

BUDDY

and THE INDIAN CHIEF



HOWARD R. GARIS

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"I'm out to get you, and I will," said Buddy.

*Buddy and the
Indian Chief*

or

A Boy Among the Navajos

BY

HOWARD R. GARIS

*Author of "Buddy on the Farm," "Buddy and His
Cowboy Pal," "The Curlytops," "Uncle
Wiggily," Etc.*

ILLUSTRATED

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THE BUDDY BOOKS

By HOWARD R. GARIS

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BUDDY AND THE INDIAN CHIEF

Or, A Boy among the Navajos

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Buddy and the Indian Chief

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NOTE

The author wishes to acknowledge his indebtedness, for much information about the Navajos, to Leo Crane and his book "Indians of The Enchanted Desert." And for details of the Hopi Snake Dance to the same source.

Buddy and the Indian Chief

CHAPTER I PLANNING A STRANGE TRIP

WHEN Buddy came running home from school a few days before the long summer vacation was about to begin, the small red-haired boy knew at once something had happened. One reason was he heard his father and mother talking earnestly in the library.

Another reason was he saw his father's traveling bag, partly packed, out in the hall.

"Dad must be going on a trip," said Buddy half to himself. "Golly! I wish he'd take me. I'm going to ask him!"

Putting his books on the seat of the hat rack, Buddy hurried toward the library. He entered it, flushed by his run home from school in time to hear his mother say:

"Are they real Indians, Clayton?"

"Oh, ho! Indians!" thought Buddy and his heart began to beat faster as he listened to his father's answer of:

"Yes, my dear, of course they are real Indians. The most real Indians it is possible to have, at least since early Colonial days."

"Then do you think it is safe for you to go?" asked Mrs. Martyne. Neither Buddy's father nor mother had yet noticed his entrance into the library. Mr. Martyne was busy looking at some books and his wife had some clean shirts in her hand as if she was preparing to help her husband pack his traveling bag.

"Of course it's safe," answered Mr. Martyne. "You aren't afraid I'll get scalped, are you?"

"I don't know," answered Buddy's mother a little doubtfully. "Somehow when I think of Indians I think of——"

"Now don't worry!" her husband laughed. "There isn't any danger or I wouldn't think of taking Buddy on this trip."

It was then Buddy could keep silent no longer. He had heard what he most wanted to hear and then and there he crowed like a rooster and, jumping up in the middle of the library, he clicked his heels together three times, a trick one of his uncles had taught him.

“Oh, my goodness!” exclaimed Mrs. Martyne. “It’s Buddy!”

“So it is,” said Mr. Martyne looking at the red-haired boy with a smile. “Buddy in person.”

For the first time his mother and father seemed aware that Buddy was in the room and a moment later he burst out with:

“Indians! When are we going, Dad? Are you sure you’ll take me? Is it to a Wild West show like the one where I met Powder Pete?”

“Well, young man,” said Buddy’s father with pretended seriousness, “I’m afraid you came in upon us a bit suddenly and heard things you weren’t expected to hear. Now if you will just quiet down and——”

“Oh, Dad, how can I quiet down after what you said?” asked the boy. “Please tell me more about it! Is it just a Wild West show?”

Mr. and Mrs. Martyne looked at each other. Then they smiled. The serious look vanished from the face of Buddy’s mother and his father said:

“No, son, the Indians we have been talking about—your mother and I—aren’t the kind in Wild West shows. They are real Indians out on reservations in Arizona. I find I have to go out there this summer on some business matters and——”

“Are you going to take me?” cried Buddy.

Again Mr. and Mrs. Martyne exchanged glances.

“You may as well tell him, Clayton,” said Buddy’s mother. “We didn’t intend him to hear anything until after school has closed. And I haven’t fully made up my mind to let him go with you. But since he heard you say you planned it—well, you may as well tell him everything and then we can talk it over. If it was any other country but one where there are a lot of wild Indians——”

“Whoopee! The wilder the better!” Buddy almost shouted. “I’ve always wanted to go to real, wild Indian country.”

“Don’t count too much on it,” advised Mr. Martyne with a laugh. “I’m afraid you’ll find even the Navajos and Hopis more civilized than you care for. It is true they still have some of the dances and ceremonies they took part in during the days when they were really wild, but as for there being any danger——”

“I wouldn’t be afraid!” boasted Buddy. And then he had the thought to say politely: “Excuse me for interrupting.”

“You’re pardoned, Buddy,” responded his father. Then the red-haired boy went on:

“Please tell me more about it, Dad. How soon can we start? There are only two more days of school and I can skip them for I’ve passed and all the rest is just entertainments and exercises. Can’t we go now? I guess you’re going soon, anyhow,

aren't you? I saw your bag in the hall."

"A regular Indian scout trick!" laughed Mr. Martyne. "Well, Buddy, as your mother says I might as well tell you all about it. First I'll start off by saying I really am going out to the Arizona Indian country. I am going there to buy some Indian objects for our town museum and library. I shall probably be gone most of the summer, and, since it will probably be a sort of vacation trip, I planned to take you with me—if your mother consents."

"Oh, Mother, please say yes!" cried Buddy, running to Mrs. Martyne and reaching up to put his arms around her neck and kiss her. "Please say yes!"

"Wait a little, my dear," she answered. "At least I'm not going to say no until I hear a little more about it. As your father says, it may be a good vacation trip for you and if there is no danger——"

She paused uncertainly and Mr. Martyne said:

"There will be no danger. There may be a little adventure and some excitement, but I'll take good care of Buddy."

"I know you will. But it's a long way from here."

"Distance doesn't mean as much as it used to," said Mr. Martyne. "In an airplane I could get out to Arizona in a couple of days."

"Clayton Martyne!" exclaimed his wife, "I'm not going to have you and Buddy travel in an *airplane*! My mind is made up on *that*."

"Then we'll go by train," said Mr. Martyne. "I'd just as soon."

"Then I can really go?" asked Buddy. It seemed as if his mother was consenting.

"Well," said Mrs. Martyne slowly, "I suppose I'll have to give in. But no airplane!"

"All right," said Mr. Martyne.

"Hurray!" shouted the red-haired boy and again he jumped up and clicked his heels together in the air. "Now tell me all about it, Dad!" he begged. "Oh, golly! This is going to be great!"

"Calm down, Buddy," advised his mother. "You're all hot and excited. I'll just take these shirts out to Lola to have her run over them with a hot iron and fresh them up before I pack them," she went on. "Then you and your father can talk. Now sit down and don't act so excited."

It was hard for Buddy to do this but he finally managed to sit on a chair and look expectantly at his father who put away some books and papers at which he had been looking when Buddy came bursting into the library.

"There isn't much to tell yet, Buddy," said Mr. Martyne. "As I mentioned, I am going to Arizona to get some Indian relics for the library and museum here. Mr.

Franklin, who died a few months ago, left in his will a certain sum to be spent for an Indian exhibition. It seems in his younger days Mr. Franklin lived out in Arizona and came in contact with the Navajo and Hopi tribes of Indians. He grew to like them and decided, in order that their ways, institutions and mode of living might be better known, to establish an exhibit for the Mountchester Museum.

“I am on the Board of Trustees having this in charge and I was selected to go out west and purchase the different things that will go in the permanent exhibition. So I’ll be ready to start in a few days and it occurred to me that you might like to go. I suppose you would.”

“Oh, would I!” cried Buddy. “I’d like to see anybody try to stop me now! Oh, Dad! This is swell!”

“Yes,” said Mr. Martyne, “I think we shall have some jolly adventures together.”

“Is mother going?” asked Buddy.

“Indeed I am not, thank you!” exclaimed Mrs. Martyne coming back into the library just then. “I wouldn’t go out among those Hopijos Indians for anything! Never!”

“You are getting your Indian tribes a little mixed, my dear,” chuckled Mr. Martyne. “Buddy and I would like to have you with us but if you won’t go——”

“Well, I won’t and that’s all there is to it!” laughed Buddy’s mother. “And now I must plan what Buddy is to take with him. How long will you be gone and what kind of clothes will Buddy need? As it is summer now I should think——”

What Mrs. Martyne thought she did not tell for at that moment a loud scream sounded in the hall and the voice of Lola Wagg, the maid, was heard exclaiming:

“Go away! Go away! Don’t you dare come in here! Go away! Oh, it’s an Indian—an Indian chief! Go away!”

