

THE INTERFERENCE OF BILL GLASS

By Franklin Welles Calkins, in the "Youth's Companion."

We were once talking in a reminiscent way with Kelly, the storekeeper, of traders and trappers of the old regime whom one or both of us had personally known. Kelly's favorite among the free trappers, hundreds of whom had traded with him, was unquestionably the redoubtable Bill Glass,—of historic mention in Northwestern annals,—who had been known as Iron Hand among the Sioux.

'I saw Bill for the first time in '62,' he said. 'I was then clerking for Le Beau, and Bill came down the Cannon Ball with his winter's catch. He must have been about fifty then, but he was in his prime—the most active and the strongest man I ever knew.'

'He was tall and slim, and dropped a little in the shoulders, and when he moved about the storeroom he reminded me of a tiger in a cage. His yellow buckskin suit and sandy complexion helped the impression, I reckon. He wore his hair and beard close-cropped. He said he had determined that no Indian should ever raise his hair, and so he raised no crop for them to harvest. That was his joke, and he was as full of humor as an egg is of meat.'

'Bill took quite a fancy to me, and when there was no trade he would sit on my counter, with his long legs dangling, and tell me stories and funny jokes. He seldom spoke of himself or his own doings, and when he did was inclined to underrate himself and make light of his experiences.'

'He might have induced me to believe that his courage and generosity had been much overestimated if I hadn't finally seen him to do a thing which I believe no other man would have dared try to do.'

'This was in the summer of '63. Bill had come in from the Little Missouri, and was camping with us when a party of Rees came down from below Berthold. These numbered a half-dozen or so of men, three or four women and several children. They camped near us, and traded a few skins each day in their slow fashions.'

'Then one morning a war party of Cheyennes came by, and there was trouble. It was customary for the hostiles to meet at the trading posts in peace. They generally consented to do this for the sake of protection in trade, a kind of commercial amnesty.'

'But these Cheyennes had lately lost a big bunch of ponies, which they knew some Rees had stolen. So, happening to find a small party with us, they camped and assumed a threatening manner. The Cheyennes had the ugliest temper of all our tribes up here.'

'Well, the Rees were badly scared, and they hung close around the store until noon, when they broke camp in a hurry, and moved across the river.'

'I had not paid much attention to matters outside the store, for Le Beau was away, and I did not wish to become involved in quarrels. About an hour after dinner Bill Glass came over from his tent and stood in my open door, I remember well how he looked. He had his hands behind him and leaned against the jamb, chewing wild-oat straws and glancing sideways out upon the river.'

'So,' he said, after a bit, 'there's going to be a row over there.'

'I went outside then, and saw that the Cheyennes were swimming their ponies across the stream. The Rees had gone into camp among some cottonwood trees, and the Cheyennes were bent on exterminating them. That was in the air. I hadn't seen any fighting then, and I felt an awful horror of the whole business.'

'These poor women and little innocent children! They're going to kill them all!' I said, sick at heart.

'It looks that way,' Bill remarked, so coolly that I felt angered at him.

'Among the Rees children there were two little girls, of four or five years, that were pretty and bright enough. I had taken a fancy to these cunning young ones, and had petted them and fed them candy in the store. And to see those little brown babies shot or tomahawked in cold blood was a good deal more than I could endure.'

'I may be a fool for my pains,' I said to Bill, 'but I'm going over there to see if I can't save those little kits.'

'Glass looked at me curiously for a minute, as if taking my measure as a man. Well, he said, 'it's ticklish business meddling with other folks quarrels, but I was just thinking I'd like to interfere this time.'

'I went into the store and got my gun, and then came out and locked the door. Glass got his long rifle and joined me at the river bank.'

'You mustn't think too hard of these bucks,' he said, as we got into Le Beau's boat. They've lost a herd of horses, and they're acting according to their lights.'

'The Cheyennes had now crossed over and gone out of sight. We could see nothing ahead but the river bank, and the tops of the cottonwoods which sheltered the Rees.'

'All was quiet when we came to land. Our errand seemed hopeless and preposterous enough now that I had had some minutes to reflect. We were two white men and a handful of Rees against not less than sixty fighting men of the Cheyennes. The half-dozen half-breeds at the post were not to be depended on, even should the store be attacked, as might happen in the outcome.'

'But Glass was as cool and careless of manner as if we had set out to stalk a bunch of antelope. His eyes searched the river bank as we got out of our boat. 'Hum!

'The Rees have dragged their canoes with them. Fixed themselves for fighting, I reckoned.'

'He walked to a little clump of willows which grew on the bank, and I followed him. We climbed and peered out from the shelter of the bushes.'

'Sure enough, among the cottonwoods close at hand the Rees had put up a sort of barricade. They had laid their canoes, with bales of robes and teepee skins, in a square facing a big cottonwood log, and were awaiting attack.'

'Out on the prairie the Cheyennes had halted about a gunshot distant. Some were sitting their horses and others had dismounted and were holding a powwow of some sort.'

'They mean business all right enough!' muttered Bill. I had no idea what he intended to do, and I was too much concerned and excited to ask. He did nothing immediately, and we watched the Cheyennes till presently the larger part of them dismounted, began to dance and yell and sing. We could hear their savage shouts of encouragement to one another, and the chantings they sung to tune their hearts to bravery. These things, I suppose, took the place of life and drum.'

'Well, we looked on from cover until the Cheyennes had worked themselves into a brave frenzy and began to mount their horses. Then Bill spoke.'

