

istration, I have not written a single word to Mr. Adams, neither have I received from him anything except the despatches which we have seen in public papers; I do not know where his other sources of information are from. But I am persuaded that as a reasonable and honest man and as a good American he cannot act otherwise. I myself should be perhaps not less emphatic in his place in words, but certainly I would prepare not any less steadily and energetically.'

"The keen and noble words of this man filled my heart with great respect and emotion.¹

"In the evening Miss Custis sang and

played on the harpsichord to me for the last time. Next day (June 14) I was awakened before sunrise. Once more I walked around the green woods of Mount Vernon and glanced my last upon the wide, open view, on the waters of the Potomac. At six o'clock, more with silence than with words expressing my gratefulness for the hospitality and my sorrow on leaving that home, I bade farewell to General Washington and his worthy wife and the beautiful Miss Custis. In the company of Mr. and Mrs. Law, as well as their pretty baby daughter, we went back through Alexandria to Georgetown."

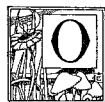


A DESERT ROMANCE.

A TALE OF THE SOUTHWEST.

BY FREDERIC REMINGTON.

WITH PICTURES BY THE AUTHOR.



CHOA water-hole is in no way remarkable, and not regarded as such by people in Arizona, but if the waters could speak and tell about what happened at their sides in the long ago, men would listen. Three generations of white men and Mexicans have fought Apaches since then, and one generation of Apaches has walked in the middle of the big road. There have been stories enough in the meantime. Men have struggled in crowds over similar water-holes throughout the Southwest, and Ochoa has been forgotten.

With the coming of the great war, the regular soldiers were withdrawn to partici-

pate in it. The Apaches redoubled their hostilities. This was in Cochise's day, and he managed well for them.

Volunteers entered the United States service to take the places of the departed soldiers, to hold the country, and to protect the wagon-trains then going to California. A regiment of New Mexican volunteer infantry, Colonel Simms commanding, was stationed at Fort Bowie, and was mostly engaged in escorting the caravans. There was a military order that such trains should leave the posts only on the 1st of every month, when the regular soldier escort was available; but in enterprising self-reliance the pioneers often violated this.

One lazy summer day a Texan came plod-

¹ Washington, as is known, belonged to the party which was opposed to France, considering the principles of the French Revolution as too far advanced. The French minister Genet was dismissed during his administration, which gave rise to difficulties that continued during all the time of Adams's administration, and increased through his inability to remove them. It seems that it ought to be put to the credit of Jefferson's and Kosciuszko's services for the progress of freedom in the United States to have removed this danger. It was very likely done through Kosciuszko's personal influence upon the French Directory, through his representation of the overwhelming probability of the election of Jefferson,

who was known as a friend of France and of freedom. We find a reference to it in Jefferson's letter to Kosciuszko, dated February 21, 1799:

"Mr. Gerry's communications, with other informations, prove that France is sincere in her wishes for reconciliation. If we are left in peace, I have no doubt the wonderful turn in the public opinion now manifestly taking place [i.e., from Federalists to Democrats] and rapidly increasing will in the course of this summer become so universal and so weighty that friendship abroad and freedom at home will be firmly established through the influence and the constitutional powers of the people at large."

ding through the dust to the sentries at Bowie. He was in a state of great exhaustion, and when taken to Colonel Simms he reported that he had escaped from a Texas emigrant caravan, which was rounded up by Apaches at Ochoa water-hole, about forty-five miles east and south of this point, and that they were making a fight against great odds. If help was not quickly forthcoming, it was death for all.

Immediately the colonel took what of his command could be spared, together with a small cavallard of little hospital mules, and began the relief march.

These Americo-Mexican soldiers were mountain men and strong travelers. All during the remainder of the day they shuffled along in the dust—brown, blue-bearded men, shod in buckskin moccasins, of their own construction, and they made the colonel's pony trot. There are many hills and many plains in forty-five miles, and infantry is not a desert whirlwind. Night settled over the command, but still they shuffled on. Near midnight they could hear the slumping of occasional guns. The colonel well knew the Apache fear of the demons of the night, who hide under the water and earth by day, but who stalk at dark, and are more to be feared than white men, by long odds. He knew that they did not go about except under stress, and he had good hope of getting into the beleaguered wagons without much difficulty. He knew his problem would come afterward.

