An Indian Reservation

N HIS way to take the agency at Lakotah Indian reservation following the murder of Agent Nogen, Capt. Floyd Hardy, U. S. A., rescues a quarterbreed girl and two men from attacking Indians. They are Jacques Dupont, post-trader, his daughter Marie, and Reginald Vandervyn, agency clerk and nephew of Senator Clemmer. Hardy learns Vandervyn had been promised the agency by his politician uncle, discovers the Indians are disaffected because they have been cheated in a tribal mine which Dupont and Vandervyn are illegally working, is puzzled when his friendly speech to tribesmen, interpreted by Vandervyn's halfbreed tool, angers the Indians, and he determines to find out what's wrong all around and right it. He proposes marriage to Marie, whom Vandervyn also is courting, and is held off, but nursed tenderly by her when shot and wounded from ambush. Lost in the mountains after a second ambush attempt on his life, Hardy wanders into the Indian camp, learns they have misunderstood his motives through misinterpretation, makes friends with them and accuses Dupont and Vandervyn of rascality to their faces. Out of this situation springs a much more serious dilemma for the army officer, attacking both his affections and his honor-as you will see in this installment.

CHAPTER XII-Continued.

"You add to my regret. Yet, as actceiving me. Had they told me about the new treaty and compelling the In- rightfully his." dians to work the mine without pay-" "He did that?" Marie questioned her

"Well, me and Mr. Van done all we could to git him to pay 'em," mumbled

"Of course! But he- I did not think him so mean!" The girl's eyes blazed

you had let the killer escape!" "Couldn't," tersely replied Vandervyn. "He was blood-mad-would have in open disdain. He raised his hat to got Charlle and me, too, if we hadn't got him."

myself! The thief!— Reggie, if only

"That was self-defense," said Hardy. "It has been greed and dishonesty, though, that have prompted you to conceal from me the facts that led up to the killing. Aside from the danger to me, you have permitted the tribe to verge upon an uprising that would have compelled their pacification by might steal the ore of this mine."

"Steal our own ore?" bellowed Dupont. "You're plumb locoed!"

a high

to pull

"I shall

of passion:

ward the trib

fixed the young

that compelled hi

But now Marie

scorn and anger burs

"You hypocrite! you

father and Mr. Van. would you? A

each a thousand times better man than

martinet! You would r

"Not so loud, if you please," quietly replied Hardy. "The ore is not

"That's all you know about it," blustered the trader. "Ain't I one of the discoverers and locators of the lode?"

to location.

member of

you want to take away the mine from the tribe and from us too!

Hardy winced under the scornful ing agent, it is my duty to censure reproaches, yet did not yield a hair. "I it's mighty hard luck on us. Here we your father and Mr. Vandervyn for de- have done my duty, Miss Dupont. I went and blocked out all that there shall continue to do it. I have no in- ore-three hundred thousand dollars Nogen's malfeasance—his blocking of tention of robbing anyone of what is as good as in our pockets—not to

> open for entry, someone else who it runs clean through the mountain never saw the mine may slip in ahead and down to China!" of us and jump it," said Vandervyn.

"That is something I cannot prevent," said Hardy.

"You can!" contradicted Marie. "The chiefs will not insist on the new and her nostrils dilated. "So that was treaty-they will do what Pere thinks mebbe it does. Just you take a look why he was shot? I don't blame the best for them and us, if you leave the at it this way, Cap. Suppose that new man who did it-I could have done it | matter to him and Reggie."

agent," insisted Hardy.

The girl turned her back upon him beats us to it, and the government says her and started for the cabin, his face white, but his shoulders squared back and his head very erect.

## CHAPTER XIII.

Another Card or Two.

A few minutes later Hardy came out of the cabin. Though grave, he was even with them on the proceeds. I call cool and alert. He at once walked up that a square deal to them and us, too the diggings and tell him what we the war department. All this that you to Dupont, who sat puffing at his pipe on the top of the mine-dump.

"Redbear seems to be quiet," he said. "Where is your daughter?"

Dupont pointed vaguely down the mountain-side. "She went off with Mr. Van, to try to smooth down his fur. You riled him considerable, Cap."

"I regret that it was necessary to eprimand you."

a look at the mine." "Yes," crisply agreed Hardy.

