

**LIFE AMONG
THE
APACHES**



**JOHN C.
CREMONY**

AS PUBLISHED IN 1868

LIFE

AMONG THE APACHES:

BY

JOHN C. CREMONY,

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LIFE AMONG THE APACHES

By John C. Cremony

As Published in 1868

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PREFACE.

THOSE who may favor the succeeding pages with their perusal, must not expect any attempt at fine writing or glowing description. The author's intention is, to furnish a plain, unvarnished tale of actual occurrences and facts illustrative of the various tribes of Indians occupying that vast region which extends from the Colorado river on the west, to the settlements of Texas on the east, and from Taos in New Mexico to Durango in the Mexican Republic.

In the front rank of the tribes, occupying the region included within the limits mentioned, stands the great Apache race, and next are the Comanches. The former of these will engage most of the author's attention for very many and obvious reasons. It is believed that the book will contain a large amount of valuable information, to be derived from no other source extant, and it will be the author's endeavor to place it before his readers in a manner which will engage their attention. Nothing not strictly true will be admitted into its pages, and if some of the incidents narrated be found of a thrilling character, the reader will experience satisfaction in knowing that they are not the results of imaginative picturing. Whenever a personal adventure is narrated, it will be found to illustrate some particular phase of character; none are recounted which do not convey information.

Our Government has expended millions of dollars, in driblets, since the acquisition of California, in efforts to reduce the Apaches

and Navajoes, who occupy that extensive belt of country which forms the highway for overland migration from the East to the West; but we are as far from success to-day as we were twenty years ago. The reason is obvious. We have never striven to make ourselves intelligently acquainted with those tribes. Nearly all that relates to them is quite as uncertain and indefinite to our comprehension as that which obtains in the center of Africa. Those who were the best informed on the matter, and had given it the closest attention, were, at the same time—most unfortunately—the least capable of imparting their information; while those who were almost ignorant of the subject have been the most forward to give the results of their fragmentary gleanings. If this volume shall have the effect of bettering our present deplorable Indian policy, by letting in some light, it will accomplish the author's object.

SAN FRANCISCO, August, 1868.

J. C. C.

CHAPTER I.

Comanche Raid. — Detailed to send them away. — Interview with Janamata. — Description of the Chief.

MY first business acquaintance with “Lo” occurred in the year 1847. A band of about one hundred Comanche warriors, led by a chief named Janamata, or the “Red Buffalo,” taking advantage of the subdued and defenceless condition of the Mexicans, crossed the Rio Grande, about seventy miles below Old Reynosa, and commenced a series of depredations. Information was immediately given to the American officer commanding at that post, and the writer was detailed, with a force of fifty men, to drive off the invaders, with orders not to engage in hostilities, unless the Indians proved refractory and deaf to all other appeals.

After marching fifty miles, which was accomplished in two days, we arrived at the scene of operations, meeting the Comanches on the highway. Our force was immediately disposed to the best advantage, and placing a white handkerchief on the point of my sabre, I advanced alone toward the chief, who, leaving his warriors, rode forward to meet me. He spoke Spanish fluently, having evidently acquired it in his many marauding excursions into Mexico. Having met, I offered him a cigarito, which was accepted with Indian stoicism. We smoked in perfect silence for half a minute, when the cigaritos having been consumed the following dialogue took place:

Officer. — “I am sent to tell you, that you must recross

the Rio Grande with your warriors, and come here no more to molest these people while we remain in the country.”

Indian. —“I hear your words. They are not pleasant. These Mexicans are our natural enemies; we have warred against them for many years. They are also your enemies. You are killing them in their own country, the same as I am. The Comanches are friends to the Americans. Why do you prevent your friends from hunting your enemies and theirs?”

Officer. —“Red man, you mistake. These people were our enemies, but they have yielded, and all who have submitted are under our protection. We have ceased from doing them harm, and if we permit you to injure them after we have disarmed them, it would be the same as if we did so ourselves.”