Guided by the guns, which the white men fired more to show their wakefulness than in hopes of scoring, the two companies trod softly in their buckskin foot-gear; but the mules struck flinty hard against the wayside rocks, and then one split the night in friendly answer to the smell of a brother mule somewhere out in the dark. But no opposition was encountered until occasional bullets came whistling over there from the wagons. "Hold on, pardners!" shouted the colonel. "This is United States infantry; let us in."

This noise located the command, and bullets and arrows began to seek them out in the darkness from all sides, but with a rush they passed into the packed wagons and dropped behind the intrenchments. The poor people of the train were greatly cheered by the advent. By morning the colonel had looked about him, and he saw a job of unusual proportions before him. They were poor emigrants from Texas, their wagons piled with common household goods, and with an unusual proportion of women and

children—dry, care-worn women in calico shifts, which the clinging wind blew close about their wasted and unlovely frames. In the center stood a few skeletons of horses, destined to be eaten, and which had had no grass since the train had been rounded up. What hairy, unkempt men there were lay behind their bales, long rifles in hand, bullets and powder-horns by their elbows—tough customers, who would "sell out" dearly.

Presently a very old man came to the colonel, saying he was the head person of the train, and he proposed that the officer come to his wagon, where they could talk over the situation seriously.

The colonel was at the time a young man. In his youth he had been afflicted with desk-work in the great city of New York. He could not see anything ahead but a life of absolute regularity, which he did not view complacently. He was book-taught along the lines of construction and engineering, which in those days meant anything from a smoke-house to a covered bridge. Viewed through the mist of years he must, in his day, have been a fair prospect for feminine eyes. The West was fast eating up the strong young men of the East, and Simms found his way with the rest to the uttermost point of the unknown lands, and became a vagrant in Taos. Still, a man who knew as much as he did, and who could get as far West as Taos, did not have to starve to death. There were merchants there who knew the fords of the Cimarron and the dry crossings of the Mexican custom-house, but who kept their accounts by cutting notches on a stick. So Simms got more writing to do, a thing he had tried to escape by the long voyage and muling of previous days. Being young, his gaze lingered on the long-haired, buckskin men of Taos, and he made endeavor to exchange the quill for the rifle and the trap, and shortly became a protégé of Kit Carson. He succeeded so well that in the long years since he has been no nearer a pen than a sheep-corral would be.

He succumbed to his Mexican surroundings, and was popular with all. When the great war came he remembered New York and declared for the Union. Thus by hooks which I do not understand he became a colonel in the situation where I have found him.

As he approached the old man's part of the train he observed that he was richer and much better equipped than his fellows. He had a tremendous Conestoga and a spring-wagon of fine workmanship. His family consisted of a son with a wife and children, and

a daughter who looked at the colonel until his mind was completely diverted from the seriousness of their present position. The raw, wind-blown, calico women had not seemed feminine to the officer, but this young person began to make his eyes pop, and his blood go charging about in his veins.

She admitted to the officer in a soft Southern voice that she was very glad he had gotten in, and the colonel said he was very glad indeed that he was there, which statement had only become a fact in the last few seconds. Still, a bullet-and-arrow-swept wagon-park was quite as compelling as the eyes of Old Man Hall's daughter, for that was her father's name. The colonel had a new interest in rescue. The people of the train were quite demoralized, and had no reasonable method to suggest as a way out, so the colonel finally said: "Mr. Hall, we must now burn all this property to prevent its falling into the hands of the enemy. I will take my hospital mules and hook them up to a couple of your lightest wagons, on which will be loaded nothing but provisions, old women, small children, and what wounded we have, and then we will fight our way back to the post."

Mr. Hall pleaded against this destruction, but the officer said that the numbers of the investing enemy made it imperative that they go out as lightly as possible, as he had no more mules and could spare no more men to guard the women. It seemed hard to burn all that these people had in the world, but he knew of no other way to save their lives.

He then had two wagons drawn out, and after a tussle got his unbroken pack-mules hooked up. Then the other stuff was piled into the remaining wagons and set on fire. The soldiers waited until the flames were beyond human control, when they sprang forward in skirmish formation, followed out of bow-shot by the wagons and women. A rear-guard covered the retreat.

As the movement began, Colonel Simms led his pony up to the daughter of Mr. Hall, and assisted her to mount. Simms was a young man, and it seemed to him more important that a beautiful young woman

should be saved than some sisters who carried the curbs and collar-marks of an almost spent existence. This may not be true judgment, but Simms had little time to ponder the matter.