Dupont rose and led him into the mouth of the tunnel. There he un- be a real lady, if she had moneylocked a heavy tool chest and took only you ain't going to give her no ing them fifteen millions. I think it out two candles. These were needed, for though the tunnel ran into the mountain side less than three hundred her," said Hardy. feet, its twisting course along the orevein soon shut out the daylight. Duont noticed his companion's dubious ok at the soft ore-body that formed roof and one wall of the tunnel.

Walk quiet, and don't talk loud," said. "We ain't done no timbering Drove in this drift to the foot of haft fast as we could git the lazy s to work, so's we could figure

we had to count on." dy made no reply until they to the end of the tunnel and haft bottom. He looked up the understand my position." quare, timbered well, and reed: "You sank this first, then

in to meet it." Wanted to make sure the s blocked out."

o lead the way back.

had gone twenty-five or thirty whispered cry; "Jump-

> ped after him, barely in the ton or more of ore from the roof in a mass. pping to look behind them, hastened stealthily down ope of the tunnel, their The shock of the first ind and in front of the they broke into a run. soon. As they dashed regarding her half-averted face. rn that brought them to entire roof behind them

e, Dupont shook the m his hat and clothes, at his bandanna to wipe

grunted. "Don't never re ag'in till it's timbered." remarked call,"

Who has made all the trouble chien! Just my luck! If I hadn't when he came within hearing of the you came? The whole tribe sung out, you'd 'a' got smashed under speakers, -and I'm one of the tribe! that first drop."

cht-laced prig! You say "I shall not forget it, Dupont." tegrie are dishonest, when "Me, neither. 'Stead of being rid of

and good pay. But you- clean us out-and I done it!"

"You do not regret saving my life," asserted Hardy.

"Well, mebbe not. Just the same, speak of all that's down under and "Yet when the reservation is thrown | t'other side the shaft. For all we know,

> "That does not alter the situation," said Hardy.

"Mebbe it don't, and then ag'in-Dupont began to scratch his head. "Yes, mebbe it don't, and then, ag'in, treaty goes through, the tribe don't "I must do my duty as acting git nothing out of this mine, and we don't, neither. Just some lucky buni it's hisn. Is that fair and square?"

You have acted outside the law," said Hardy. "You must take your chances with other locators."

"How about the tribe?" queried Dupont. "Don't you care nothing about their interests? Just supposing you and me and Mr. Van took hold of this here proposition for the tribe and split -and I know Marie would think the same. She likes you, Cap. Just show her you want to do what's best for all concerned, and I'm dead sure she-"

"Stop!" commanded Hardy. "Leave your daughter out of this."

"You've got to tell me how I'm going to do it," replied Dupont in an injured tone. "If I don't git my share in the mine, Mr. Van can't afford to "All right, Cap. I don't bear no take her; and you won't have no grudge. Mebbe now you'd like to take show. But you git in right with Marie, and she'd work her hands to the bone | plied Hardy. for you. She ain't no common breed You know that. girl, neither. chance."

you're going to rob me and her of a fortune?

Hardy looked directly at the tempter, his eyes clear and resolute, though his face was white and drawn. "It is of no use, Dupont. I shall do what I consider my duty."

Dupont's face darkened. "So that's what I git for saving your life. You ain't got a particle of gratitude, and you don't care a hang about her."

"I must beg to differ with you," said ed out into the dim daylight of Hardy. "But I cannot expect you to

Dupont drew out his pipe and returned to his seat on the mine-dump, to brood on his wrongs in morose silence. Hardy thoughtfully walked in't pinch out nowhere. Nogen back to the cabin, drew out a writing Van both figured we got three pad from one of his saddlebags and d thousand dollars of ore as began to draft a semiofficial letter to the most influential of his few acsaid Hardy, and he signed to quaintances in Washington.

He soon became so intent that he did not notice the half-dozen figures hen a little slither of ore fell in dark blue uniform that came swingloor of the tunnel in front of ing down the precipitous mountain-Instantly he sprang forward, side above the terrace. When at last he finished the letter and looked up, he saw all the members of the police escort drawn up in line before him, their swarthy faces alight with respectful friendliness. Their sergeant uttered a guttural word of salutation, and began making signs.

sed and eyes fixed on the looked around for an interpreter. Duody above them. At any pont still sat sulking on the mine with them out of hand. But Jake tire roof might cave in dump, but Marie and Vandervyn will allow them part payment in trade were coming back up the mountain- goods, and we shall make other paysmall quantities of ore side. They appeared only a few ments as fast as we get returns from assage, Fragments drib- yards away, as Hardy glanced about, our next ore shipments." His lips drew tense when he per-

cabin had he not spoken.

