed all the family except the mother and a thirteen-year-old



daughter, whom they took prisoner.

The cries of the little boy begging his father to stay rang in my head for weeks. Poor little child! We had no pity for the foolish father.

I might tell how we suffered with fear the next six weeks, until a company of soldiers came up from the south to protect us.

Many years have passed since then, and the sunshine of peace and prosperity now reign in the little village. In place of the old armory, now stands the Academy. The children pass in and out, little thinking of the tragedies that were enacted there so many years ago.

The writer of this little story hopes that it will find its way ~~into~~ to some of the descendants of those brave men and women who fought to bring civilization into one of the grandest States in the Union.

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