Now the demons of the Arizona deserts began to show themselves among the brush and rocks, and they came in boldly, firing from points of vantage at the moving troops. A few went down, but the discipline told, and the soldiers could not be checked.

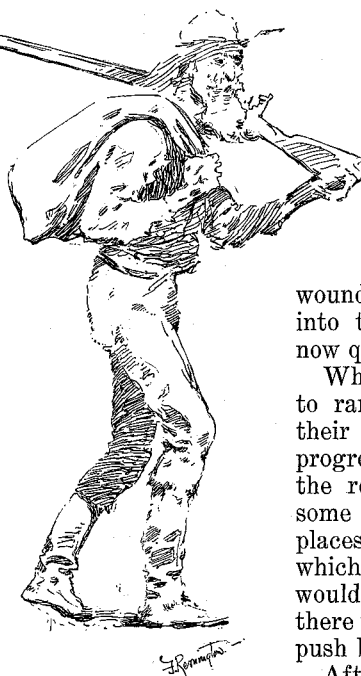
Scurrying in front ran the Indians, on foot and on horseback. They had few guns, and their arrows were not equal to the muzzle-loading muskets of the troops or the long rifles of the Texans. A few of the savages were hit, and this caused them to draw off. The

wounded soldiers were loaded into the wagons, which were now quite full.

What with having to stop to ram the charges home in their guns, and with the slow progress of the women on foot, the retreat dragged its toilsome way. There were bad places in the back trail—places which Simms knew the Apaches would take advantage of; but there was nothing for it but to push boldly on.

After a couple of hours the command drew near a line of bluffs up which the trail led.

There was no way around. Simms halted his wagons at the foot of the coulée leading up, and sent his men in extended order on each flank to carry the line of the crest, intending to take the wagons and women up afterward. This they did after encountering some opposition, and when just in the act of reaching the level of the mesa, a score of mounted warriors dashed at the line and rode over it, down the coulée in a whirl of dust, and toward the women, who had no protection which could reach them in time to save. The men on the hill, regardless of the enemy in front, turned their muskets on the flying bunch, as did the rear-guard; but it was over with a shot, and the soldiers saw the warriors ride over the women and wagons, twanging their bows and thrusting with their lances. The mules turned, tangled in their harness, and lay kicking in a con-



THE OLD TEXAN.

fused heap. The women ran scurrying about like quail. The cloud of dust and racing-ponies passed on, receiving the fire of the rear-guard again, and were out of range. With them went the colonel's horse and Old Man Hall's daughter, stampeded—killed by the colonel's kindness. No arm could save.

When the dust settled, several women and children lay on the sand, shot with arrows or cut by lances. The mules were rearranged, the harness was patched, and the retreat was resumed.

Old Man Hall was hysterical with tears, Simms was dumb beyond speech, as they marched along beside the clanking wagons, with their moaning loads. On all sides strode the gallant New Mexicans and Texans, shooting and loading. The Apaches, encouraged by success, plied them with arrows and shots from every *arroyo* which afforded safe retreat. The colonel ran from one part of the line to another, directing and encouraging his men. By afternoon every one was much exhausted, Colonel Simms particularly so from his constant activity and distress of mind.

Old Man Hall had calmed down and had become taciturn, except for the working of his hollow jaws as he talked to himself. Going to the rear wagon, he took out a cotton bag, which he swung across his shoulders, and trudged along with it. "Some valuables he cherishes," thought Simms; "but to add such weight in this trying march seems strange. Demented by the loss of his daughter, probably."

Slower and slower moved the old man with his sack, falling back until he mingled with the rear-guard, and then even dropping behind that.

"Come, come, camarado, stir yourself! The Indios are just behind!" they called.

"I don't care," he replied.

"Throw away the sack. Why do you carry that? Is your sack more precious than your blood?"

"Yes, it is now," he said almost cheerfully.

"What does it contain, señor? Paper money, no doubt."

"No; it is full of pinole and pemochie and

strychnine—for the wolves behind us"; and Old Man Hall trod slower and slower, and was two hundred yards in the rear before Simms noticed him.

"Halt! We will go back and get the old man, and have him put in the wagons," he said.

The soldiers turned to go back, when up from the brush sprang the Apaches, and Hall was soon dead.

"Come on; it is of no use now," signaled Simms.

"The old man is loco," said a soldier. "He had a sack of poisoned meal over his shoulder. He is after revenge."

"Poisoned meal!"

"Yes, señor; that is as he said," replied the soldier.