Indian. —“But your revenge is for yourselves. It does not satisfy us for the blood of Comanches slain by Mexicans. You made war upon them without our consent or knowledge. We do the same. A wise warrior takes advantage of his enemy’s weakness. It is now our opportunity.”

Officer. —“These people are our captives, and cannot continue to be your enemies while in that condition. Suppose you had a dozen Apache captives, would you permit the Kaddos to come into your camp and kill them; take their property and go off without resistance?”

Indian. —“White man, your tongue is double, like a woman’s; but the Comanche does not feel to war against his American brothers. I and my people will recross the Rio Grande, but will not promise never to come back. Good-by.”

Our colloquy ended—we smoked another cigarito; he waved his hand to his warriors, and without another word

directed his course to the river, which was soon waded, and Janamata, with his followers, stood on American soil. This little interview imparted the knowledge that the American savages are rather keen logicians, from their own uncivilized stand-point, as they are incapable of appreciating the moral and religious sensibilities of enlightened races.

Janamata was a good type of his tribe, in point of physical development. He was about five feet ten inches in height, with well proportioned shoulders, very deep chest, and long, thin, but muscular arms. His forehead was very broad and moderately high, his mouth enormous, and garnished with strong white teeth. His nose was of the Roman order, broad and with much expanded nostrils, which appeared to pulsate with every emotion; but his countenance was rigid and immovable as bronze. His arms consisted of a bow and quiver full of arrows, a long lance, a long sharp knife, worn in the top of his moccasin boot, and a very good Colt's revolver. A strong shield of triple buffalo hide, ornamented with brass studs, hung from his saddle bow, and his dress was composed of buckskin and buffalo hide well tanned and flexible, but wholly free from ornament. I afterwards learned from a Texas Ranger that he was called Janamata, or the "Red Buffalo," from a desperate encounter he once had with one of those animals, which had ripped up his horse, and attacked him on foot. In this encounter Janamata had only his knife to depend on, as he had lost lance and bow when unhorsed. It is related that as the buffalo charged upon him, he sprang over the animal's lowered front, and landing on his back, plunged his knife several times into its body; then, as suddenly jumping off behind, he seized it by the tail and with one cut severed the ham-string. These details made an impression upon me at the time which has never been effaced or weakened.

Years passed before another opportunity offered to extend my acquaintance with Indians, and then in a totally different sphere and under different circumstances, and with many different tribes. The lapse of time, however, gave opportunity for reflection, and I realized the fact that my former rude impressions, founded upon such authorities as Catlin, Cooper, and others, must be considerably modified; and I resolved that, should occasion ever offer, I would devote attention and time to the observation of Indian character as it is, and not as I had believed it to be from writers on the subject.

CHAPTER II.

March from Texas to El Paso. — The Lipans. — Their Personal Appearance. — Sait-jah and the Picture.

IN the year 1849, I was prevailed upon by Dr. Thomas H. Webb, Secretary of the Massachusetts Historical Society, to forego my position on the *Boston Herald*, and accept an appointment on the United States Boundary Commission, then being re-organized under the Hon. John R. Bartlett. Mr. Bartlett selected some thirty of the Commission, and determined to proceed by way of the Northern Route, which, up to that period, had been traveled only three times, and was, consequently, but little known. The most valuable information relative to the route was received from Judge Ankrim—a brave, courteous and handsome gentleman. In accordance with the directions pricked out on Mr. Bartlett's traveling chart by Judge Ankrim, one portion of the Commission directed their way, leaving the great body, under Col. John McClellan, U. S. Topographical Engineers, to come on by what is known as the Southern Route, a well beaten and frequently used road. Many portions of the way selected by Mr. Bartlett had never before been gone over by white men. There was no trail to direct our course, nor did we possess any satisfactory knowledge of its ability to afford wood, water and grass. The maps, however, showed that it was crossed by certain streams at stated distances, and the venture was boldly undertaken.