CHAPTER II

OFF TO NAVAJO LAND

HAD it not been that Buddy was in the room with his father and mother they might have thought he was playing some trick on Lola Wagg to make her cry out in this way. For the truth must be told—Buddy was often a tease.

But he wasn't bothering Lola now. He was thinking too much about the strange trip his father had promised him to have any mind for tricks or jokes. Still, something had alarmed the maid for out in the hall beyond the library door she continued to call:

"Please go away! I don't like Indians!"

"Indians! It can't be!" said Mrs. Martyne.

"That's what she said," spoke Buddy. "I'm going to see what it's all about."

He made a dash for the door as his mother said:

"You didn't bring an Indian home with you and leave him out in the hall, did you, Clayton?"

"No, indeed," answered Buddy's father with a laugh. "I can't imagine what this means. Lola must be talking in her sleep or something like that. I'll take a look."

Mr. Martyne followed Buddy out into the hall. He saw Lola Wagg hurrying toward the kitchen. He saw Buddy looking at a tall, slim man who, though he wasn't dressed as are Indians in a Wild West show yet looked to be one of the Redmen from one of the little visited parts of the United States. Though dressed in ordinary clothes, the strange man in the hall was holding a gaily decorated blanket, some thin sticks festooned with feathers and a number of silver ornaments studded with blue stones which Buddy knew to be turquoise as his mother had one set in a ring.

Really the objects which must have made Lola Wagg think the strange man was an Indian chief were the eagle feathers he carried but did not wear on his head as some Indians wear a war bonnet. But even without the war bonnet the visitor was clearly an Indian.

Buddy gazed at him with widely-opened eyes. It all seemed so strange to the boy. To come home, to hear his father talking about a trip to the Navajo Indian country and then to find an Indian of that nation, seemingly, in the hall. What did it mean?

Before Buddy could ask any questions, Mr. Martyne spoke, saying:

"Who are you? Why did you come in my house? Do you want to see me? What are you doing with those Indian objects?"

Somewhat to Buddy's surprise the strange man, instead of speaking as the boy expected he would, in halting, broken words, answered in good English:

“I must ask your pardon, Mr. Martyne, for this surprise. I really didn’t intend it. But learning you are interested in Hopi and Navajo Indian relics I brought you some.”

“How did you know I was interested in such things?” asked Buddy’s father.

“They told me at the library and museum here in Mountchester. I have just come from there. They gave me your address.”

“I see,” said Mr. Martyne, who was beginning to understand what at first was a puzzle. “Well, perhaps you had better step into the library here and explain. Are you an Indian?”

Buddy waited eagerly for the answer and was thrilled when he heard the visitor say:

“I am a full-blooded Navajo Indian. My name is Morzrel, which in English means Flaming Light. I shall be very glad to explain why I called on you.”

“I wish you hadn’t frightened my maid,” said Mrs. Martyne coming out into the hall to join in the talk. “Did you walk in on her and surprise her?”

“Oh, no, ma’am, indeed I didn’t. I rang the bell to come in to show what I have for sale. But as soon as she saw me, and I admit I must have startled her, she jumped back, leaving the door open and as I walked in she backed up and started to scream. I’m very sorry.”

“Lola screams easy,” said Buddy. He ought to know if anybody did, for he often teased Lola so that she cried out in alarm.

“Oh! Then I really didn’t frighten her, perhaps,” said Morzrel. “I am glad. I should like to make amends and perhaps you will give her this with my compliments.” He held out a bracelet made of native silver studded with turquoise chips and Mrs. Martyne took charge of it, murmuring her thanks as she said:

“Oh, I’m afraid it’s too expensive.”

“Oh, no,” said the Indian. “My people make many of them and sell them. This is not one of the most expensive. I have others and I hope you may purchase many of them and other of our goods for the collection, Mr. Martyne.”

“How did you know I was going to buy Indian goods for a collection?” asked Mr. Martyne quickly.

“They told me so at the museum where I went to sell some things myself. I would rather deal with you, sir.”

“Very well,” said Mr. Martyne. “Come in and we’ll talk it over.”

Buddy could hold back no longer. He just had to find out something and what he asked was:

“Are you really an Indian, Mr.-er-Flaming Light?”

“Yes, truly I am. What makes you think I’m not?”

“Well, you talk just like we do.”

“I have been to school for a number of years, just as I suppose you have, little man,” said the Navajo with a smile that showed his white teeth in contrast to his dark brown skin. “Most of the younger Indians speak considerable English though we also know our own language. But my father, Chief Kotcha, speaks very little English.”

“Oh, then there is an Indian chief?” asked Buddy and his hopes of some wild adventures came back.

“Oh, yes, we have several chiefs on the Navajo reservation in the Black Mountain region of Arizona. There are Hopi chiefs, too, and if you will come out there I’ll show them to you.”

“I’m coming!” Buddy exclaimed eagerly.

“Now don’t be too sure,” warned his mother.

“Oh, but you said I could go!”

“Yes, yes. We’ll go into that later,” said Mr. Martyne. “What I am interested in now are these things you have brought, Morzrel. Where did you get them?”

“They were intrusted to me by our tribe. I shall explain everything and you will see that it is all right.”

“May I stay and listen?” asked Buddy.

“Yes,” his father replied. So, while the red-haired boy curled up in an easy library chair, the young Indian, who was about twenty-five years of age, placed on a table the things he had with him.

I might take just a moment to tell you something about Buddy, though those of you who have read the other books in this series know him well enough by this time.

Buddy, who appears for the first time in a book called “Buddy on the Farm,” was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Clayton Martyne. Buddy’s real name was Richard, or Dick. But he was seldom called anything but Buddy.

The Martyne family lived in the small city of Mountchester and Buddy had many wonderful times and adventures not only there but in other places as has been told in several books. His last adventure was related in the volume just before this, called “Buddy and His Cowboy Pal,” and told how the red-haired boy went out on a Western ranch.

“But I’m going to a wilder place than a ranch now,” thought Buddy, as he listened to what Morzrel related.

Briefly the Indian’s story was that because there were several poor members of his tribe who wanted to live better than they could on the money the government

allowed them, they decided to get together a collection of the things they could best make, send them East and have them sold.

The things the Navajo Indians make best are blankets with rather peculiar angular designs, pottery and silver and turquoise jewelry of simple styles. Many of these things are sold to tourists who go to the Navajo country or to the Hopi reservations to observe the snake dances and other ceremonies.

Buddy was a little puzzled when Flaming Light spoke of the Indians being on reservations. But he remembered that Powder Pete, his cowboy pal, had explained how, when the United States government took the Indian lands they set aside certain big tracts where the Redmen, who once roamed about as they pleased, must now live forever. The Indians can't do as they please but must stay on their reservations unless permitted, for a certain time, to leave them for special purposes.

"So, after I finished school, a white man's school by the way, where many Indians were taught," said Morzrel the Navajo, "I got permission to leave the reservation to come and sell some of our goods.

"I sold quite a good lot to different museums and libraries around New York but when I got here I learned, somewhat to my surprise, that arrangements had been made to send you out, Mr. Martyne, to buy things yourself."

"Yes," said Buddy's father. "A rich man died and left some money to buy Indian relics. I was planning a trip to your country with Buddy when you happened in."

"Then perhaps it is very fortunate that I called," said Morzrel. "I am planning soon to go back to Arizona and, if you do not object, I should like to travel with you."

"That can be done," said Mr. Martyne.

"But we can't go in an airship," said Buddy rather sadly.

"I don't care to," laughed the Indian. "The train is good enough for me but a pony is better than the train. I shall have my pony when I get back home. Perhaps you would like one, also, Buddy?"

"Oh, I'd love it! I rode with Powder Pete. I can sit a saddle pretty well, I guess."

"I'm sure you can. Well, I'll give you a chance. When did you intend to start for Arizona, Mr. Martyne?"

"In a few days. The first of the week. As soon as Buddy's school closes."

"Good. Then, with your permission, I'll go with you. I can arrange for you to buy what you want of Indian relics for the museum and library at very good prices."

"That will be fine," said Mr. Martyne. "Now I'd like to look at what you have here. I may buy some of them."

Buddy was delighted, as were his mother and father, to inspect the Navajo goods. Even Lola ventured into the library when she learned the “Indian chief” was very harmless and she was delighted with her bracelet.