But under the stress Simms's little column toiled along until dusk, when they were forced to stop and intrench in a dry camp. There was no water in those parts, and the Indians had no doubt drawn off for the night—gone to the Ochoa spring, it was thought, and would be back in the morning. By early dawn the retreat started on its weary way, but no Indians appeared to oppose them. All day long they struggled on, and that night camped in the post. They had been delivered from their peril: at little cost, when the situation was considered, so men said—all except Hall's son and the young commanding officer. The caravan had violated the order of the authorities in traveling

without escort, and had been punished. Old Man Hall, who had been responsible, was dead, so the matter rested.

II.

THE people who had so fortunately come within the protecting lines of Bowie were quite exhausted after their almost ceaseless exertions of the last few days, and had disposed themselves as best they could to make up their lost sleep. Some of the soldiers squeezed the *tequila* pigskin pretty hard, but they had earned it.

Colonel Simms tossed uneasily on his rude bunk for some time before he gained oblivion. Something in the whole thing had been incomplete. He had had soldiers killed and



COLONEL SIMMS.

soldiers wounded—that was a part of the game. Some emigrants had suffered—that could not be helped. It was the good-looking girl, gone swirling off into the unknown desert, in the dust of the Apache charge, which was the rift in the young colonel's lute, and he had begun to admit it to himself. What could be done? What was his duty in the matter? His inclination was to conduct an expedition in quest of her. He knew his Apache so well that hope died out of his mind. Even if she could get away on the colonel's swift pony, an Apache on foot could trail and run down a horse. But the tired body and mind gave over, and he knew nothing until the morning light opened his eyes. Sitting opposite him on a chair was the brother of Hall's daughter, with his chin on his hands, and his long rifle across his knees.

"Good morning, Mr. Hall," he said.

"Mornin', colonel," replied Hall. "Ah 'm goin' back after my sista, colonel. Ah 'm goin' back, leastwise, to whar she was."

"So am I," spoke up Simms, like a flash, as he swung himself to his feet, "and right now." With men like Simms to think was to act.

He was refreshed by his rest, and was soon bustling about the post. The day before two companies of his regiment had come into the post on escort duty. They were pony-mounted, despite their being infantry, and were fresh. These he soon rationed, and within an hour's time had them trailing through the dust on the back track. Hall's sad-faced son rode by his side, saying little, for both felt they could not cheer each other with words.

Late in the afternoon, when coming across the mesa which ended at the bluff where the misfortune had overtaken the girl, they made out mounted figures at the very point where they had brought up the wagons.

"If they are Apaches, we will give them a fight now; they won't have to chase us to get it, either," said the colonel, as he broke his command into a slow lope.

Steadily the two parties drew together. More of the enemy showed above the bluffs. They formed in line, which was a rather singular thing for Apaches to do, and presently a horseman drew out, bearing a white flag on a lance.

"Colonel, those are lanceros of Mexico," spoke up the orderly sergeant behind the officer.

"Yes, yes; I can see now," observed Simms. "Trot! March! Come on, bugler." Saying which, the colonel, attended by his man, rode

forth rapidly, a white handkerchief flapping in his right hand.

So they proved to be, the irregular soldiers of distracted Mexico—wild riders, gorgeous in terra-cotta buckskin and red serapes, bent on visiting punishment on Apache Indians who ravaged the valleys of Chihuahua and Sonora, and having, therefore, much in common with the soldiers on this side of the line.

In those days the desert scamperers d'd not know just where the international boundary was. It existed on paper, no doubt, but the bleak sand stretches gave no sign. Every man or body of men owned the land as far on each side of them as their rifles would carry, and no farther. Both Mexico and the United States were in mighty struggles for their lives. Neither busied themselves about a few miles of cactus, or the rally and push of their brown-skinned irregulars.

Shortly the comandante of the lancers came up. He was a gay fellow with a brown face, set with liquid black eyes, and togged out in the rainbows of his national costume. Putting out his hand to Simms, he spoke: "Buenos dios, señor. Is it you who have killed all the Apaches?"

"Si, capitan," replied Simms. "I had the honor to command, but I do not think we killed so many."

"Madre de Dios! you call that not many! Ha, you are a terrible soldier!" And the lancer slapped him on the back. "I saw the battle-ground; I rode among the bodies as far as I could make my horse go. I saw all the burned wagons, and the Indios lying around the water-hole, as thick as flies in a kitchen. It smelled so that I did not stop to count them; they were as many as a flock of sheep. I congratulate you. Did you lose many *soldados*?"