On arriving within a short distance of the South Con-

cho river, we camped on a small stream named the Antelope creek, situated in the Lipan country. Early next morning, as the party were about to resume the march, an Indian was seen advancing at full speed. A halt was ordered, and in a few minutes he was among us asking, in Spanish, for the commander. I at once took him to Mr. Bartlett, and, on approaching the Commissioner, our red visitant commenced fumbling among his clothes, from which he extracted a dirty piece of handkerchief, which, being unrolled, disclosed another dirty rag, and the unwrapping continued until five pieces of cotton fragments had been unrolled, displaying a handsome leopard skin pouch, in which were a number of recommendations, signed by well-known Americans, and setting forth that the bearer, Chipota, a Lipan chief, had, a short time before, celebrated a treaty of peace with the United States, and was entitled to the consideration and kindness of all American travelers over those wastes. During the interview, I attentively watched the Indian, who gave slight indications of uneasiness as to the manner in which his overtures would be received; but these were soon dissipated by the frank and amicable deportment of Mr. Bartlett, who invited his visitor to take a seat in his carriage and proceed with him to the next camp, which was about twelve miles further. Chipota appeared to be about sixty years of age. He was short, stout and sinewy, with an uncommonly high and expansive forehead, and so singularly like the celebrated Lewis Cass in appearance, that the fact was immediately remarked by all the party who had ever seen Mr. Cass or his portrait.

The Commissioner traveled in a close carriage, drawn by four fleet and powerful mules. His *compagnon de voyage* was invariably Dr. Webb, who could never be induced

to mount a horse. The inside of the carriage was well supplied with Colt's and Sharp's rifles, Colt's pistols, a double-barreled shot gun, lots of ammunition, a spy-glass, and a number of small but useful tools. Upon entering this traveling arsenal, old Chipota looked around him with ill-concealed astonishment, which was greatly heightened by Mr. Bartlett preparing the spy-glass, and permitting him to take a good look through it at a distant object. The Indian could hardly credit that the thing he saw so distinctly through the glass was the same object he beheld so dimly with his naked eye. Not until we arrived in camp, however, were his senses brought to the full stand-point of admiration by the rapid discharges and terrific effects of the fire from our repeating rifles and pistols. Looking around with undissembled amazement, he said in his own language, as if soliloquizing: "*Inday pindah lickoyee schlango poohacante.*" It was not until years had passed that I became aware of the meaning of these words, but I noted them at the time by asking him to repeat them, and took a memorandum of their sounds. Since then I have discovered that they mean—"These people of the white eyes are wonderful medicine men."

About two hours after camping, we were joined by four more Lipans, the leader being named Chiquito, a Spanish term, signifying "the little one." He was tall, thin, sinewy, and had the appearance of having been possessed of more than ordinary powers of endurance. The likeness of this chief to General Jackson was quite as remarkable and striking as that of Chipota to General Cass, and was a general subject of remark. The most prominent member of Chiquito's escort was a tall, strong, well-made and handsome young Lipan dandy, who rejoiced in the name of Sait-jah, disdaining to be known

by any Spanish term. This fellow evidently believed himself of some consequence, and strutted about with a very decided aristocratic bearing. After a short time passed in displaying his colossal proportions, his splendid leopard skin saddle, quiver, leggins, etc., Chipota quietly beckoned to him and the others, and, I suppose, gave them a short account of the wonders he had beheld. His warnings were received with trust by all but Sait-jah, who, like most inexperienced and flattered young men, savage or civilized, preferred to rely on his own experiences. Our party being small, and offering many temptations, I kept a strict but unobserved watch over the Indians, and suspected the tenor of Chipota's discourse, from his gesticulations. In a few minutes Sait-jah came toward me in a swaggering manner, and said, in broken Spanish: "Our chief says you great medicine; he says your pistol fires six times without reloading; he says you bring the trees which are afar off close to the eye, so you can count the leaves; he says your guns reach a great way, and never miss; he says a great many other wonderful things, which I cannot believe. You have bewitched him." Drawing a six-shooter from my belt, I pointed out a tree about seventy-five yards distant, and commenced firing rapidly. Each shot struck the tree, and blazed off large fragments of the bark. Sait-jah was astonished at the power of the weapon, and made no attempt to conceal his surprise; but his admiration broke out into emphatic expression when he witnessed the precision and reach of our Sharp's rifles, and the rapidity with which they could be loaded and fired. His pride had evidently received a heavy fall, and his lofty bearing was toned down to the level of his white visitors.