That night, after Morzrel had gone back to the hotel where he was staying, the Martyne family talked matters over and formal permission was given Buddy to go out to Arizona with his father, starting Tuesday, to remain most of the summer vacation. Mrs. Martyne would go to visit her sister at the seashore.

So it came about that one day, with bags and baggage, Buddy and his father and the Indian started for Arizona where many strange adventures awaited them.

CHAPTER III

A DEAD PONY

THE automobile, an old touring car, jolted along a dusty trail that wound in and out now over desert sands and again through small wooded hills and past little pools or small streams of water. It looked to be a dreary region of country but to Buddy it was like a most beautiful park, for the red-haired boy was looking eagerly forward to a stay among the Navajo Indians. At last he had reached their land.

"Here we are!" announced the driver of the auto.

"So this is the Indian agency?" asked Mr. Martyne.

"One of them," answered Morzrel. "There are a number of them on the different parts of the Hopi and Navajo reservations."

"Are we going to stay here?" asked Buddy.

He was just a little disappointed. Not because of the wild desert country to which he and his father had come after a long journey, but the Indians themselves didn't seem to Buddy to be at all like any Indians he had been dreaming about. Yet, when he came to think of it, from the very first time Flaming Light had come to the house with the silver and turquoise ornaments, Buddy had begun to somewhat understand that the Indians of today are different from those told of in books and stories of a few years ago.

Crowding around the old touring car in which the journey had been made from the railroad station at Gallup, in New Mexico, were Navajo Indian men, women and children. Some were afoot and others rode lean and rather scraggy-looking ponies. Most of those on ponies were young men and old men. The women and children seemed to be afoot, mostly, though there were several wagon loads of the dark-faced people. They had evidently come to the agency or trading post to buy goods or perhaps to meet their friends and visit.

"They're funny Indians," said Buddy.

"Yes, they are," admitted Morzrel with a laugh, "that is, Buddy, if you are thinking of the sort of Indians the people of New York city, or near it, see in Wild West shows like the one you told me Powder Pete, your cowboy pal, was in. We Navajo Indians are not like the old Indians that lived in the East, where there are great forests. We are Indians of the mountains and desert and live differently, even if we are in charge of the Government. But still we have our wild ways and adventures as you shall see when you meet my father, the chief."

"That's what I want—to meet an Indian chief," said Buddy.

"You shall," promised the chief's son.

“I think we are going to have plenty of adventures, now that we are here,” said Mr. Martyne looking about curiously, as Buddy was doing, on the strange scene. “I plan to go back into the country, where there aren’t any towns nor any agencies like this, to look for new and different relics for the library and museum. Out there it may be more like what you have in mind, Buddy, than here.”

“It will be,” said Morzrel. “Wait until you see a Hopi Indian snake dance, Buddy, or some of the ceremonies of the medicine men or take part in a rabbit hunt. We’ll have plenty of adventures for you, my little white friend.”

“That’s good,” Buddy said with a smile. Then he gave his attention to the scene about him. A hundred or more of Indian men, women and children were gathered about the agency buildings which were on a large desert plain at the foot of low hills which, farther back, rose into mountains. On the hills and mountains were trees and bushes, but the plains were rather barren, covered with rocks and sand almost like a desert.

On the railroad trip from Mountchester to Gallup, Buddy had been told, partly by his father and partly by Flaming Light how, about sixty years ago, the United States Government took charge of all the Indians, their land and property and put them on different reservations, or big tracts of country, each tribe or nation by itself. On some of these tracts oil was discovered so that the Indians who owned that land became wealthy. On other reservations were found deposits of silver and the blue turquoise stones, as in Arizona where the Hopi and Navajo nations were quartered. And from the sale of these and also the things they made, like blankets and pottery, the Indians made money which they spent for food and clothing.

In addition the government gave the Indians certain supplies or let them buy what they needed at low prices, such as wagons and household goods. These goods were supplied by men called traders who set up their stores at the various Indian agencies. The government also built schools and hospitals for its Indian wards.

Looking at the Navajo Indians gathered around the agency, Buddy saw some of the men wearing trousers made of old flour sacks. Others had on ragged overalls of blue or yellow. The better dressed braves had on dark red or purple velveteen shirts and trousers of corduroy or gay calico. On their heads were twisted handkerchiefs of many colors which contrasted well with their very black hair, drawn back from their heads and bundled into knots at the back. Instead of shoes, most of the Indians wore moccasins of buckskin, stained red, some coming high up on their legs. Many of the younger braves wore ornaments of silver and turquoise and they had decorated the bridles of their ponies with the same, sometimes shells and pieces of coral being mingled with them. Often a Navajo Indian would be decorated with

ornaments worth \$500.

Silver and turquoise stones form the main wealth of the Navajo tribes and they love to display these ornaments on their persons or horses.

The Indian women wore velveteen waists and skirts and their black hair, where it was not covered with gay handkerchiefs, gleamed with bright silver and the blue stones. Some of the girls had little bells sewed to their belts or moccasins so they tinkled musically as they walked along.

Buddy enjoyed all this very much. It was one of the best adventure trips he had ever taken. But he was anxious for the time to come when he and his father could get out among the hills and mountains, and perhaps camp at night on the desert under the gleaming stars, with their ponies, and listen to the yapping barks of the coyotes.

Two Indians, one a boy about Buddy's age and the other an old, dignified man, approached the auto from which Buddy and his father had alighted to go to the agency headquarters. They would have dinner there, be provided with ponies and set out for the wilds.

There was a greeting in the Navajo language between Morzrel and the two approaching Indians. Then Morzrel said to Mr. Martyne and Buddy:

"This is my father and my young brother. My father's name is Kotcha, which means Night and my brother is Lukah, which means Laughing Sand. I hope you will be friends."

"I am sure we shall," said Mr. Martyne shaking hands with the older Indian who seemed to accept this as a matter of course. He said something in his own language which Morzrel translated as:

"He says you and your son are welcome and that we shall all be happy together."

"Thank him for me," said Buddy's father.

But old Kotcha understood some English for he laughed and said in that tongue:

"I glad to see you. We ride out soon—see many things. I have son—you have son." He pointed to Buddy and then to the other Indian lad, Lukah.

"He means," said Lukah, or Laughing Sand, proving by his chuckle that he was rightly named, "he means we are about the same age. What's your name?"

"Buddy," answered the red-haired boy.

"That's a nice name."

"I think yours is nicer—Laughing Sand," spoke Buddy. "I wish I had an Indian name."

"Perhaps you will have one before you go back home," said Morzrel.

It was late in the afternoon, when, following a meal at the agency, a meal made up mostly of canned food, Buddy and his father, with the three Indians, Kotcha, Morzrel and Lukah, riding ponies, with other ponies carrying their baggage, headed away from the reservation agency. They were starting out into the foothill regions of the desert where Mr. Martyne expected to begin buying the things he needed.

They had not traveled far on their way, having planned to cover only a few miles before camping for the night when, as they topped a rise, they saw just ahead of them a little group of other Indians.

There were only men in this party and they seemed to be doing something curious. They were grouped about a lone pony and as Buddy and his father, with their escorts approached, a shot rang out and the pony fell dead.

“Is there going to be an Indian attack?” cried Buddy.

He wished he had a gun but he was unarmed.

CHAPTER IV

UNDER BRIGHT STARS

SOMEWHAT to the surprise of Buddy and his father, their three Indian friends did not seem at all alarmed by the shot and the killing of the pony. That the pony was killed was soon evident for it did not get up and the Indian group remained silent around it.

“Why did they kill the pony?” asked Buddy.

“It’s a funeral, an Indian funeral,” said Morzrel.

“Do they have funerals for Indian ponies?” asked Buddy.

“No, but when a Navajo dies it is the old custom to kill his favorite pony and put it in the same grave with him. To some of us younger ones it seems rather cruel and wasteful of a good animal. But it is hard to change the old Indian customs.”

Old Night, or Kotcha, the chief, who had come from his own village to meet his older son, grunted and said something in his own language.

“He says,” translated Morzrel, “that the Indian who has died will need his pony when he gets to the new land where he is going. You cannot change the old customs at once,” went on the young Navajo to Mr. Martyne.

“No, I suppose, you can’t,” agreed Buddy’s father.