"No, capitan. I did not lose many men, but I lost a woman—just down below the bluffs. Did you see her body there?"

In truth, the poisoned sack of meal had come only slowly into Simms's mind when he thought of the dead Indians about the water-hole, and he did not care to enlighten a foreign officer in a matter so difficult of explanation.

"No," answered the Mexican; "they were all naked Apaches—I made note of that. We looked for others, but there were none. You are a terrible soldier. I congratulate you; you will have promotion, and go to the great war in the East."

"Oh, it is nothing, I assure you," grunted Simms, as he trotted off to get away from

his gruesome glories. "Come, señor; we will look at the girl's trail below the bluffs."

"Was she mounted well?" inquired the lancer, full of a horseman's instinct.

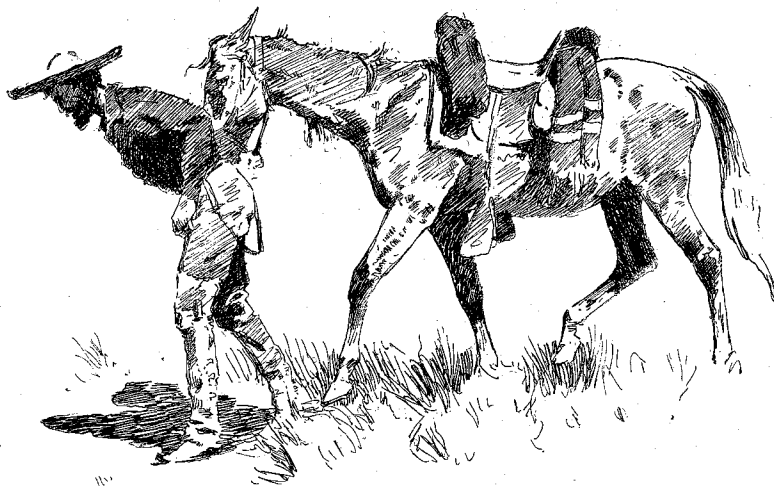
"Yes; she had a fast horse, but he had been ridden far. He was my own."

"She was of your family?"

"No, no; she was coming through with the wagon-train from Texas."

flanker who waved his hat, and toward him rode the officer. Nearing, he recognized the man, who was a half-breed American, well known as a trailer of great repute.

"Colonel, here are the prints of the Apache ponies; I know by their bare feet and the rawhide shoes. Your pony is not among them; he was shod with iron. These ponies were very tired; they step short and stumble



THE TRAILER.

"She was a beautiful señorita?" ventured the lancer, with a sharp smile.

"Prettiest filly from Taos to New Orleans," spoke our gallant, in his enthusiasm, and then they dismounted at the wagon place, which was all beaten up with the hoof-marks of the lancers.

The best trailers among the mountain men of the command were soon on the track of the horsed Indians who had driven off the girl, and this they ran until quite dark. The enemy had gone in full flight.

Simms made his camp, and the Mexican lancer pushed on ahead, saying he would join him again in the morning.

By early light Simms had his troops in motion; but the trail was stamped up by the lancer command, and he could follow only this. He was in a broken country now, and rode far before he began to speculate on seeing nothing of his friend of yesterday. Some three hours later he did find evidence that the lancers had made a halt, but without unsaddling. Simms had run the trail carefully, and had his flankers out on the sides, to see that no one cut out from the grand track. Soon he was summoned by a

among the bushes," said the man, as he and the colonel rode along, bending over in their saddles. "See that spot on the ground. They had run the stomachs out of their horses. They stopped here and talked. They dismounted." Both the colonel and the trailer did the same. "There is no print of her shoe here," the trailer continued slowly. "See where they walked away from their horses and stood here in a bunch. They were talking. Here comes a pony-track back to them from the direction of the chase. This pony was very tired. His rider dismounted here and walked to the group. The moccasins all point toward the way they were running. They were talking. Colonel, the girl got away. I may be mistaken, but that is what the trail says. All the Indians are here. I have counted twenty ponies."

There is nothing to do in such places but believe the trail. It often lies, but in the desert it is the only thing which speaks. Taking his command again, the colonel pushed on as rapidly as he dared, while feeling that his flanking trailers could do their work. They found no more sign of the Indians, who had evidently given up the

chase, thinking, probably, the wagons more important than the fast horse-girl.