In my possession was the miniature of a young lady, whose many graces of person, cultivated mind and amia-

ble disposition, rendered her one of the most lovable of Boston's fairest daughters. Sait-jah happened to see this picture, and asked permission to take a good look at the pleasant features. The miniature was placed in his hand, and his eyes seemed to devour its expressive lineaments. Throughout the remainder of that day this Indian bored me with frequent requests for another look, and the next morning, so soon as the camp was astir, he offered me his bow, arrows and splendid leopard skin for the picture. These offers being refused, he then added his horse, and whatever other property he might have, for its possession; but, finding me deaf to his entreaties, he took one long, last look, vaulted on his horse, set off at full speed and rapidly disappeared in the distance.

The Lipans are a numerous and warlike tribe, roaming over a vast extent of country, and perpetually at war with the Comanches, Kaddos, and other tribes of Western Texas. Since acquiring the Apache language, I have discovered that they are a branch of that great tribe—speaking identically the same language, with the exception of a few terms and names of things existing in their region and not generally known to those branches which inhabit Arizona and New Mexico. The Mescalero Apaches, in their search for buffaloes, frequently meet the Lipans, and always on the best of terms. No conflicts are known to have ever occurred between them; but they act in concert against the Comanches, and all other tribes. All the remarks on the Apache race, which will be found in the succeeding pages of this work, apply with equal force to the Lipans, with the exception of their tribal organization, the Lipans having regular chiefs, whom they obey on all occasions, and whose acts are final; while the Apaches are pure democrats, each warrior being his own master, and submitting only to

the temporary control of a chief elected for the occasion.

As no other Indians were encountered until after our arrival at Paso del Norte, the remainder of our journey with its many incidents, sufferings and dangers, will not be expatiated upon in this work, which is solely dedicated to descriptions of Indian life.

CHAPTER III.

To the Copper Mines. — Encounter with Cuchillo Negro. — Fearful Massacre of Apaches. — Their Terrible Revenge. — Apache Method of Hunting Ducks and Geese. — Apaches Hunting Antelopes. — Mangas Colorado. — My Camp.

IN the latter part of January, 1850, Mr. Bartlett took advantage of the march of Col. Craig, commanding the military escort of the Boundary Commission, to order Dr. Webb, Mr. Thurber and myself to the Copper Mines of Santa Rita, as Col. Craig had determined to make that place his head-quarters until the extended operations of the Commission should demand a more advanced post. Dr. Webb, Secretary of the Commission, and Mr. Thurber, Botanist, rode in Mr. Bartlett's carriage, which he had loaned them for the trip, but I preferred to take the saddle, being mounted on an uncommonly fine horse I had bought from Capt. A. Buford, First United States Dragoons. In order not to be distressed by the slow, painful and tiresome marches of the infantry, Dr. Webb invariably ordered Wells, the carriage driver, to hurry forward to the next camping ground, and we generally arrived three or four hours in advance of the troops, my horse keeping up with the carriage, for I would not leave my party in so dangerous an Indian country as the one we were then penetrating. Sometimes, when the road was rough and difficult for the carriage, I was accustomed to ride ahead in search of game, being always armed to the teeth with two belt and two holster six-shooters, a Sharp's carbine and a large bowie knife. On