They rode slowly to the burial place. There were about twenty Indians, young and old, grouped about an open grave at the bottom of which was a pine coffin. In it lay the body of a young Indian brave. With him in the coffin were his saddle, bridle and quirt. The body was wrapped in new blankets and there were many silver and turquoise ornaments. The dead pony was at the edge of the grave and suddenly some of the burial party, one Indian of whom held a smoking rifle, shoved the animal in with its late master.

“It seems too bad,” said Buddy to Lukah. “Shooting a nice pony like that.”

“I used to think so myself,” remarked Lukah who, having been to the agency school, spoke English as well as did his new chum. The boys had decided on being chums for this new adventure without really making any formal plan about it. Mr. Martyne was glad Buddy would have a companion of his own age on this trip. “Yes, it did seem a little hard at first to have a pony killed every time its master died. But it is what has always been done by my people.”

Lukah spoke rather proudly for he was an Indian boy through and through and he could boast of his ancestors as some of Buddy’s chums back home could boast, of having ancestors who had fought in the Revolutionary war or who had come over in the *Mayflower*.

“Yes, I guess Indians can’t be like white people,” Buddy agreed.

“In some ways maybe it’s better the Indians aren’t like you white folks—I don’t mean just you and your father but others,” said Lukah, thinking his guest might not like this talk. “The white people are a lot smarter than we are in many ways and they have lots of nice things we haven’t, like airships and automobiles. Most of the white men around here are good to us Indians and do things to help us.

“But after I have learned out of the white man’s books and have gone to his school,” said the Indian boy with a smile, “there are some things I’m glad that I can still be Indian about.”

“What for instance?” asked Buddy.

“Well, one is that I can have my own pony and I can ride around almost as I please and that I can camp out on the desert alone, without being afraid, and I can take care of myself almost anywhere in this reservation country of ours.”

“Yes, that is nice,” Buddy admitted. “I wish you’d teach me some Indian things, like camping out alone and like that. Do you think you and I could take a trip by ourselves?”

“Maybe your father wouldn’t let you.”

“I think he would, with you,” said Buddy. “Does your father, the chief, let you go out alone all night?”

“If I wanted to he would,” said Lukah. “I’ve done it before.”

“Look here, youngster,” said Morzrel, laughing at his small brother, “don’t get too boastful. That isn’t being Indian.” He said something in the Navajo tongue which the old chief heard. He also, spoke to Lukah. Buddy’s new chum listened carefully for a moment, seemed a little put out and then, laughing made reply.

“My father, the chief, told me,” confided Lukah to Buddy, “not to fill you full of big talk about myself.”

“Oh, I don’t think you were doing that,” Buddy said.

“I didn’t mean to,” Lukah answered. “But come on. They’re going and we don’t want to be left behind, even if I do know my way about these foothills.”

The burial was over, most of the Indians who took part in it moving away after the faithful pony had been killed, a few remaining to cover up the dead brave and his mount who, according to the beliefs of the Navajos, would be ready for his master in the distant realm, wherever it is that Indians go after they die.

Mr. Martyne, with the chief and Morzrel, rode on ahead, swinging along the trail away from the grave while Buddy and Lukah brought up in the rear, following the pack animals that carried the camp equipment.

The way was over sandy stretches with, now and then, an outcropping of rocks and some stunted trees and bushes. It was not like traveling in the East where many

streams and bodies of water abound. Arizona, in some parts, lacks abundant water.

The Indian agency buildings were soon left behind in a haze of dust, the burial party had been lost sight of amid the low hills and now the five were riding by themselves on the way to several small settlements or villages of the Navajo and Hopi tribes where Mr. Martyne hoped to buy many relics to make up the museum and library exhibit.

Buddy proved to be a very good rider, so much so that Lukah who, like all Western Indians, was almost born in the saddle, complimented him on his ability.

“Do you like horses?” asked the Indian boy.

“I sure do,” said Buddy. “Of course I haven’t ridden so awful much but I want to learn to go fast.”

“You do fine,” said Lukah. “Want to try a little race?”

“Sure!” laughed the red-haired boy.

Away they started, spurring their ponies by clapping their heels against the sides of their mounts. But there were no sharp rowels to wound the animals. No Indian ever uses spurs. But because Buddy wore shoes with hard heels and because Lukah had on soft moccasins, Buddy’s pony received a little harder drubbing than did Lukah’s. So it ran faster and Buddy won the little brush.

“Say, you sure can ride!” declared Lukah.

“I guess I scared my pony with my hard heels, though I didn’t tap him hard enough to hurt him,” Buddy said. “Next time, to make it fair, I’ll use moccasins like yours. Can I get a pair out here?”

“Sure. They’re mighty easy on the feet. I’ll ask my father or brother to get you a pair.”

“Golly! I’ll be like a real Indian!” laughed Buddy. He was beginning to like this trip more and more each moment. It was the sort of life he had long wanted.

Mr. Martyne, riding on ahead, was carrying on a talk with Morzrel and the chief, mostly about the collection to be made and about Indian affairs. Occasionally the chief spoke in halting English but for most of the talk he used Indian and had Morzrel translate.

As Buddy and Lukah urged their ponies back toward the others, following the little race, Buddy heard the chief say:

“Soon we camp.”

“Yes, there’s a good place near a water hole just ahead,” added Morzrel.

“And do we eat then?” asked Buddy.

“Are you getting hungry?” laughed his Indian chum.

“Sure. Aren’t you?”

“I guess I’m always hungry,” admitted Lukah. “It must be the air out here. I don’t any more than get through breakfast than I want dinner and then it seems a long time until supper.”

“I wonder what we’ll have to eat?” Buddy said.

“Nothing very fancy,” was the answer. “You’ll have to get used to plain food when you’re on the march.”

“Oh, I like plain stuff,” said Buddy. “I’ve often cooked for myself and other boys when I’ve been on a hike or camp. I’m not fussy.”

“It’s a good thing,” laughed his dark-faced chum.

They rode in among some low hills and near a small grove of cottonwood trees and bushes the ponies were halted. The riders dismounted, staking out the animals, the pack animals were relieved of their burdens and camp was quickly made. Lukah found an extra pair of moccasins which he gave his new chum.

Almost before Buddy realized it, he saw darkness beginning to gather and then the stars came out, brighter than he had ever seen them before, as they twinkled down on the Indian desert country.

CHAPTER V

LOST

“GOLLY, this is fun!” said Buddy as he jumped up and clicked his heels together three times as his uncle had taught him.

“Do you like it?” asked Morzrel.

“It’s the best fun I ever had,” Buddy said as he watched the old chief and his two sons get the camp fire going and set out the food that was to be cooked—in this case some bacon and eggs, with plenty of strong coffee. Buddy wasn’t allowed to have coffee but his father said he could have some cocoa which would be made by stirring some chocolate powder in hot water.

“That’s quite a trick of yours with your heels,” said the young Indian man whose American name was Flaming Light. “I wonder if I can do it?”

“It isn’t so hard,” said Buddy.

But when Morzrel tried it he could only click his soft moccasined heels twice. His father, the old chief, laughed at him and said something in Indian language to his younger son.

“That’s right, let Lukah try it,” said the older brother. “Maybe he can do it. Go on, Lukah.”

Laughing Sand bore out the first part of his name by laughing and then he bore out the second part for on the sand around the camp fire he suddenly leaped up and clicked his heels together three times just as Buddy had done. Of course his heels didn’t really click, nor did Buddy’s, for their feet were in soft moccasins that made no sound.

“That’s pretty good!” said Mr. Martyne clapping his hands. “Where did you learn that trick, Lukah?”

“Oh, just by watching Buddy,” laughed the Indian boy.

“You did it fine!” complimented Buddy. “It took me longer to learn than it took you.”

Kotcha, the old Indian chief, laughed with the others. But neither he nor Mr. Martyne tried the jumping trick. Probably they felt too stiff after their long travel.

“That isn’t much of a camp fire,” Buddy remarked when he saw only a small blaze of sticks over which, supported on stones, the bacon and eggs were sizzling and the coffee boiling. “When we boys go camping we always make a big camp fire.”

“And you probably almost roast yourselves and often burn what you try to cook,” said Morzrel. “A small fire of dry wood gets as hot and cooks better than a

big one made of too much light wood piled on all at once. We don't have any too much wood out here on our desert reservations and so we don't waste it."