All day long they progressed, the colonel wondering why he did not come up with the lancer command. Why was the Mexican in such a hurry? He did not relish the idea of this man's rescuing the girl, if that was to be fate. Long he speculated, but time brought only more doubt and suspicion. At places the Mexican had halted, and the ground was tramped up in a most meaningless way. Again the trailer came to him.

"Colonel," he said, "these people were blinding a trail. It's again' nature for humans to walk around like goats in a corral. I think they have found where the girl stopped, but I can't run my eye on her heel."

The colonel thought hard, and being young, he reached a rapid conclusion. He would follow the Mexican to the end of his road. Detailing a small body of picked trailers to follow slowly on the sides of the main trail, he mounted, and pushed on at a lope. Darkness found the Mexicans still going. While his command stopped to feed and rest, the colonel speculated. He knew the Mexicans had a long start; it was unlikely that they would stop. He thought, "I will sleep my command until midnight, and follow the trail by torch-light. I will gain the advantage they did over me last night."

After much searching on the mountain-side in the gloom, some of his men found a pitch-tree, which they felled and slivered. At the appointed time the command resumed its weary way. Three hundred yards ahead, a small party followed the trail by their firelight. This would prevent, in a measure, an ambush. A blanket was carried ahead of the flaming stick—a poor protection from the eyes of the night, but a possible one. So, until the sky grayed in the east, the soldiers stumbled bitterly ahead on their relentless errand. It was a small gain, perhaps, but it made for success. When the torches were thrown away, they grazed for an hour, knowing that horses do not usually do that in the dark, and by day they had watered and were off. The trail led straight for Mexico.

Whatever enthusiasm the poor soldiers and horses might have, we know not, but there was a fuel added to Simms's desire, quite as great as either the pretty face of Adele Hall or his chivalric purpose kindled—it was jealousy of the lancer officer. When hate and love combine against a young man's brain, there is nothing left but the under jaw and the back of his head to guide him. The spurs chugged hard on the lathering sides,

as the pursuers bore up on the flying wake of the treacherous man from Mexico.

At an eating halt which the lancers made, the trailers sought carefully until, standing up together, they yelled for the colonel. He came up, and pointing at the ground, one of the men said: "Señor, there is the heel of the white girl."

Bending over, Simms gazed down on the telltale footprint, saying, "Yes, yes; it is her shoe—I even remember that. Is it not so, Hall?" The girl's brother, upon examination, pronounced it to be his sister's shoe. Simms said: "We will follow that lancer to hell. Come on."

