The Quarterbreed

An Indian Reservation Tale by ROBERT AMES BENNET

The three preceding installments described the rescue of a quarterbreed girl and two men from an Indian attack at the edge of Lakotah Indian reservation by Capt. Floyd Hardy, U. S. A., the new Indian agent. The rescued ones are Reginald Vandervyn nephew of United States Senator Clemmer and agency clerk. Jacques Dupont, post trader, and his daughter, Marie. Vandervyn tells Hardy of disaffection among the Indians, of the murder of Nogen, the last agent, and of his having been promised the agency. Hardy calls a council of head tribesmen. Redbear, the halfbreed interpreter, brings his pretty sister, Oinna, to the valley. The new agent learns that the Indians have been cheated and has reason to suspect Dupont and Vandervyn of crookedness. He plans to square matters with the tribesmen. How Captain Hardy is thwarted in his purpose, how his life is endangered, how Vandervyn shows his true character, is told in very absorbing style in this installment.

CHAPTER VI-Continued

Unseen by his superior, Vandervyn nodded encouragingly to Redbear and land of his tribe, and white men have to stay and take the chance of an upsmited at the Indians. Hardy had not no right here, and he hates all Long- rising." turned his steady gaze from Ti-owa- knives.'

"The chief is not angry," he said. "We shall soon be friends. Tell him the killing of Mr. Nogen on the tribe. If white men have done any wrong to If there are any members of the tribe help me make all do right,"

This time Redbear did not hesitate. He faced the assembly and rolled out a flood of Lakotah with desperate rapidity. Almost immediately Ti-owakonza rose to reply, his face ablaze When he had spoken, he remained standing.

"He says he is angry," began Red-

"No," brusquely contradicted Hardy, "Look at his face. The others are angered. He is not. There is some misunderstanding. Be careful that you interpret correctly."

"He says he is angry," insisted Redbear, his sidelong glance looking past Hardy to Vandervyn, who was nodding reassuringly. "He says he is trying to keep it inside, but the others can't hold it inside. He says you have got to go away or there will be fighting."

Hardy straightened on his chair, and his look became severe. He spoke sharply: "Tell the chief it is useless to ask me to go away. I do not wish to send for the Longknives. But they will come and fight the tribe if the

is any uprising." Redbear's interpretation was lowed by a hush more threatening gestures or outcries. Vandery tily beckoned to the policemen came along under the overhan warehouse until they were be white men. Hardy heard .

scuffle of their moccasined, dust. He looked around a "How is this?" he de pasticularly wished no

of force," said Hardy. "Well, since the hadn't you better let will be close enough come to a scrap, and the

to see the fun.' Hardy turned aro daring girl. She stoo

midway between the a and her father's cabin "Take her back to the

"But would it be wise for me to leave you and Charlle just now? The police

may not stay loyal if-" The command was peremptory, Van-

dervyn started off, yet contrived to ex-



Ti-owa-Konza Rose to Reply, His Face Ablaze With Indignation.

change glances with Redbear. Hardy studied the semicircle of waiting In- if they've to dians with a resolute gaze, and, as youbefore, fixed his attention upon Ti-owa- saw how the

of this ill feeling," he remarked to the attacking you. But the promise that you." halfbreed. "Ask them why they are Mr. Van is to be their agent, that paciopposed to their young men trading fied them. Had you never come here, ore for Dupont's goods."

Redbear spoke slowly to the Indians, his manner not unlike that of a man who approaches a barrel of gunpowder with a lighted torch. There was explosion, but the old hend chief fig with unmistakable anger. He r with a flery declamation the

says all over again that this is the leave for the good of the tribe, or

soldiers have always been the best for all concerned if I should leave." friends of the Indians. I find that, toward all the tribe. I do not blame goods are to be issued to the tribe. and take the ore if the Indians do not as shooting." the tribe, I shall stop the wrongdoing. dig it themselves. Another thing, I believe the tribe should agree to the farm and work it after the manner of what her father had done. the white men. Other tribes have done this, and they are no longer poor,"

aside from Hardy, and began to pour after that." with indignation, his voice impassioned, out a torrent of Lakotah. He had spoken only a few sentences when a wave Hardy. of agitation passed over the semicircle of Indians. Blankets slipped down Dupont. from copper-red shoulders; fierce eyes glared menacingly at Hardy. Several cut in. "You've put it up to him that of the more excitable bucks leaped up with bow and rifle in hand.