the fourth day of our march, I advanced about three miles ahead of the carriage, which was detained in making the passage through Cooke's cañon, a rough, rocky and very dangerous defile, about forty miles east of the Mimbres river, and having observed some antelope tracks, looked around in hope of seeing the animals, when I perceived myself surrounded by a band of about twenty-five Indians, who advanced upon me from all sides, led by a savage who rode several yards ahead of all others. At that time I could have broken through the circle and rejoined my party with but little risk, as my horse was infinitely superior in strength and speed to their ponies, but as I felt convinced that the carriage would heave in sight within a short time, my resolution was immediately taken to adopt another policy. By this time their leader was from twenty-five to thirty yards in advance of his followers, and about the same distance from me, perceiving which I drew a heavy holster pistol with my right hand and putting spurs to my horse, met him in a bound or two, when I addressed him to the following effect, in Spanish:

“Keep off or I will shoot you.”

To this he replied: “Who are you, and whence do you come?”

Observing that his warriors were closing upon me, I said: “See here, Indian, you have plenty of warriors against one man, but I have got you; your people may kill me, but I will kill you, so tell them to hold back at once.”

Involuntarily the Apache waved his hand, and his warriors halted about forty yards off. Not liking so short a distance, I again urged the chief to let his warriors fall back still further, at the same time giving a significant shake of my pistol. This, too, was done, and the Apaches

increased their distance to about one hundred and fifty yards. The chief, whom I afterwards found to be Cuchillo Negro, or the "Black Knife," then endeavored to gain my left side, but I foiled his attempt by keeping my horse's head in his direction wherever he moved. He then said, "Good-by," and started to rejoin his comrades, but I again brought him to a sense of his position, by telling him I would not permit it, and he must stay with me until my friends came up. This excited considerable surprise, for he evidently labored under the idea that I was alone, or nearly so. The following dialogue then took place:

Cuchillo Negro.—"What do you want in my country?"

American.—"I came here because my chief has sent me. He is coming soon with a large force, and will pass through this country, but does not intend to remain or do any harm to his Apache brethren. We come in peace, and will always act peaceably, unless you compel us to adopt other measures; if you do, the consequences will do you great harm."

Cuchillo Negro.—"I do not believe your words. You are alone. My people have been on the watch, and have seen no forces coming this way. If any such had been on the road, we would have known it. You are in my power. What more have you to say?"

American.—"Indian, you are foolish. Long security has made you careless. A company of soldiers is close behind me; but your young men have been asleep. The squaws have retained them in camp, when they should have been on the lookout. I am not in your power, but you, personally, are in mine. Your people can kill me, but not until I have put a ball through your body. Any signal you may make to them, or any forward movement on their part, will also be signal for your death. If you

do not believe me, wait a few moments, and you will see my friends come round the point of yonder hill. They are many, and intend to remain several moons in your country. If you treat them well you will grow rich and get many presents, but if you treat them badly they will search you out among the rocks and hills of your country, will take possession of your watering places, will destroy your plantations and kill your warriors. Now choose."

Cuchillo Negro.—"For many years no white man has penetrated these regions, and we do not permit people to enter our country without knowing their purpose. If you had friends, as you say, you would not have left them and come on alone, for that is foolish. My young men have not been led away by the squaws, for there are none within two sun's march, and if you had a large party with you, they would have known it and given me notice. You have many guns, but I have many men, and you cannot escape if I give the signal."

American.—"Indian, I don't think you will give that signal so long as you and I are so close together. Wait a few moments, and see whether I tell the truth."

This proposition was finally agreed to by him, and we sat on our horses waiting the approach of the carriage. It is unnecessary to say what my feelings were during the next quarter of an hour, nor to explain the manœuvres each adopted to get or keep the advantage of his enemy. I feel incapable of doing justice to the occasion. At the expiration of the time mentioned, the carriage hove in sight, about a quarter of a mile off, rounding the point of the mountain, and it had been detained so much during the march through the rocky and terrible defile that the infantry had come up with it and presented a formidable array of glittering tubes immediately in its rear.