"Pardon me, Miss Dupont. These that was gathering in you to interpret for them?"

a cool one," muttered the bled over from the mine-dump. His expenses," ider, and he scowled. "Nom d'un discontented face darkened still more

At last the sergeant finished his im- I hope that you-" promptu oration. Without looking at "You mag not, Captain Hardy," she Hardy, Marie gave the substance of ungraciously is terrupted. "You in- like this poor girl's, her natural sh to do is to give the tribe you, here you are ready as ever to the speech with contemptuous curt- sulted my fath er. He and I shall at guardian is unfit, my position as acting

"He says they think you were very brave to follow the shooter into the broken mountain. They are very sorry that they could not again find

he must have shot Charlie." "Tell them that is all right. The fellow thought I was the enemy of his tribe. He will soon learn better. Neither he nor any other will

the trail of the bad Indian after los-

ing it on the bare rocks from which

again attack me." "Yes, you have talked Thunderbolt into believing you the tribe's dear; est friend," ironically replied Marie. These silly fellows trailed you to the chief's camp, and have swallowed whole the account of the wonderful good things you are going to do for the tribe. All this gush and fuss was over that and your big heart."

Regardless of the mockery in the girl's eyes, Hardy turned to smile and nod at the policemen in acknowledgment of their kindly feeling.

Dupont muttered a curse, and ventured an ill-humored remark loud enough to reach Hardy's ears: "The whole bunch'd sing a different tune If I told them how he turned down the chance to give the tribe half what's in our mine."

"Chuck it, Jake!" interposed Vandervyn, with a good-humored smile that surprised Hardy no less than the trader. "It's up to us to take our medicine. We know it will not be to the best interests of the tribe. The responsibility, however, is his."

"You ain't going to throw down, are you?" exclaimed Dupont.

"What else can we do?" mildy asked Vandervyn, "The game is up." "What if the government don't make it no rush, but has the entrymen draw lots?" objected Dupont. "I been fool enough to show Cap through got blocked out. If he ain't square enough to keep his head shut, we won't stand no chance at all of buying out the entryman what draws first choice in the lottery."

"You see, captain," said Vandervyn. As we discovered and developed the lode, do you not think the honorable thing would be to make no mention of the mine in your report?"

"The tribe should receive a large payment for their mineral lands," re-"Quite true," agreed Vandervyn, his

voice ringing clear and strong with sincerity. "There was talk of payshould be fifteen or twenty. We have "She knows that I wish to marry found indications of other lodes. am sure you will see that it would be e out all mention of our ould protect us, and do mine. he tribe. If you see it no harm that way, I will pull all the wires I can to convince the government that this part of the reservation is rich in minerals. My uncle is chairman of the treaty commission. If his report favors a payment of fifteen or twenty millions to the tribe, congress will ap-

propriate that amount." "If there are indications of other lodes as rich as this one, fifteen millions is none too large a price," said Hardy. "You agree to help obtain fair compensation to the tribe?"

"Provided you do the fair and honorable thing by us," replied Vander-

Hardy considered, and nodded. "Very well. As between you and the other entrymen, it seems to me right to withhold your secret. You found and developed th's mine, and it is not the fault of yourself and Dupont that Nogen had the work done at the expense of the tribe."

"Pere and Mr. Van will pay them for all the work," proudly stated Ma-

Dupont gaped in blank amazement at this unwelcome prediction. Not so

"Of course we shall pay them, captain," he confirmed. "I intend to list the claimants and the amount due Hardy smiled, shook his head, and them at the council tomorrow. Neither Jake nor I can afford to settle

"Very good," agreed Hardy. "You even on their heads, ceived the girl's happy blushes and are to understand, however, that the the look with which Vandervyn was tribe must voluntarily bring the ore to the reservation boundary and ther At sight of Hardy she straightened sell it to you. Have you coasidered eith proud disdain, and would have the risk of the public surmising he mmediately gone around into the existence of the mine from the ore shipments?"