Buddy noticed that the small blaze of cottonwood sticks gave off very hot flames with very little smoke. The supper was cooking fast.

"Yes, I guess yours is the best way to make a fire," Buddy agreed. Already he had learned something from having met the Indian chief and his sons. Buddy liked them all, especially Lukah. He would be a good chum for the red-haired boy during his visit to the West.

"Do you want me to help put up the tent?" asked Buddy after the supper which was eaten from tin plates with tin cups of coffee for the men and cocoa for Buddy and Lukah, though the latter said he often drank coffee.

"What tent?" asked Morzrel as he stood near the small, flickering camp fire.

"The tents we are going to sleep in," Buddy said.

"We don't sleep in tents while on the trail around here," said the young Indian man. "That is unless it happens to be the rainy season which doesn't last very long. It's so dry out here that we just roll up in blankets and sleep on the ground. So you needn't worry about helping put up the tent. There isn't any."

Buddy had always supposed that there must be a tent when one went camping. It was rather fun living in one of the canvas houses. But since none was needed he could understand what a lot less work it was not to have to put one up and take it down each time the party of campers moved on.

"Then may Lukah and I go for a little walk before we have to go to bed—on the ground?" asked Buddy. His father was busy talking to the chief about where they would go next day to look for Indian relics for the museum and library collection.

"Go ahead," suggested Morzrel. "Only don't go too far and don't get lost."

"We won't," promised the Indian boy. "Come on, Buddy."

The two new chums started off over the desert already shrouded in the early darkness of the night. But it did not seem to Buddy as dark as the same hour would appear at home, even though there were no street lights and none in houses along the streets.

As a matter of fact there were no houses from which lights could gleam. They had left the few houses or huts near the agency and now were out on the uninhabited desert. But it was so open and the stars were so bright, and already in the East there was the glow of the rising moon so that it didn't seem dark at all. The red glow from the camp fire did not penetrate very far.

So, while Buddy's father and the two older Indians were getting the bed rolls and blankets ready for the night, and picketing the ponies and pack animals so they

would not stray, Buddy and Lukah strolled out over the desert which was studded with clusters of rocks, large and small here and there with an occasional clump of bushes or stunted cottonwood trees.

“Say it’s nice out here,” Buddy told his Indian chum.

“Yes, I like it, too,” said Lukah.

“It’s so still and quiet,” Buddy went on. “Why, you could hear a clock tick if there was one to do any ticking.”

“Yes,” agreed the Indian boy.

“What’s that?” suddenly asked Buddy as a distant combination of sounds, like the barking of a dog, the yap of a puppy and the howl of a cat, came to his ears.

“Coyotes,” answered Lukah. “There’s a lot of ’em around here.”

“Are they dangerous?”

“No. They’ll run if they see you. But they might attack a stray sheep. They won’t do any more than howl now.”

“Did you ever catch any?” Buddy wanted to know.

“What would be the use? Sometimes we shoot ’em if they get too bold and there’s too many of ’em. But they’re no good.”

The two boys walked on a little farther. Suddenly from beneath a clump of bushes a small animal leaped out and scurried away.

“What’s that?” asked Buddy rather startled, for the creature seemed to leap almost from beneath his feet.

“Rabbit,” answered Lukah. “Maybe we’ll have a rabbit hunt before you have to go back. They’re good to eat, rabbits are. Better than coyotes.”

“Gosh! I don’t want to think of going back,” said Buddy with a laugh. “It’s too much fun out here.”

“Well, we’d better go back to camp now,” proposed the Indian boy after they had gone on a little farther. “There isn’t much to see and your father may be anxious about you as it’s your first night out here.”

“Oh, Dad won’t worry about me,” Buddy said. “He knows I’m with you and you can find your way all over the desert, can’t you?”

“Well, maybe not *all* over it,” Lukah said. “But I guess I know the country around here. Anyhow let’s go back.”

When they returned to camp, to find the animals quietly standing about, hobbled and picketed so they wouldn’t stray, they saw Kotcha wrapped in his blankets and sound asleep on the warm desert sand. Mr. Martyne was getting ready to do likewise and Morzrel was laying some dry sticks near the embers of the fire, which was partly covered with ashes, to “bank” it or keep it smouldering all night. With the

dry sticks at hand to throw on, a quick blaze could be had at any time.

“Well, Buddy, going to turn in?” his father asked.

“I guess so, Dad. Gosh, but I like it out here! I’m glad you brought me.”

“So am I, Buddy. Good-night.”

Quiet soon settled over the camp, Buddy dropping off into a heavy slumber almost at once. Lukah, who was beside the red-haired lad, had, also, gone to sleep quickly.

Buddy didn’t quite know what it was that aroused him some hours later. Perhaps it was the strangeness of his bed or it may have been the bright light of the full moon shining on him. Moonlight is very wakeful to some persons.

However it had happened, Buddy was wide awake on an instant and as he sat up on his bed of blankets he saw that Lukah was also awake. The Indian boy looked across at his new chum and said:

“I seem to have had enough sleep.”

“So have I,” said Buddy. They spoke in low tones so as not to arouse the others.

“Look!” whispered Lukah pointing across the desert. Buddy looked and saw several forms, with what appeared to be pointed horns on their heads, a short distance away.

“Rabbits!” whispered the Indian boy. “Want to try to get some of ’em?”

“How?”

“Ride after ’em on our ponies.”

“But I haven’t any gun.” Buddy was considered too young to handle firearms yet.

“I have,” said Lukah. “I’m a pretty good shot, too. It would be fun if we could surprise ’em and bring some rabbits for dinner tomorrow.”

“It sure would!” Buddy agreed.

“Come on then. You get your pony and I’ll get mine and my father’s rifle. Don’t make any noise until we ride away from camp. They might not let us go.”

Not pausing to consider that this might not be just the right thing to do, but eager for the thrill of a night chase after rabbits, Buddy did as Lukah suggested. Soon the two boys were on their ponies which walked softly away over the silent sand until they were far enough from camp so that a faster pace with thudding hoofs would not be heard by the sleepers.

“Where are the rabbits?” asked Buddy as they rode out into a wide open desert that was brightly flooded with moonlight.

“Oh, they started to run away as soon as we stirred,” said Lukah. “We’ll have to

trail 'em now.”

Either the Indian boy and Buddy didn't know very well how to trail rabbits at night or else the rabbits kept under cover. However it was, certainly the two hunters, only one, the Indian, with a gun, saw no game as they rode along and finally Buddy, thinking his father might awake and miss him, suggested that they turn back.

“Yes, I guess we'd better,” agreed Lukah.

They turned their ponies and rode on for some time talking about their hard luck in getting no rabbits. Finally Lukah said something in the Indian language.

“What did you say?” asked Buddy.

“Oh—I forgot—you aren't Navajo,” was the answer. “But what I said was I guess we are lost.”

“Lost!” echoed Buddy. “Lost!”

“Yes. I don't exactly know which way to go back.”

“That's too bad,” Buddy said.

It wasn't the first time he had been lost. This had happened more than once on his many adventure trips. But it was the first time the red-haired boy had been lost out on an Arizona desert in company with an Indian boy whom he didn't know very well.

“Yes, we're lost all right,” went on Lukah.

“What are we going to do?” Buddy asked.

Before the Indian boy could answer a series of howls sounded from a clump of cottonwood trees near a gully of dark rocks.

CHAPTER VI

IN THE CAVE

“WHAT’S that?” asked Buddy in some alarm though he was not really afraid. He trusted Lukah. “What’s that?”

“Only some more coyotes,” was the answer. “Maybe they got the rabbits we were after. There they go!” Lukah exclaimed, pointing to several animals that looked like dogs running out of the bushes.

“Going to take a shot at them?” asked Buddy for he saw Lukah bringing around the rifle that was fastened to his saddle.

“No. What’s the use? If I fired it might wake up my father and my brother and then they’d know we rode out at night. And it’s just as well if they don’t know.”

“Oh, I’m going to tell my father I went out,” said Buddy quickly. “He won’t care if I tell him, though maybe he wouldn’t have wanted me to go. But he sure wouldn’t like it if I didn’t tell him, even if he didn’t find out about it.”

“Well, maybe it will be better to tell ’em,” agreed Lukah. “That is after we get back. There’s no harm in us coming out as we did, though, do you think so?”