'I'm going out there now,' he said, 'to try and interfere in the proceedings. My advice to you is, stay where you are, or if you've got the grit, go among the Rees and try and persuade them to hustle back to the post.'

'There didn't seem to be much chance for the Rees to get to the river even, for a half-minute would fetch the Cheyennes upon them once they saw the move. I doubted if I could reach my boat with the children and manage to save them. At all events, I could not do anything to put Bill Glass into greater danger than he was running into of his own accord.'

'Yet I went out to the Rees. I found the men lying behind a big dry cottonwood log, holding their guns and on the watch. Within their barracks sat four women, muffled in blankets, altogether the most despairing and hopeless creatures I have ever seen. Their five small children they had actually tied up in bundles and tucked away under the edge of their canoes, hoping that the Cheyennes finding them thus helpless, would carry them off alive and adopt them into their families.'

'Men and women had given themselves up for lost. They looked at me with dull eyes when I spoke to them, and when I urged them with signs to drag their canoes to the river, the men simply shook their heads, and to my continued urging, one said, 'No good, Cheyenne come heap quick.'

'They had simply prepared to sell their lives as dearly as possible, and they had no faith that two white men could save them, or that we would even try to do so

when the Cheyennes should come on to attack. They had of course seen Bill Glass walking out to the enemy, but the Cheyennes were so mad and too angry to be kept off, and since they were to die, they did not seem to care for any delay in the matter.'

'I was about to pick up the two little girls I had petted, and whose eyes, like those of frightened quails, were peeping from their cover, when I heard a shout on the prairie. I turned to see the Cheyennes and Bill Glass.'

'Bill was seated on a gopher mound, facing the war party, and about half-way between them and the Rees.'

'A big Cheyene, sitting his horse in front of his men, was yelling at Bill, 'Go off! Go way off!'

'I don't think Bill had said a word or made a sign to them. He was just sitting in their way, with his rifle across his knees. But the Cheyennes had seen me go to the Rees, and understood that we had taken sides in the quarrel, and they were both astonished and angry.'

'As the big chief grew more emphatic in his yells to Bill to 'go way, his bucks pressed in beside and behind him, and leaned forward in their saddles, as they do in the instant of making a rush.'

'That was a critical second, and I was about to jump for those Rees babies regardless, when Bill suddenly straightened himself on his gopher knoll. There was something in his action which startled me.'

'The man came to his feet, and his rifle was thrown to his face with an indescribable movement. Just in that breath Bill Glass seemed to be all there was to look at. Although his back was toward me, I know that he had covered the Cheyenne chief with his gun, and that the fellow's life wasn't worth a fallen leaf if Bill chose to pull trigger. For Bill was a dead shot, and not only his 'hand' but his nerve was 'iron.'

'That was a superb moment. Every Indian who looked at Bill knew that the Cheyennes must back down or lose their chief. And when their big man had faced the gun of Iron Hand for a minute the courage oozed out of him.'

'Of course if he had fired that would have been the last of Bill, but my friend had given those Cheyennes a lesson in daring and they admired his deed.'

'Their chief made a sign to them, and they straightened up in their saddles. 'How! how! how!' they shouted, and turned and cantered off as if nothing unpleasant had happened.'

'Well, those Rees, I reckon, were the gladdest people on earth. They could hardly believe in their escape until the Cheyennes had gone out of sight. Then the women gathered up their children and untied them, crying out their wonder and gladness. They all gathered round Bill when he came up, and shook hands with him, the women laughing and crying in the same breath. They said, 'How—how—big man—big medicine!'

Earthquake Kills Many In Japan.

London, March 16—A despatch from Tokio says that there was a severe earthquake to-day in the Prefecture of Akita, on the Island of Honshu, 300 miles north of Tokio. Many persons were killed, and many houses were destroyed or damaged. There were many casualties in the village of Kowakub', which was ruined.

The volcano Asama-Yama, ninety miles southwest of Tokio, is in eruption.

Full details of the disaster have not been received owing to the interruption of communication. Sixty dead bodies were found in the basin of the Omono River, where 320 houses were destroyed. The

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village of Kitameno was burned.

As a result of the earthquake a copper mine at Tsunmdate collapsed. The fate of the 300 workmen in the mine is unknown.

Akita is a garrison town on the sea of Japan. It does a considerable export trade, especially in rice. The population of the city is about 30,000.

Asama-Yama is the largest active volcano in Japan.

London, March 16—Severe rain storms prevail throughout England and the country is flooded at many places. Several rivers have overflowed their banks.

At Queenstown, several houses were unroofed, and the sea was so high yesterday that the Cunard liner Andania, from Boston for Liverpool, was unable to land her passengers and had to proceed to Liverpool with her Queenstown pilot. The American liner Haverford was five hours late in starting from Liverpool, and did not get to Queenstown, and proceeded to Philadelphia, carrying her Liverpool pilot with her.

The cable steamer, Telecolia, has for five days tried in vain to repair a broken cable, and returned to Queenstown yesterday.

SLIT SKIRT TOO MUCH FOR BELGIAN KING.

Brussels, March 14.—At the court ball Friday night, the observant eye of King Albert espied a woman entering the ball room with an extreme slit skirt. The King whispered something to the court marshal, who immediately fixed the woman his arm and led her out of the room. At the door of the ball room the marshal, bowing to the woman said:

'His Majesty noticed that you had torn your dress up one side and requested me to escort you to your carriage so you may return home and have the damage repaired.'

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