"No chance of that," explains d Dumen wish to report to me. May I ask pont. "Nogen let it out that he got the ore from a prospect in the moun-The girl turned coldly to the ser- tains clean back across f.he other your word, I shall feel justified in geant, who at once poured out an im- boundary of the reservation, and be telling Dupont my reason for ordering passioned declamation, emphasized showed around a smelter report of a you off the reservation." with swift-formed signs. He was still shipment of ore tint 'we'd doctored talking, when Dupont sullenly sham- with barren rock fo's 'it just paid out laugh. "Do you think Jake's the sort

Hardy did ne & sm'ile. He returned gravely to Marie. "In view of the ter is at stake-" general agreement, Miss Dupont, may

once le ave for home."

received a sign to acquiesce.

"Don't want to leave you in the

set on going, guess I'll have to." "Tell four of the police they are detailed to escort yourself and Miss Dupont back to the agency," ordered Hardy. He raised his hat to Marie. "Permit me to wish you a pleasant journey."

The girl turned away without replying. Hardy stood for a moment cool and still under Vandervyn's exultant Walt till we hear from Washington." smile; then faced about and steadily walked off along the mountain ter-

He did not return to the cabin until the greater number of the saddle and pack ponies had been brought up from the valley and the returning party had mounted and ridden away He drew back a step or two, lit his on the back trail. Vandervyn started pipe, and at last remarked in a someoff with them, and Hardy's keen, hazel eyes dimmed as, leaning against a gnarled pine on the slope above, he watched the lovers ride away, side by side.

Angered at himself for his momentary weakness, he sprang down the back to talk with Redbear. He was pered that her brother had at last fallen asleep.

Hardy withdrew to the shady side of the cabin, where he sat down on his saddle and began drafting a list of in-Washington, He was still writing



"You Insulted My Father!"

Vandervyn came jogging back to the mine. He had had a delightful ride of the cabin. with Marie, and he complacently intimated the fact to Hardy.

In the midst of this subtle tormentserve the supper that she had cooked ability or t'Ae Jonesty of her brother." in the cabin. Vandervyn abruptly ave no sign that glances that the girl bestowed on Van-

As they puffed at their after-supper "Think she believes that when perfectly honorable to report that pipes, Vandervyn suggested that, out t'ae apex of the outcrop of the vein. of consideration for the young woman, they roll up in their blankets outside the cabin. To this Hardy made no ob- f.elf and call softly through the near jection. They picked out a soft sport est loophole. He then seated himself matted with fallen pine needles, und er on his saddle and began to write. A a low-growing tree, and soon bot'n were seemingly fast asleep.

After several minutes Vand er syn spoke to his companion in a lov / 'cone. Hardy did not answer. Var Flervyn drew out his pipe and struck 'a match. He held the flame above Har dy's face. The eyes were closed, and ' he severe, half-melancholy expression of the harsh features was relay refi as if in heavy slumber.

Vandervyn extinguish ed, the match, and slipped out of his 'ob inkets. Noiselessly he crept dow a to the cabin and around to the do or. It was barred on the inside. He tar ped on it.

There was a sliding sound within the cabin, and the heavy door began to swing inward . Vandervyn put his foot on the threshold to enter. At the same means at a sinewy hand gripped his shorder and jerked him far camps as well as near, the men away. He cur sed, and clapped his hand to bis 'noister as he whirled about. It was empty. He bent for they had first hated but now believed ward to sprf ng at the dark form in the half-ope a doorway.

"Stand by .ick!" came the stern command, "I have your revolver. Oinna, close the door."

The door swung shut. In the tense silence the rattle of the bar as it shot brick '.nto its socket was distinct. Vanperv yn's teeth ground together.

"You - straight-laced prig!" cb oked out, "Get away from here! I'm going in.

"Suppose I do not choose to give it?" "Then I will protect her by ordering you to leave the reservation as fast as you can travel."

"I see," taunted Vandervyn.

want to get rid of me, so you can have clear sailing with Marie. You're a great one to spout about honor! You'll go and blat to her about this." "You know very well I cannot do that. Yet if you refuse to give me

Vandervyn burst into a cynical

to care. "When the happiness of his daugh-

"Precisely. He thinks I'm her one best chance. "Very well," replied Hardy. "Since,

agen: requires me to take his place.

