

I had been assigned to a position eastward of the camp and very close, as I afterward learned, to the trail which led toward the mining village at the forks of Butte Creek. The forest trees afforded us ample hiding places and we had been ordered to hold our fire until it was perfectly light. Hi Good was on my right and Brother Jack upon my left.

As the gray dawn melted into daylight, the outlines of the camp became clearer. It was evidently a permanent meeting place, as there were signs of its having been frequently occupied. Directly in front of me and standing something like a hundred yards apart were two lofty pine trees, trimmed of branches except for small tufts of foliage on their tops, and, what was my surprise, as the heavens grew brighter, to behold a large American flag depending from the top of each tree.

The Indians, as we afterward learned, had been enjoying a celebration in company with their friends from Butte Creek, and did not prove to be early risers. The sun had crept up to the tops of the pines on the hill east of us before there was any stir in the camp. Then a man emerged from a cluster of little firs and came shuffling up the trail directly toward where I lay. Captain Breckenridge had not yet given the signal to commence firing, so I slipped around my tree in order to remain hidden. As the man approached and passed me, I perceived that he was not an Indian, but a Spaniard. However, birds flocking together on this occasion were to be considered birds of a feather. The man had got but

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a few paces past me when Hi Good spied him. In a moment Good's rifle spoke, and the Spaniard, wounded, sprang back toward the camp. As he ran another rifle over on the other side of our circle cracked, and he fell dead.

The camp was roused. In a twinkling, up the Indians sprang, men, women and children, and as if with one impulse they swarmed up the slope directly toward where I lay. In a moment I was enveloped in the wild stampede. I shot and then clubbed my rifle and struggled against the rush. Good and Jack came to my assistance, and together we turned them back. The balance of our party were pouring shots into them and they soon began to seek shelter amid the logs and thickets of small forest trees.

Our orders from Breckenridge had been to allow no one to break through the circle, but to spare the women and children. This was a most difficult program to carry out. The bucks were armed and were returning our fire. The squaws soon perceived that we were seeking to spare their lives, and so they clung to the bucks. This made it difficult to get a bead upon the one without endangering the other. Seeing that this state of affairs would not do, we sent word from man to man around to the captain and asked him for new orders. Soon the word came back: "Let the squaws and children pass out."

Good, who could speak the Indian dialect, promptly shouted the order to the Indians. They eagerly seized upon the suggestion, but we were soon to learn that the order was a serious mistake.

Fighting the Mill Creeks.

A warrior would wrap himself in a blanket, throw another blanket or a basket over his head, with a rifle concealed next his body, seize a child by the hand, or hoist one upon his back, and go shuffling past us.

Soon we came in possession of the camp. There was not a bad Indian to be found, but about forty good ones lay scattered about.

While rejoicing over our victory, shots began to ring out and bullets to sing about our ears, and we suddenly found ourselves where so lately we had had the Indians. They were shooting at us from all sides. I heard Hi Good cursing like a wagon-master and saw him trying to get a bead on an Indian. He was behind a tree, from both sides of which pieces of bark were flying as from a woodman's ax. However, our luck had not deserted us. Not one of our party was hit. We charged and scattered the Indians, then kept out guards while we prepared and ate our breakfasts.

Two barrels, partly filled with whiskey, were in the camp, as well as other evidences which pointed to the fact that whites had joined with the redskins in the recent celebration. We soon took our departure for our own camp across Chico Creek, each man well burdened with plunder from the captured camp. I had found three good six-shooters, which I thrust under my belt, thinking these to be about as useful as anything to be had.

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