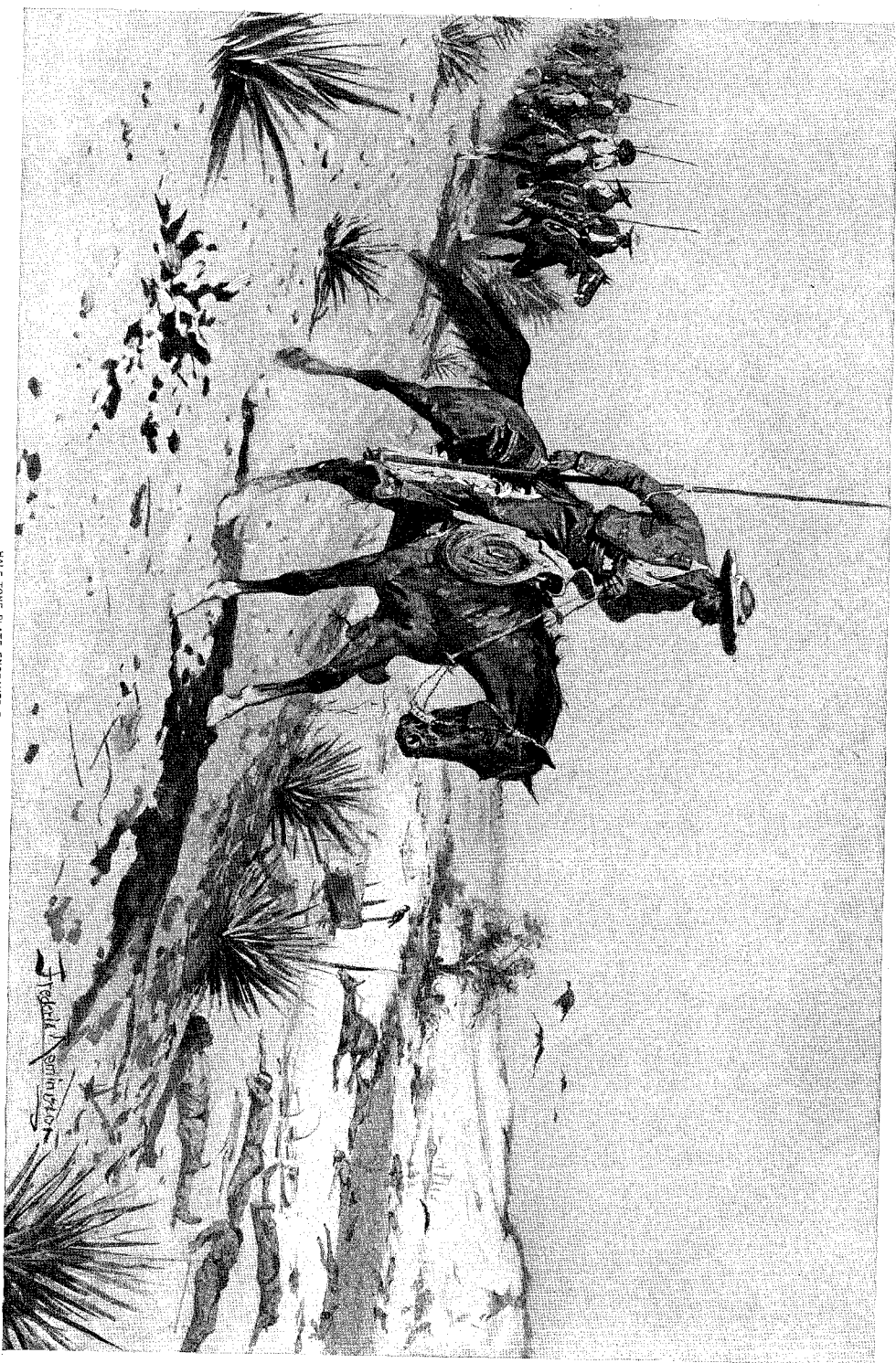
There were, in those days, few signs of human habitation in those parts. The hand of the Apache lay heavy on the land. The girl-stealer was making in the direction of Magdalena, the first important Mexican town en route. This was a promise of trouble for Simms. Magdalena was populous and garrisoned. International complications loomed across Simms's vision, but they grew white in the shadow of the girl, and, come what would, he spurred along, the brother always eagerly at his side.

By mid-afternoon they came across a dead horse, and soon another. The flat-soled tegua-tracks of the dismounted riders ran along in the trail of the lancer troop. The country was broken, yet at times they could see long distances ahead. Shortly the trailers found the tegua-prints turned away from the line of march, and men followed, and found their owners hidden in the mesquit-bush. These, being captured, were brought to Colonel Simms, who dismounted and interrogated them, as he gently tapped their lips with the muzzle of his six-shooter to break their silence. He developed that the enemy was not far ahead; that the girl was with them, always riding beside Don Gomez, who was making for Magdalena. Further, the prisoners said they had found the white woman asleep beside her worn-out pony, which they had taken aside and killed.

This was enough. The chase must be pushed to a blistering finish. As they drew ahead they passed exhausted horses standing head down by the wayside, their riders being in hiding, doubtless. On a rise they saw the troop of lancers jogging along in their own dust, not three hundred yards ahead, while in the valley, a few miles beyond, was an adobe ranch, for which they were making. With a yell from the United States soldiers, they broke into the best run to be got out of their jaded ponies. The enemy, too,

IN THE DESERT--DON GOMEZ AND HIS LANCERS AT THE OCHOA SPRING.

HALF-TONE PLATE ENGRAVED BY H. C. MERRILL.



spurred up, but they were even more fatigued, and it was not many minutes before the guns began to go. A few of the enemy's horses and men fell out, wounded, and were ridden over, while the rest fled in wild panic. They had doubtless thought themselves safe from pursuit, and they would have been, had their booty been anything less than Adele Hall. Many lancers turned and surrendered when the tired horses could go no more. The commands tailed out in a long line, the better horses of the Americans mixing gradually with the weaker ones of the lancers. Still well ahead rode Don Gomez and his reluctant companion. These drew up to the blue walls of the long adobe ranch (for it was now sunset), and were given admittance, some dozen men in all, when the heavy doors were swung together and barred, just as the American advance drew rein at their portals.