“No, I don’t think so,” Buddy answered. “Not if you tell when you get back. But if we’re lost wouldn’t it be a good thing to fire your rifle so they could hear it and come out and get us?”

“That’s just what I don’t want ’em to do,” said Lukah with a little laugh. “I’ve been telling you, and my brother heard me, that I couldn’t get lost around here, so near the agency. Now here I’ve gone and got lost and Morzrel will always hold it against me if I can’t find my way back alone.”

“Don’t you think you can?” asked Buddy hopefully. “Maybe we aren’t very much lost.”

“Oh, we’re lost all right,” said Lukah and it didn’t seem to worry him very much. “I didn’t tell you before, but we’ve been lost quite a while. I was trying to get back on the right trail without letting you know. But when I didn’t pick it up I thought I’d better tell you. Don’t be scared. We can stay out until morning and then we can either find the way back or they’ll come after us.”

“I’m not scared,” Buddy answered. “But where can we stay the rest of the night? If we keep on riding we may get farther than ever away from the camp.”

“That’s so and I guess when we get to a good place we’ll stay there. No use getting more lost than we are now. And I think maybe we can find a good place to stay over in those rocks where we heard the coyotes howling.” Lukah pointed to the clump of cottonwoods and stones.

“Won’t they bother us?” asked Buddy.

“Who bother us?”

“The coyotes.”

“No. They’ve run out long ago. They won’t come near us. But we’d better take shelter there seeing we haven’t any bed rolls or blankets except those on the ponies. We can wrap up in them.” Lukah referred to the blankets he and Buddy had put on their horses before cinching on the saddles which they did when they so softly stole out of camp more than two hours ago.

“What’ll the horses do?” asked Buddy.

“Oh, they’re used to sleeping without blankets,” said the Indian boy with a laugh. “They won’t catch cold. Come on, let’s take a look over in the rock pile.”

“Sure,” Buddy agreed and as the two urged their ponies to it they saw several other coyotes running off across the desert in the moonlight.

“They’re clearing out so we can move in,” said Lukah. “I guess you’ll think I’m not much of an Indian to get lost so easy,” he went on.

“Oh, no,” said Buddy quickly. “I’ve been lost lots of times and nearer camp than we are now.”

“We’re not so very near camp,” spoke Lukah. “We rode quite a ways, farther than you think. But it’s this bright moon—it sort of makes everything look different. When daylight comes I can find the way back.”

“Sure you can,” said Buddy. “We’ll be all right.”

As they rode toward the pile of rocks the collection of bare stones which rose from beside a cottonwood growth were seen to be much higher than they had appeared at first.

“This’ll be a regular lookout place in the morning,” said Lukah as he stared upward at two tall masses of stone. “Regular chimney rocks. We can climb them and make a smoke signal they can see back in camp.”

“Like the old Indians used to do,” said Buddy.

“Sure,” agreed his new Indian chum with a laugh.

They stopped their horses outside the collection of rocks with the two high spires, and dismounted. They tossed the reins over some rocky spurs, like hitching posts, so the animals would not stray while their riders went in to investigate the shelter.

Suddenly, in the reflected light of the moon, which was not so bright now, as it was partly clouded over, Buddy saw Lukah disappear from his sight. He seemed to drop down in a hole amid the rocks. As he disappeared the Indian boy gave a shout.

“What’s the matter?” asked Buddy, this time quite alarmed.

For a moment there was no answer. Then Lukah called out as if from a distance:
“Watch yourself. I’ve fallen into a big cave!”

CHAPTER VII

DEADLY RATTLES

LUKAH'S warning came just in time. For Buddy, following his Indian chum by the footsteps ahead of him was on the verge of stumbling into the cavern which opened suddenly in the floor of a rocky defile into which the boys had gone for shelter.

Buddy stopped short when Lukah called out, grasped a projecting rock and held on, one foot over the hole into which the chief's son had fallen.

"Are you hurt?" asked Buddy anxiously.

"No. Just shaken up a little. There's a lot of soft sand and some sticks on the bottom. They made a sort of cushion. But if you're coming down, try and find an easier way than I did. There must be one."

"Do you want me to come down there with you?" asked Buddy in some surprise.

"Not until we find out if I can get out as easily as I got in. If I only had some kind of a light! I don't dare make a fire here."

"Wait a minute!" shouted Buddy, fumbling in his pocket. "I have a light!"

In another instant he had switched on his pocket electric torch, the bright beams filtering down into the cave at the bottom of which Lukah looked up in some surprise.

Buddy had a glimpse of his chum standing in a sort of slanting cave which extended back a considerable distance beneath the pile of rocks. Lukah did not appear to be hurt.

"Say, it's lucky you had that flashlight!" exclaimed the Indian boy. "I wish I had one of those. My father always says he's going to get me one at the agency trade store but he never has. I asked Morzrel but I guess he forgot about it."

"I'll give you one," promised Buddy. "I brought two and I have some extra batteries. I never go camping without a flashlight."

"They sure are mighty handy little gadgets," said Lukah who had picked up considerable United States slang in his brief life. "It sure will be swell if you give me one."

"I will. But now let's see about getting you out of there," said the red-haired lad. He flashed his light around and saw where there was a rocky, inclined path leading into the depressed cave. Lukah could have walked down that but, in the false light of the moon, he had stepped off the brink a little to one side of the easy way.

"What's the matter with you coming down instead of me coming up?" asked Lukah.

“What do you mean?” Buddy demanded.

“Well, we’ve got to stay some place the rest of the night. It’s mighty cold out in the open, even when the days are hot, if you haven’t any blankets, and we have only thin saddle ones. This cave is protected, and there’s no reason why we both can’t take shelter in it. It’s big enough.”

“What about our horses?” asked Buddy.

“They’ll be all right where they are. I don’t believe the Hopis will come out this far on a raid.”

“Do the Hopi Indians raid your horses?” asked Buddy.

“Sometimes. The Hopis and the Navajos don’t get along any too well together. They blame us and we blame them. But we’re quite a long way off from the Hopi reservation so there’s no danger. Come on down here.”

“I guess it would be a good idea,” Buddy agreed.

He flashed his light again around the rocky defile at the end of which there was a slope and the opening to the cave. He saw that by going down the rocky incline he could easily join his chum and it would be no trouble for both of them to come out in the morning.

So down Buddy went, joining Lukah. The two boys, with their saddle blankets, walked slowly a little way farther into the cave proper. Where Lukah had fallen was really only a sort of vestibule.

Cautiously Buddy flashed his light within the cavern. Bright as his pocket torch was, it only gave off a thin beam of illumination that did not show much of the cave. Enough was disclosed, however, to let the boys see it was a large one.

“Were you ever here before?” asked Buddy as they went on in, alert for any sight or sound of danger.

“No, I never was, and I never heard any of the Indians tell about this cave though they may know of it. My father probably does. But I haven’t been around here much. We live farther back on the reservation.”

“Then we can explore it in the morning,” Buddy suggested.

“If we want to. But I think we’d first better get back to camp.”

“That’s so, Lukah.”

“You know they may be looking for us now, Buddy.”

“That’s right. We’d better go back as soon as it gets daylight enough for us to find our way. Do you think you can?”

“Sure, in daytime. It was the moonlight shadows that fooled me.”

“What do you think this cave was for?” asked Buddy.

“Not for anything special, I guess,” answered the Indian lad. “It may have been a

hiding place once when our people were fighting your people. But that's all over now. I guess it's just a natural cave."

"It has a sort of funny smell," Buddy suggested.

"Coyotes have been in here, or some other wild animals. But they're only small ones so there's no danger."

"Oh, I wasn't getting scared," Buddy said with a laugh.

Just the same, a moment later, he jumped and cried out as something with heavy, fluttering wings swooped past him over his head in the darkness. Then the whole cave seemed filled with mysterious squeaking and fluttering sounds.

"What is it?" cried Buddy.

"Only bats!" laughed Lukah. "The light stirred 'em up. They'll settle down again, hanging by their toes or whatever it is they call the hooks on their wings. They won't hurt you."

"But maybe they're vampire bats," said Buddy, "and will suck our blood while we're asleep."

"There aren't any vampires out here," said the Indian boy. "Anyhow, I'm tired. This cave is dry and warmer than out in the open. We can roll up in our blankets and sleep easy. This sand and the twigs all mixed up with it will make a soft bed. Don't worry about the bats."