> Hardy thrust out from among the police and raised his hands to Ti-owakonza in the peace sign. The head all, followed by certain massacre of chief called to his fellows and turned his back upon the agent with deliberate contempt. All the others faced about and followed him to the waiting ponies. The band mounted and rode off up the valley in morose silence.

CHAPTER VII.

The Comm- n Law.

red in Hardy's sallow cheeks when Ma- would harm me, even in an outbreak." rie, Vandervyn and Dupont came In on him at the office. Dupont held t a congratulatory hand.

By gar, Cap," he said, "you sure mighty close squeak of it that Guess old Ti got all-fired hot. e's Charlie?"

dbear? I sent him to reassure er and the families of the po-

was very thoughtful of you, said Marie.

would be far more considerou would leave the reservadded Vandervyn

so?" queried Hardy.

prse, you'll fancy I am thinkpromotion. But it's not Ask Jake.

it from the p'leece," said Duthe whole bunch was crazy you; they'd done it, too, only ings out to 'em that Mr. Van

tain, don't be angry at Char-

I could not have been Yet everything I said er them.

hey're a ornery bunch,' "It was for because queried Hardy, fficer. The chiefs hate pizen. Most of the the ghost-dance craze, the soldiers,"

down and be willing argued Hardy.

They'll go back and stew till hell boils happens, they'll stir Nom d'un chien! itting enough ahead take care of my old ag arle a chance to be alp to boot!"

"Tou; leave here with her vhenove

"No, I an't leave my store ull my

"There no danger if it said Marle, her were not eyes flashi indignation. me here! If there only you he is an outbr will be all your fault!"

"Mine?" "Oh. I k mean well. But violent dislike to Why you come? You . Van. Had they thought you "We must learn what is the cause nothing could have kept them from all this would not have happened. The age come to talk with

as he interpreted: "He-he says there vyn, twisting the tip of his blond mus shall be no more barter of ore. He tache, "It is for you to decide to

> "The way you put it-" cons'dered "Tell him that he is mistaken. The Hardy. "Perhaps it might be better

"You bet it would, Cap," eagerly that I come in peace, with a good heart after next spring, no more food and broke in Dupont. "'Tain't no joke. Them ornery cusses 'll git you like Sooner or later, white men will come they done with Nogen, just as sure

Vandervyn shot a furious glance at the blunderer. Marie was looking at who are doing wrong, the chiefs should dividing up of their land, so that each Hardy. But she did not need to see head of a family can have his own the tightening of his lips to realize

"Oh, Pere!" she reproached. "Why did you say it? You should have Redbear hesitated, stepped more known Captain Hardy could not leave

"Quite right, Miss Dupont," said

"You mean, you won't leave?" asked

"How can he?" Vandervyn smoothly it would be deserting his post under fire. He's an army officer-he wouldn't leave now even if he knew his staying here meant certain massacre for us 'the tribe by the troops.'

"I will remain until I have made at least one more effort to pacify the tribe," replied Hardy. "You are at liberty to resign whenever you please. Mr. Dupont has ample time to remove his goods and his daughter from the

"Not me," declared Marie: "I don't care what Pere and Reggie say; I There was still more than a trace of know there is not one of the tribe who "Well, mebbe not," admitted her fa-

> "I gather that I am the only person who seems to be endangered," remarked Hardy. "This being so, I will wait a few days for the excitement to subside, and will then call another council."

"They won't come ag'in to meet you,"

predicted Dupont. Then I shall go to them.

"Into the mountains, captain?" exclaimed Marie, her splendid eyes widening with concern. "Surely you will not venture among the camps."

"The tribe must learn that I mean friendship,"

Dupont paused to scratch the side of his head. But Vandervyn spoke without an instant's hesitancy: "You have no right to throw your life away uselessly, captain. Suppose Charlie and I make a trip to the camps, to see to be agent, and you'd go if we cannot quiet the tribe and talk the chiefs into giving you another hearing? If you have no objection, we could tell them that you cannot leave eded Marie. "He had to do just now, but that you will do so as soon as you have tried to benefit them."