At this unexpected sight, Cuchillo Negro gazed for a moment like one in a dream, but quickly collecting himself, he advanced directly toward me, extending his right hand and saying, "*Jeunie, jeunie!*" which means friendly, amicable, good. I refused to take his hand lest he might suddenly jerk me off my horse and stab me while falling, but contented myself by saying, "*Estamos amigos*"—we are friends. He then turned quickly and rode off at full speed, attended by his warriors. They disappeared in another rocky cañon, about four hundred yards distant. It was subsequently my fate to meet this savage several other times, and I am satisfied that the remembrance of our interview on the occasion above narrated, did me no harm either with him or the balance of his tribe.

After leaving Doña Ana, our way led across the lower portion of the Jornada del Muerto until we arrived at what is known as the San Diego crossing of the Rio Grande, a mile or two below where Fort Thorne was subsequently built. As the Jornada del Muerto was the scene of another incident, its description is postponed for the present. The Rio Grande was crossed without much difficulty, and our camp formed near a large lagoon on the western bank of the river. This lagoon was infested by wild ducks and brant, and the Apaches took great numbers of them in the following manner.

In the early winter, when these birds commenced to arrive in great flocks, the Apaches took large numbers of gourds and set them adrift, on the windward side of the lagoon, whence they were gradually propelled by the wind until they reached the opposite side, when they were recovered and again set adrift. At first, the ducks and geese exhibit dread and suspicion of these strange floating objects, but soon get used to them, and pay them no further attention. Having arrived at this stage,

the Indians then fit these gourds upon their heads, having been furnished with holes for the eyes, nose and mouth, and, armed with a bag, they enter the water—not over five feet deep in any part—and exactly imitating the bobbing motion of the empty gourd upon the water, succeed in getting close enough to the birds, which are then caught by the feet, suddenly dragged under water, and stowed in the bag. The dexterity and naturalness with which this is done almost exceeds belief, yet it is a common thing among them.

About eighteen or twenty miles east of the Copper Mines of Santa Rita, is a hot spring, the waters of which exhibit a heat of 125 degrees Fahrenheit, and after having crossed the Mimbres, the whole party directed its course to this spring. After examining it thoroughly, and having the qualities of its water tested by Dr. Webb, we prosecuted our march; but my attention was soon after arrested by a number of antelopes feeding on the plain, not more than half a mile distant. Anxious to procure one, I left the party, and, galloping in the direction of the herd, arrived within five hundred yards of it, when I dismounted and tying my horse to a yucca bush, proceeded cautiously on foot, carbine in hand. Crawling from bush to bush, and hiding behind every stone which offered any shelter, I got within handsome range of a fine buck, and feeling sure that the animal could not escape me, I raised to fire, when, just as I was taking aim, I was astonished to see the animal raise erect upon its hind legs, and heard it cry out, in fair Spanish, "*No tiras, no tiras!*"—don't fire, don't fire! What I would have sworn was an antelope, proved to be a young Indian, the son of Ponce, a chief, who, having enveloped himself in an antelope's skin, with head, horns and all complete, had gradually crept up to the herd under his

disguise, until his operations were brought to an untimely end by perceiving my aim directed at him. The Apaches frequently adopt this method of hunting, and imitate the actions of the antelopes so exactly as to completely mislead those animals with the belief that their deadliest enemy is one of their number.

We arrived at the Copper Mines, without further accident, one day in advance of our military escort, and had no sooner pitched our tent than we were visited by some eight or ten of the most villainous looking Apaches it is possible to conceive. Although the weather was exceedingly cold, with snow six inches deep on a level, and, in some places where it had drifted, as deep as three or four feet, the Indians were wholly nude, with the exception of a diminutive breech cloth. They bore no arms of any kind and pretended to be very friendly, having undoubtedly seen our train and escort crossing the plain from their various places of observation on the top of Ben Moore, which is eight thousand feet high. Our mules were hitched to the several wheels of the carriage and my horse in the rear, while one of our party kept constant and vigilant watch over the animals. When night fell Dr. Webb informed the Apaches, through me, that they must leave camp, which they did after receiving a few presents in the shape of tobacco, beads and some cotton cloth. A rousing fire *was* then made in front of the tent, and after a hearty supper our small party retired upon their arms, with one man on guard. It was afterwards discovered that among our visitors were the renowned warriors Delgadito, Ponce and Coletto Amarillo. These were their Mexican names—their Indian appellations I never learned.