Indeed these half-bird half-mouse creatures seemed to have quieted down. By the light of Buddy's torch the boys made beds for themselves on the floor of the cave, rolled up in their blankets and, in spite of their strange room, were soon asleep.

It was Lukah who awakened first when a dim, natural light was flooding the cavern. Like most Indians he was a light sleeper. Buddy felt some one shaking him and opened his eyes to see his new chum bending over him.

"What's the matter? Where are we?" asked Buddy who had been having a curious dream.

"We're in the cave and we didn't get the rabbits we started out after last night," laughed Lukah.

Then Buddy remembered and sat up suddenly. He recognized the dim outlines of the cave. To his surprise, as well as that of Lukah, light came in from two ends. For a moment neither could understand what it meant. Then Lukah cried:

"This cave must lead up into a hollow chimney rock. Maybe we can climb up it and signal our camp from the top. Come on! This is good luck!"

Leaping from their blankets, the boys started toward a patch of light opposite the entrance they had used when they first came into the cavern. Then, suddenly,

Lukah stopped and cried:

“Don’t go any farther!”

“Why not?” asked Buddy.

“This cave is a den of snakes—rattlers—and they’re deadly! Hear ’em buzzing!”

CHAPTER VIII

SMOKE SIGNALS

Buddy heard the strange noise. It was a sort of combined buzz and rattle, a sound as if a locust was fluttering in some dried leaves. And though one rattlesnake cannot make much noise, a number of the serpents, together shaking their tails on the ends of which are dried membranes that produce the sound, can make a considerable racket. The boys realized this as they cowered back on their blankets. For Buddy knew from what he had read and the Indian lad knew from what his tribesmen had told him, that rattlesnakes are very dangerous if not deadly when they bite. Not every rattlesnake bite produces death but there is such a chance for a fatal ending that most men don't care to take a chance.

"What are the rattlers doing here?" cried Buddy as he looked about the dim cave which was slowly getting lighter as the sun rose higher.

"I guess this must be where they live," said Lukah. "There are a lot of snake dens around here and more of them in the Hopi country."

"What had we better do?" asked Buddy.

"We'd better get out as soon as we can," said his Indian chum. "I don't like rattlesnakes, though the Hopi priests use them in some of their ceremonies. Maybe you'll see 'em. Anyhow, let's get out."

"Sure!" Buddy agreed.

But as the boys started out of the den by the entrance which they saw ahead of them, (which wasn't the one through which they had dropped in the night), they came to a sudden pause.

For between them and the exit was a mass of crawling and coiled rattlesnakes, some of considerable size. It was the coiled ones that seemed to be rattling the hardest. Their tails with the peculiar formations of membrane segment, with a "button" at the end, were raised from the midst of their pancake-like coils.

As the light grew stronger the boys could see the darting black, forked tongues of the reptiles playing in and out of their mouths. Buddy, as well as Lukah, knew that the tongues of the snakes were not the "stingers," as many persons suppose. A snake has to bite with his teeth. Its tongue is harmless.

A poisonous snake is provided with two long front fangs, which are hollow like a hypodermic needle. These fangs lie against the roof of the snake's mouth until he is ready to strike. Then they drop down and through the hollows in them enough poison to stun or kill is injected into the body of the person or animal bitten.

"We can't get past those snakes!" exclaimed Buddy as he saw the writhing

mass.

“I should say not!” agreed Lukah. “Shooting a few wouldn’t do any good.”

“Then what are we going to do?” asked the red-haired boy. “Must we climb out the way we came in? It isn’t going to be easy.”

“No, it isn’t,” said the Indian lad. “We might not be able to get up that way without ropes. But I’m not going to risk passing those rattlers. We might be able to step over or through them and they might not attack us. I’ve heard my father and brother say they won’t bother you if you don’t go too near them. A rattler will always wiggle away from you if you give him a chance.”

“But these,” said Buddy, “haven’t any chance to go anywhere else just now. So if we went toward them they might spring at us.”

“That’s right,” agreed Lukah. “But there’s a way we can get out without going too near them.”

“How?”

“Up the chimney rock,” answered Lukah. “We can get into that opening right here without going too near the snakes. And it will be easy to climb up inside the natural chimney. There are a lot of rocks sticking out that will make it a sort of stairway.”

“Then let’s go up!” proposed Buddy. “I don’t like it here. Those snakes might take a notion to come back this way.”

As the sun rose higher and its beams began to warm the pile of rocks, the serpents felt the genial heat. And as cold makes snakes sluggish and as heat makes them lively, the rattlers were getting ready to move around and perhaps go out for breakfast.

“Only I don’t want them to breakfast off me,” said Buddy when the Indian boy spoke of this.

“Come on!” said Lukah quickly as he saw some of the snakes moving away from the middle of the cave up above which rose the hollow pile of stone known as chimney rock. “I think we can get up now.”

While the mass of writhing snakes seemed attracted to the opposite entrance to the cave, the boys quickly packed up what few belongings they had and started to climb up the big, natural chimney.

“I wonder,” said Buddy as he let the Indian lad take the lead, “if any of these snakes will get out and bite our ponies? The ponies might die.”

“I don’t think so,” said Lukah. “I’ve often heard of horses being bitten by rattlers and vipers and none of the animals ever died. I guess horses are so big and strong the poison doesn’t have any effect.”

"I hope our ponies will be all right," said Buddy. "If they run away or die we'll have to walk back to camp."

"I guess we won't have to walk," said Lukah. "Even if anything happened to our horses we could signal back to camp and they'd bring others for us. Maybe we could ride the pack animals."

"How can we signal back to camp?" asked Buddy. "By firing the rifle?"

"By smoke from the top of chimney rock. Maybe we won't have to do that. They may be on the lookout for us and if we wave our jackets they'll see 'em. But if they don't they'll be sure to see the smoke signals. They can see 'em farther than they can hear a gun," answered Lukah.

"Say, this is great!" cried Buddy in delight. He had now lost all fear of the snakes. And the prospect of another new turn to the night adventure made him feel like jumping up and clicking his heels together three times. But he couldn't do that while he was climbing with Lukah up inside the hollow chimney rock so he decided to wait.

"Well, I'm glad you like it," said the Indian boy with a smile. "I'd rather be back in camp eating breakfast. But maybe we'll soon be there. Now let's get up to the top and send some smoke signals."

"How you going to send them?" asked Buddy.

"I'll show you," was the answer.

They were now well up and away from the mass of serpents but they could hear them buzzing and rattling in the den below. There was no more danger, however, provided the boys did not have to pass near the dangerous reptiles.

Finally they were up and out of the chimney. It was a tall, roughly square mass of natural rocks, with a hole in the center just like a chimney. Around the opening was a flat platform of stone and when Lukah saw on it a mass of dried sticks he gave a shout of delight.

"I was afraid," he said, "that there wouldn't be anything up here to use in making a fire. But we have plenty of wood."

"How did it get here?" asked Buddy.

"Oh, I guess some of the Indians brought it here to make fires for some of the dances or ceremonies they have every once in a while," answered Lukah. "I'm glad they left enough for us."

With a match, which was one of several in his pockets, Lukah started a blaze on top of the chimney rock. He let it blaze up brightly and then put on it some damp wood he found in one of the several small holes around the edge of the platform.

At once a dense smoke arose straight up into the clear, dry, morning air. Lukah

let it burn for a while.

“Is that all you’re going to do?” asked Buddy.

“No, I’m going to make some signals now,” was the answer. “Here, take hold of two corners of my blanket. Hold it over the smoke and when I tell you to, lift it to one side.”

Buddy did as directed and thus he and the Indian boy made smoke signals. When the blanket was over the fire the smoke billowed out on both sides. But when the blanket was lifted away a round ball of smoke rose straight in the air.

Lukah moved the blanket to and fro a number of times with Buddy’s help, and thus several smoke balls were sent up, sometimes three in quick succession, then a pause and two balls, another pause and three more.

“Are you spelling out any words?” asked Buddy who knew how Boy Scouts signal by the Morse code.

“Not exactly words,” said the Indian lad. “It’s just a signal to my father telling him we’re here and in trouble.”

“Will they see it and answer?” asked Buddy.

“I hope so,” said Lukah.