> "And that Mr. Van'll be next agent," added Dupont.

> "Will you tell them that I am here to help them and to be their friend?"

> "Trust me to put it to them strong, captain," assured Vandervyn. "I know you'll play fair by resigning in my favor as soon as you have the tribe in hand.

"After I have done what I can do to improve conditions among them," qualified Hardy.

"I do so hope Mr. Van can persuade them to be friendly with you," said Marie. "I know he and Charlie will be perfectly safe. But it will be hard to talk them out of their strange disto lose everything like to you. When will you start, Reg-

"Early tomorrow morning, if the cap-

tain has no objections," "The sooner the better," agreed Hardy. "Til go and remove my council cos-

tume," said Vandervyn, smiling at his irreproachable frock coat. Marie and her father rose with him Hardy bowed out the girl and returned to his desk. He was deep in the midst

of a report on the tribe when, half an

hour later, Vandervyn returned to the office in his riding togs. "Charlie may not come back this afternoon," he remarked. "I thought I might ride down and tell him about the trip. I could fetch your mare for

"Very well. I shall be obliged," replied Hardy, and he returned to his study of the report.

Vandervyn rode down along the far side of the stream, keeping the thickld have gone back ets as much as possible between himin his chair to self and the Dupont house. He die face of Van- not recross the creek until he was or posite Redbear's home. He found the

Then the door opened a scant inch. "Hello!" he said. "Where's your brother?"

"He has-has gone to tell the police families."

"On the agent's mare," guessed Vandervyn.

"Please-he didn't mean any harmplease don't tell on him."

"That depends," replied Vandervyn. Do you think I care to favor him when you act as if you hate me?" "Hate? No, no!" The door opened

everal inches and as suddenly closed to a narrow crack. But Vandervyn had caught a glimpse of the girl's blushing face. His voice dropped to a caressing tone: "You're not afraid of me, are you, just because

talk. I won't bite you." "You promise not to-to kiss me?" "Not unless you wish me to."

I wanted a kiss? Come out here and

"But-but I do!" came back the naive confession.

Impulsively he started to swing off nis pony. The cabin door shut with a bang. He straightened in the saddle, waited a long moment, frowned heavly, and started to ride away.

From the window came a plaintive cry: "Oh, please, please!"

He deliberately dismounted, flung the reins over his horse's head, and walked to the opened window. The eager, frightened face within blushed scarlet and shrank back. He stopped

"See here," he admonished, "if you're going to be silly, I shall go away for



'It Will Be Hard to Talk Them Out of Their Strange Dislike for You."

good. You've got the door barred, and you know I shall not try to crawl in at a hole like this,"

"I-I won't be," she faltered.

"That's better," he said, and he reached in to slip his arm around her trembling shoulders.

Shrinking yet yielding, with eyes timidly downcast and olive cheeks burning with blissful shame, the young girl allowed him to draw her closer. Her lips quivered, yet she raised them to meet his kiss.

"There!" he rallied. "Was it so

dreadful?" She did not answer; she could not. Her head drooped forward with the instinctive modesty of an innocent young girl. He put the forefinger of his free hand under her chin and raised her head to take a second kiss.

"One good turn deserves another, sweetheart," he said. "You should not-not call me that,"

she whispered. "You are a gentleman white man; I am only a halfbreed-I'm yellow as a Chinaman." "No-golden. You are my golden

girl. Your cheeks are wild roses and honey gold. Your eyes are like a fawn's; your lips sweet as honey-Another kiss- There, that's more like it. You're learning how. Now look at me."

She raised her drooping lids with the sudden, desperate courage of one who is very shy, and gazed up at him, her tender eyes starlike with the soft glow of her love and adoration.

"You-you really like me?" she whispered.

"No, I hate you like poor Lo hates firewater. Give him a taste, and he wants it all. I want you."

"Charlie-he said I must marry a white man. I am joyed in my heart-You say you want me! But I am only a halfbreed girl, and you-

and open the door." She looked up at him again full and direct, and his gaze sank before the

trust in her clear eyes. "You want me to be your engaged girl!" she murmured. "When people are engaged; they are going to be married. Charlie said I must marry a white man, a good white man. You are kind to me. It is wonderful. I have read that even army officers have married halfbreed girls. But you are grander than any officer, and you are

very good to think of marrying me." her enraptured gaze:

"What else did you think I meant reservation, it will be according to the custom of the tribe."