Finally having all collected,—both Americans and prisoners,—and having carefully posted his men around the ranch, Simms yelled in Spanish: "Come to the wall, Capitan Gomez. I am Colonel Simms. I would speak a word with you." Again he spoke to the walls, now blackening against the failing light. From behind the adobe battlements came excited voices; the inhabitants were trying to digest the meaning of this violence, but no one answered Simms.

Turning, he gave an order. Instantly a volley of musketry started from near him, and roared about the quiet ranch.

Once more Simms raised his angry voice: "Will you come on the roof and talk to me now, Don Gomez?"

At length a voice came back, saying, "There are no windows; if I come on the roof, I will be shot."

"No, you will not be shot, but you must come on the roof."

"You promise me that?"

"Yes, I promise you that no soldier of

mine will shoot at you," and in loud military language Simms so gave the order.

Slowly a dark figure rose against the greenish light of the west.

"Don Gomez, I ask you truly, has one hair of that girl's head been harmed? If you lie to me, I swear on the cross to burn you alive."

"I swear, my colonel; she is the same as when you last saw her. I did not know you were coming. I was trying to save her. I was taking her to my commander at Magdalena."

"You lie!" was the quick response from Simms, followed by a whip-like snap peculiar to the long frontier rifles. The dark form of Don Gomez turned half round, and dropped heavily out of sight on the flat roof of the adobe.

"Who fired that shot?" roared Simms.

"Ah did, sah," said Hall, stepping up to the colonel and handing him his rifle. "Ah am not one of yer soldiers, sah—I am Adele Hall's brother, and Mr. Gomez is dead. You can do what you please about it, sah."

While this conversation was making its quick way, a woman sprang up through the hole in the roof, and ran to the edge, crying: "Help, Colonel Simms! Oh, help me!"

"Cover the roof with your guns, men," ordered Simms, and both he and the brother sprang forward, followed by a general closing in of the men on the building.

As they gained the side wall, Simms spoke. "Don't be scared, Miss Hall; jump. I will catch you," and he extended his arms. The girl stepped over the foot-high battlement, grasped one of the projecting roof-timbers, and dropped safely into Colonel Simms's arms. She was sobbing, and Simms carried her away from the place. She was holding tightly to the neck of her rescuer, with her face buried in a week's growth of beard.



THE ADOBE RANCH WHERE THE FIGHT TOOK PLACE.

"A GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE."

A STORY OF OKLAHOMA.

BY J. W. PIERCY.

WITH PICTURES BY B. MARTIN JUSTICE.

DIGDALE'S specialty was town sites. Given a particular quarter-section, whether actually accessible or not, he could cover it with a thriving city with accuracy and despatch, locating its public buildings, specifying its industries, and indicating all its valuable franchises, not yet given over to greedy corporations without compensation. He had a regular plan of procedure in his creative work, and practice had made him proficient. Having pinned the center of his metropolis, the public square, to his office table, he led off the streets toward the four cardinal points, named the main thoroughfares after the Presidents or the States, and the groundwork was done. To erect a hotel with electric lights and elevators that might impress visiting capitalists, to build churches and school-houses that would provide the moral and educational atmosphere, and to construct a court-house and jail that would stamp upon the place the character of a county-seat, were the simple and easy technic of his art.

The business in which Digdale was at present engaged, however, presented new and perplexing features. In his whole career he could not recall anything like it. In planning, as he believed, the future capital of Oklahoma, he had found himself

at the very beginning without a working basis. The congressional act opening the Territory to settlement had been passed in such haste—it being a "rider" to another bill—that no laws had been framed to meet the needs of the new country.

Digdale had called in Dabney, and they had worked hard over the problem. In their personalities these two men were in striking contrast, but they were complements of each other in conducting real-estate ventures. Digdale possessed the dominating mind. Of slight form and mild manner, he met your gaze directly, and took your hand firmly, but without effusive interest. He spoke softly and agreed with you on all subjects of ordinary conversation, but on more vital matters he took issue, if need be, delicately and insinuatingly, but none the less stubbornly, a stare from his cold gray eyes emphasizing his remarks, while long, slender fingers stroked his well-trimmed beard. But to resolute purpose he added craftiness. He talked compromise when the case seemed to demand it, or assumed the rôle of peacemaker,

but in the end he yielded little and secured much. He was a man of considerable self-acquired education, and was well informed about things both past and present, but he wore a



HALF-TONE PLATE ENGRAVED BY R. C. COLLINS.

A HOME-SEEKER.