Dupont looked to Vander vyu, and My appeal to you as a gentleman naving failed. I must conclude that you are not a gentleman. I shall be comturch, Cap," he said, "but if Marie's pelled to disclose this incident to Miss Dupont. You shall be escorted off the reservation under arrest."

"You'll order me-" cried Vandervyn, and again he bent forward as if to leap at his rival. Hardy stood cold and motionless in the dim starlight The younger man checked himself. His voice shook with suppressed anger: "You've got the drop on me now.

"Until I am relieved from my present detail, I shall consider myself the guardian of everyone and everything belonging to the tribe," stated Hardy.

There followed a silence of several moments' duration, in which Vandervyn must have found time to reflect. what forced tone of conciliation: "I see you're like an army mule-no use trying to budge you when you balk. I give you my word to act as a gentleman in this affair."

"Very well," replied Hardy.

Vandervyn started off, sucking at ledges to the terrace, and hastened his pipe. Hardy turned about, and locked the door on the outside with met at the cabin door by Oinna, who the heavy padlock that hung loose in placed a finger on her lips and whis- the jamb staple. He put the key in his pocket, and walked around the cabin to make certain that there were no other openings larger than the narrow crevices of the loopholes.

When he returned to the tree, he structions for the tribal delegates to found Vandervyn already outstretched. He picked up his blankets and moved them when, shortly before nightfall, down the slope, to spend the night in the more congenial company of the two remaining Indian policemen.

## CHAPTER XIV.

In White and Black.

In the morning Oinna did not shove herself outside the cabin, though Hardy called a kindly good morni agl, to her. Her brother, with one : mul carefully bandaged and in a shire. brought out the breakfast that fine cooked. He looked so weak a'ad 'ansteady that Hardy at once reserred when he mumbled that he wished to go back to bed and rest antil the

council. "You must have your wits about you this time," added Harady. "Whatever the cause of the masun ierstanding at the first council, it must not recur. You are too careles s in your interpretations. Inform four sister that she is to be present. I shall require her to check you."

"Would you make a 'girl as shy as she is stand up in a tribal council and interpret?" remor strated Vandervyn, as Redbear slun's around the end

"The presence of her grandfather will give her cour age," replied Hardy. "It is necessary that she should be ing of his rival, Oinna came out to present. I do not trust either the

Vanderv yn shrugged, and sald no changed the subject, and began to talk more. Fin's an hour or so later he about the council next day. Hardy asked per mission to use Hardy's pen h, eq ban to write some letters. sudden break or the furtive, adoring captain handed them to him, and started up the mountainside above dervyn as she glided softly to and fro. the tur nel mouth. A steep path led up The night came on, clear and still. to the top of the spur ridge from w'aic', the shaft had been sunk from

> / is soon as he had gone beyond earshot, Vandervyn rose to stretch himlistener would have had need to be near at hand to have heard the low murmur of Redbear's and Oinna's voices through the loophole above Vandervyn's head.

> When Hardy returned from his examination of the upper works of the mine. Vandervyn sealed in his presence the two letters that he had written. They appeared decidedly thin, in view of the time that Vandervyn had spent in his writing and the number of sheets of paper gone from the pad. But Hardy did not observe this. His attention had been diverted by a large party of Indians that had appeared on the velvety green meadows of the valley bottom.

> The tribal council had begun to assemble. This time the chiefs and headmen did not come alone. From of the tribe were bringing their families to see the Longknife chief whom to be their friend and father. By noon their numbers had grown from scores to hundreds. Shortly after the midday meal one

of the Indian policemen brought word up to the cabin that the head chief had arrived and the council was ready to talk with the agent. Hardy at once gave command to mount. As soon as Hardy and Vandervyn started to ride down the slope. Qinna slipped out, and held her brother's pony for him. She then mounted her own, and rode after him.

At the foot of the slope the rideco came out through a grove of young. quaking asps into sudden view of the picturesque and imposing tribal council. Fully half the tribe had gathered together for the occasion. All up and down the valley the meadows were dotted with their popies. The Indiane were assembled in a dense crowdthe men in a deep band around the chiefs, the women and children out-

Do you believe that Vandervyn can persuade Oinna to do so or scare her into misinterpreting Captain Hardy's statements to the tribesmen? Will Hardy catch Vandervyn at his dirty work this time and punish him

(To be contin but