"Married? Oh, my heart sings!" cried the girl. "I will be your wifeyours! I can't believe it- There habitual gravity softened to a smile comes Charlie, I must run and tell of wistful sadness. At the first oppor-Wim. Vandervyn hastily released her, and

drew his arm out of the window as he looked around. "Wait!" he commanded, "He's coming fast enough. Leave the door breakfast.

gesture. There was a short pause, gallop. He flung himself out of the saddle and advanced upon Vandervyn, his face dark with suspicion.

"What you saying to my sister?" he demanded.

The white man met his threatening look with a half-contemptuous, half-

amused smile.

"I've been showing the girl what I think of her," he replied. Redbear came to a sudden halt. The

muscles of his face began to twitch. 'What makes you look at him that way? Why don't you thank him?"

She untarred the door and stepped outside. "For what?" questioned her brother

in a harsh, strained voice. "Because he is going to be my mangoing to take me for his wife." "Marry you? Oinna-you?" The halfbreed could not believe his ears.

suspicion. "But you-you won't marry her!" Vandervyn smiled in his careless

manner "Oh, I guess yes." "You'll marry her? You'll take her

to town and marry her like white people?" "I'll marry her as some white people marry. I'll not take her to town. Oinna and I have agreed to be

married according to tribal custom." Again Redbear's weak face darkened with suspicion and anger. "1 won't have it. You're white, and Oinna is half white. White people don't

marry Indian fashion." "You know a lot about it, Charlie. Haven't you ever heard of common-law marriages? Lots of white people get

married that way." "What way?" "You must know about it. Instead mine." of going to a lot of fuss and bother over ministers and licenses, many people just take each other for husband and wife and go to housekeep-

ing." "Is—is that a real white people's

marriage?" asked Oinna. Vandervyn frowned. think I'm lying, do you? Why, you get him into our camp." often see in the newspapers about common-law wives getting their share of their dead husbands' estates, just the same as if they had gone through all the fuss of weddings. Ask Hardy if that does not often happen."

"Well, if it's a real marriage-"

muttered Redbear. "Of course it is, Charlie, if he says

so!" cried Oinna rapturously. Her brother's face glowed with sudden unconcealed exultance. He stammered almost incoherently: ."Then you-Marie-you don't marry-don't

marry Marie." "No," replied Vandervyn, and his voice rang clear. "I have no intention of marrying her.'

"Maybe Marie'll like me now, when I tell her you are going to be my brother," sighed Redbear. Vandervyn laid a brotherly hand on his shoulder. "Hold on, boy!" he said. him see you look that way till after

"You let me manage things. You know that Marie thinks she likes me. But now Hardy is here, and he wants her. If she hears that I have thrown her over, she will run off with him." "She don't like him."

"What if she doesn't! He's an army officer. He has money, and when he goes from here he will wear his uniform, all gilt and spangles. You know how the girls like that. No-I tell you there's not the ghost of a show for you until he is out of the way. Our little bluff didn't work. He says he is me. But it must be understood at the and discipline. agency that you have sent her to-

Who could you send her to?" "Ti-owa-konza is our mother's fathat," said Redbear. "Before he came rock and piney slope was familiar to here, she ran off with a bad white man. They went to the Blackfeet. After a time he got an arrow through his back. My mother came home. Ti-owa-konza would not see her face. She had to work for the agent till they made us go away to school. Then she died."

"Old Thunderbolt your grandfather?" remarked Vandervyn, seizing upon that one fact in the squalid tragedy. "Does he know it?"

"I told him so today. He said my face- But maybe he will come to like me. He said to bring Oinna for

him to look at her." "You're my honey-sweet girlie. Go "That's great! We'll tell it to everybody. But remember, not a word about the marriage until after we get rid of Hardy and I am agent. Then things will go all right for all of us. You savvy that, Charlie? While you rub down the mare I'll go in and say goodby until tomorrow morning."

CHAPTER VIII.