About 11 o'clock, A.M., next day, Col. Craig appeared with his command, and formally took possession of the

Copper Mines, the great head-quarters of the redoubtable chief, Mangas Colorado, or the "Red Sleeves," beyond all comparison the most famous Apache warrior and statesman of the present century. The word statesman is used advisedly in his case, as will be made apparent to the reader in the course of his perusal. The term chief will also be found, hereafter, to have a very great modification, in so far as refers to the Apache race.

The Copper Mines of Santa Rita are located immediately at the foot of a huge and prominent mountain, named Ben Moore. These extensive mines had been abandoned for the space of eighty years, but were uncommonly rich and remunerative. They were formerly owned by a wealthy Mexican company, who sent the ore to Chihuahua, where a Government mint existed, and had the ore refined and struck into the copper coinage of the country. Although the distance was over three hundred miles, and every pound of ore had to be transported on pack mules, yet it proved a paying business, and mining was vigorously prosecuted for a space of some twenty years. Huge masses of ore, yielding from sixty to ninety per cent. of pure copper, are still visible all about the mine, and frequently considerable pieces of pure copper are met with by the visitor. The reason for its sudden and long abandonment was asked, and the following story related.

During the period that the Mexicans carried on operations at the mines, the Apaches appeared very friendly, receiving frequent presents, and visiting the houses of the miners without question. But every now and then the Mexicans lost a few mules, or had a man or two killed, and their suspicions were roused against the Apaches, who stoutly denied all knowledge of these acts and put on an air of offended pride. This state of affairs

continued to grow worse and worse, until an Englishman, named Johnson, undertook to "settle matters," and to that end received *carte blanche* from his Mexican employers. Johnson ordered *fiesta*, or feast, prepared, and invited all the Copper Mine Apaches to partake. The invitation was joyfully accepted, and between nine hundred and a thousand, including men, women and children, assembled to do justice to the hospitality of their entertainers. They were caused to sit grouped together as much as possible, while their host had prepared a six-pounder gun, loaded to the muzzle with slugs, musket balls, nails and pieces of glass, within one hundred yards of their main body. This cannon was concealed under a pile of pack saddles and other rubbish, but trained on the spot to be occupied by the Apaches. The time arrived; the feast was ready; the gun loaded and primed; Johnson stood ready with a lighted cigar to give the parting salute, and while all were eating as Apaches only can eat, the terrible storm of death was sped into their ranks, killing, wounding and maiming several hundred. This fearful volley was immediately followed up by a charge on the part of the Mexicans, who showed no pity to the wounded until nearly four hundred victims had been sacrificed at this feast of death. The survivors fled in dismay, and for several months the miners fancied they had forever got rid of the much hated Apaches. It was an ill-grounded hope, as the sequel proved.

The Copper Mines were entirely dependent upon Chihuahua for all supplies, and large *conductas*, or trains with guards, were employed in the business of bringing in such supplies, and taking away the ore. So regular had been the arrival and departure of these trains, that no efforts were made to retain provisions enough on hand