Best-Laid Schemes. Hardy had gone to the Duponts' for

supper when Vandervyn returned to the agency. He made a hasty toilet Vandervyn forced a smile, and re- and followed. Marie met him with olied to her adulation without meeting marked coldness. This, however, melted before he had finished his report to Hardy. All agreed that the old chief when I kissed you? Of course we shall probably would take a fancy to Oinna, be married. As we are here on the and that, as a result, there would be a fair chance of pacifying the tribe.

When Hardy turned to the girl, he found her and Vandervyn exchanging glances and murmuring remarks. His tunity he excused himself. Midnight had passed before the light in the little citified parlor of the Dupont house was extinguished.

When, at sunrise, Hardy went for

After the officer left, Dup a. iqui ed across the table at her and beg

to scratch his head. "You and Mr. Van burned a lot coal oil last night. He didn't git i enough along to ask you to hitch

with him, did he?" A red blush flamed in the gir cheeks. Without looking up, she mi

mured a regretful "No." "Guess he figures he'll wait and se if Hardy is going to bust us up. Lil "Oh, Charlie!" reproached Oinna. as not he'll skip back east if Hard gits sore and chove if our hold o

the mine.' "What do you mean? He'd sen Bezgie away. The stiff, solemn of

fogy -I hate him!" "Easy, easy, girl!" soothed Dupen 'No use plunging when you're hitche to the snubbing post. Just now he' got us roped. He'll have us all hor tied if we go to bucking. We've go Through his daze shot a flash of angry to make him think we're gentled." "What if we act toward him as w

feel?"

"You don't savvy about that mig-Me and Nogen discovered it and raid honest for developing it, as you know. Well, we let Mr. Van in on it. Tren Nogen up and gits killed. That makes it half and half between me and Mr. Van, according to all that's fair and square. But do you believe Hardy will look at it that way? Not by a-con-

tribe's, just because it's on the reservation.' "I see !" The girl's eyes flashed, and her nostrils dilated. "He will rob you and Reggie of a fortune-yet you wish

siderable. He'll talk about it being the

me to be nice to him!" "You bet I do! Can't you git the point? He ain't going to be bluffed into quitting. That means we got to make friends with him or lose the

"Oh! So that is it?"

"Yep. Worst of it is he's one of them there fellows what stand so straight they lean backwards. We talked to him about how it would help the tribe if he joined us in opening the mine. He was mighty offish. Guess we'll have to give him Nogen's third to

"What a shame! The mine is yours and Reggie's. He hasn't done a thing toward developing it." "I know. But he's the agent. He's got us roped. He can rob us of our

mine if we don't make friends with him. Now do you savvy?" The girl's thick black eyebrows met in a frown of vexation. "If he is a man whose friendship must be benght.

I do not wish to be pleasant to him." "It's business, Marie. There ain't no two ways about it. Mr. Van's hanging fire, a-waiting to see if we lose the mine. If we do, he can't afford to marry no poor girl off a reservation."

"Very well. I shall make myself agreeable to Captain Hardy. But wait until I am free to pay him out for it !" "Nom d'un chien!" muttered Dupont sight of her straightened lips,

"That's the Injun in you. Don't let

we git the mine cinched." "I am not a fool, mon pere."

Dupont shook his grizzled head dubiously. But at midday, when Hardy came over for the noon dinner, Marie received his courteous greeting with a graciousness that soon lightened the pensive severity of his look. Before the end of the meal they were chatting in a manner that brought a twinkle

into Dupont's cunning eyes. The girl proposed a ride up the valley. Hardy was greatly pleased. He going to stay. So for a while you and had already grasped the simple details Oinna must keep still about the mar- of the agency business, and now, pendriage. Tomorrow morning you and I ing the absence of Vandervyn and Bedare going into the mountains to talk bear, had nothing to do except instruct with the chiefs. Oinna will go with the police in his ideas of cleanliness

Marie never looked more charming than when on a horse. She took her new friend for a long ride around one ther. Not even Mr. Dupont knows of the mountains. Every cliff and



"Is-Is That a Real White People's "Marriage?" Asked Oinna.

her. She pointed out all the grandest and most beautiful views, and showed nerself even better versed in the lore of the wild than she had seemed to be posted on the culture and graces of polite society. After that there was no break in her friendly manner toward the captain for several days. Frequently they took other rides, over or around the nearest hills and mean

Do you believe that Vander-

vyn's deceitfulness with little Oinna will be punished by the Indians-or do you think sh