in the event of a failure to arrive. Besides, no molestation of any kind had been experienced since Johnson's experiment. At length three or four days passed beyond the proper time for the *conducta's* arrival; provision was becoming exceedingly scarce; ammunition had been expended freely; no thought for the morrow had taken possession of their minds, and everything went on in the hap-hazard way of thoughtless Mexicans. No attempt was made to send a party in quest of the lost train, nor was any economy exercised. Two or three days more passed, and they were on the verge of starvation. The surrounding forests of heavy pines still furnished bear and turkeys, and other game in abundance, but their ammunition was becoming exceedingly scarce. In this dilemma some of the miners climbed Ben Moore, which gave a distinct view of the extensive plain reaching to and beyond the Mimbres river, but no sign of the *conducta* was visible. It was then ordered that a well-armed party should set out and discover its fate, but those who were to be left behind resolved to go also, as they would otherwise be forced to remain without means of defence or provisions. On a given day every man, woman and child residing in the Copper Mines took their departure; but they never reached their place of destination. The relentless Apaches had foreseen all these troubles, and taken measures accordingly. The party left, but their bones, with the exception of only four or five, lie bleaching upon the wide expanse between the Copper Mines of Santa Rita and the town of Chihuahua. Such is the narrative given me by an intelligent Mexican, whom I afterward met in Sonora. From that time for more than eighty years, the Apache had remained the unmolested master of this his great stronghold. This long interval of quiescence was rudely interrupted by the advent of

the military escort to the Boundary Commission, which immediately commenced repairing the half-ruined presidio, and rendering some fifty small adobe buildings habitable for the members of the Commission. These proceedings were watched with great interest and unfeigned anxiety by the Apaches, who frequently asked whether we intended to remain at the Copper Mines, and as frequently received a reply in the negative. The real object of our stay was explained to them; but they could not conceive that people should take so much pains to build houses and render them comfortable only for a short residence, to be again abandoned at the very period when men could live in the open air without disquietude.

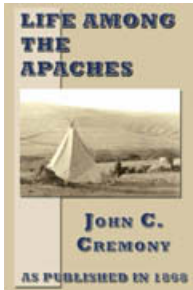
Shortly afterward, the whole Commission, numbering some two hundred and fifty well-armed men, arrived, making a total force of over three hundred men. This odds was more than the Apaches could face, with any prospect of success, and they relapsed into the better part of valor, under the advice of Mangas Colorado and his leading warriors. The gentle nomads pitched their main camp about two miles from the Copper Mines, and made frequent visits to observe our movements and to practice their skill in begging.

Although the Copper Mine, or Mimbres Apaches, have signalized themselves by many of the boldest and most daring exploits, they are not physically comparable to the Mescalero, Jicarilla and Chiricabui branches of the same tribe. But what they lack in personal strength they make up in wiliness and endurance. No amount of cold, hunger or thirst seems to have any appreciable effect upon an Apache. Whatever his sufferings, no complaint or murmur is ever heard to escape his lips, and he is always ready to engage in any enterprise which promises a commensurate reward. Ten Apaches will under-

take a venture which will stagger the courage and nerve of a hundred Yumas, Pimos or Navajoes, although the last mentioned tribe is an undoubted branch of the Apache race, as will be shown in a subsequent chapter. The cunning of the Apache is only equaled by his skill and the audacity with which he executes his projects, and every success is chuckled over with undissembled gusto by the whole tribe, the actors only assuming an unconcerned air, as if wholly disconnected with the matter. Their conversation is always carried on in low tones, and only one person ever presumes to speak at a time. There is no interruption to the speaker's remarks; but when he ceases another takes the word, and either replies or indorses the opinions of his predecessor. During a general conversation on indifferent topics they separate into several small knots, and in each the above rules are strictly observed.

I had selected the most lovely spot in the valley for the site of my tent, which was some six hundred yards distant from the rest, and shut out from sight by an intervening hillock. At this place the stream widened into a handsome basin ten yards across, and with a little labor I had built a sort of dam, which raised the water in the basin to the depth of about three and a half feet, and formed a delicious bathing pool, which was shaded by a very large and spreading cottonwood tree. At this place the Apaches frequently congregated in considerable numbers, maintaining a lively conversation, and enabling me to make many observations I could not otherwise have done. As I was the only member of the Commission with whom they could converse, my tent became their head-quarters during their visits, which were almost daily for several consecutive months, until our amicable relations were broken up by their irrepressible rascality and treachery.

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