CHAPTER IX

RESCUED

AFTER having sent up several balls of smoke as signals to the camp, the exact location of which they did not know, Buddy and Lukah waited a few moments. Meanwhile they anxiously scanned the horizon all about them. They could not tell from which direction help might come as they were quite confused as to direction following their rather foolish night venture.

"Do you see anything?" asked Buddy anxiously of his chum.

"No, not yet."

"I wish they'd come soon or that we could go down past those snakes ourselves and start back," went on the red-haired boy. "I'm getting hungry."

"So am I," admitted the Indian. "But we'd better send up more signals."

"Why, didn't we send enough?"

"You can't tell. It's like this. Back in camp my father and yours have no way of knowing these are our signals. They know by this time that we are missing and they probably know we went off by ourselves, though maybe they don't know why.

"Now if they see these smoke signals they won't know whether they come from us or from maybe a band of Hopi Indians who may have left their reservation. And we Navajos don't get along any too well with the Hopis."

"How can you let your father know it is you who is doing the signaling and not the Hopis?" asked Buddy.

"I'm going to send up a signal that only my father, my brother and I know. We made it up among ourselves. Take hold of the blanket again, Buddy."

"Sure! And if you can signal 'em to hurry I wish you would."

"I'll try."

This time Lukah, with Buddy's help, sent up smoke balls in a different arrangement of a sort of dot and dash telegraph code. Then he waited and he and Buddy again scanned the horizon until suddenly Lukah cried:

"There they are! I see 'em!"

"Do you? Where?" Buddy asked.

"I mean I see their smoke," Lukah explained. "Over that way."

He pointed toward the west in which direction the sun rising up over the desert was casting long shadows from the piles of stones and chimney rock in particular. Buddy looked and saw some puffs of smoke such as he and the Indian boy had sent up.

"That's our camp!" cried Lukah. "I know my father's signal. They'll soon be

here.”

The fire was allowed to die down, there being no further use for it. Then the boys stood on top of the natural chimney and waited for a sight of their rescuers. They did not have long to wait.

In a short time three figures on horses were seen coming out of the west, from the direction of the answering smoke signals. Meanwhile Buddy and Lukah had looked down and seen their own horses still where they had been tied the night before.

“The snakes didn’t get ’em!” cried Buddy.

“No, and they didn’t run away!” laughed the Indian boy. “We’ll be all right as soon as we can get past those snakes.”

“How do you think we’re going to be able to do that?” Buddy asked.

“My father and Morzrel will probably smoke ’em out,” said Lukah. “They can do that but we couldn’t for we’d have been smothered if we tried to light a fire while we were down below. But they can and the smoke will come up the chimney opening here so it won’t bother us.”

In a short time Buddy’s father and the two Indians were at the foot of the pile of rocks. As from the top of a watch tower Buddy could look down and speak to his father.

“Are you all right?” Mr. Martyne wanted to know.

“Yes,” Buddy answered. “I’m sorry, Dad, that we went away from camp last night.”

“I’m sorry, too,” said Mr. Martyne. “You didn’t intend it but you have made a great deal of trouble and caused us all considerable worry. We couldn’t imagine what had happened to you when we awakened this morning and saw that you were gone.”

“I won’t do it again,” Buddy promised. He felt sorry for what he had done and a little ashamed of himself. He couldn’t tell just how Lukah felt for the Indian boy was talking in that language to his father and brother.

“I told them about the snakes,” said Lukah to Buddy after a while. “They’re going to smoke them out as I thought. We can watch from up here. Then we can get down and ride back to camp.”

“And breakfast,” Buddy added.

“Oh, sure, breakfast.”

It did not take long for Chief Kotcha and his older son to toss into the snake cave, through the entrance down which the boys had gone, some bundles of burning sticks. These made a dense smoke within the pile of stones and in a short time a

mass of serpents came rapidly crawling out of the main entrance at a level with the desert. By scores and hundreds the rattlers escaped, buzzing menacingly the while, until it was thought the cave was empty.

After waiting a while to make sure, and seeing no more snakes, Chief Kotcha declared the den cleared.

“Now we can go down inside the rock and out,” Lukah told Buddy.

Gathering up their few belongings they climbed down and were soon out of the cave and standing on the desert. No snakes molested them, the reptiles disappearing in among the rocks scattered over the sand as the smoke blew away.

“Well, Buddy,” said Mr. Martyne as the red-haired boy walked toward the picketed horses, “you had quite an adventure, didn’t you?”

“I’ll say I did!”

“But don’t forget you did wrong to go out as you did. Remember and don’t do it again.”

“I won’t forget,” Buddy promised. He heard Chief Kotcha talking to Lukah in their own language and guessed the Indian boy was also receiving a scolding for leaving the camp and taking the rifle.

The boys were soon in their saddles again and in a little while were riding with their rescuers back to camp which they reached without further trouble.

A good breakfast was soon in preparation and while waiting for it the boys told of their adventures.

“Don’t do it again!” warned Mr. Martyne and the Indian Chief warned his own son in the same way. “It’s too dangerous.”

“Do you mean on account of the rattlesnakes?” asked Buddy.

“No,” answered Mr. Martyne in a low voice while he and Buddy were riding off by themselves before breakfast. “It’s something else. There’s a rumor that some of the Hopi Indians with whom the Navajos have always been more or less mixed up, are coming here.”

“What for?” asked Buddy.

“No one seems to know,” his father said. “Perhaps they have heard I am buying as many old Indian relics as I can find and they figured they could sell some of theirs.”

“Have the Hopis any things you want to get for the museum, Dad?”

“Some, yes. We may go to their reservation. But we’ll talk about that later. I hear Morzrel calling us to come and eat.”

“And, boy! Will I eat?” cried Buddy.

Following a short rest after the meal, camp was broken, the ponies were

saddled, the pack animals made ready for taking the trail again and the little party set forth across the desert.

They rode all morning and though they passed several trails Kotcha would not take them.

“Only go little Indian villages,” said the chief. “We stop at big village—get better things for you,” and he nodded at Mr. Martyne.

“Well, I want the best relics money can buy,” said Buddy’s father. “No use buying them in a small village if we can get them in a bigger one where there’s some competition.”

It was decided they would ride on until night, sleep out in the open again and continue on to Laguna, an Indian town of some size.

“And remember you aren’t to get up in the night and go chasing off after anything—no matter if it’s a herd of elephants,” Mr. Martyne warned his son.

“Don’t worry!” Buddy laughed. “I’m too sleepy to do anything but go to bed when it’s time.”

Once more the camp fire was started to cook the evening meal. Then when it was out of the way the three men sat and talked and smoked while Buddy off to one side listened to stories told by Lukah.

But at last Buddy and his Indian chum grew so sleepy they couldn’t keep their eyes open any longer. So they turned in.

It must have been some time after midnight that Buddy found himself being awakened by Lukah who stood over him shaking him hard.

“What’s the idea?” sleepily demanded Buddy.

“I think I hear some one coming to our camp. We’d better get up and look around. None of the others are aroused.”

Wide awake now, Buddy sat up and crawled with Lukah out of the low gleam of the fire. The boys had no notion of going more than a few steps away.

“What is it?” asked the red-haired boy.

“Something or somebody is making a raid on our camp,” whispered Lukah. “They’re trying to sneak up on us. Come on, now, let’s take a look around and then we can wake my father and yours if we need to.”

As Buddy followed Lukah into the shadows they were both aware of two strange figures crawling about the camp on their hands and knees.

“Thieves!” whispered Buddy.

“That’s right,” agreed Lukah. “I wonder what they’re after?”

“Our horses, maybe,” suggested Buddy. Though he had only been out in Arizona a few days he had already learned to know how greatly the Indians and others

depended on their mounts. Of course in many cases now the automobile has replaced horses. But out on the Arizona deserts, especially on the Indian reservations, horses and ponies, with mules, are in general use.

“They’d better not try to raid our ponies,” said Lukah in a low voice. “If they do, we Navajos will get after those Hopis and chase ’em back to their own reservation.”

“Are they Hopis?” asked Buddy.

CHAPTER X

A STRANGE HUNT

LUKAH did not answer Buddy at once. Instead the Indian lad crouched down to hide himself as much as possible and also pulled the white boy to a crouching position.

“Don’t let them see us,” whispered Lukah. “They are Hopi Indians all right.”

“How can you tell?”

“By the way they sneak in. And by their walk. They don’t go along as we Navajos do.”

To Buddy it seemed that the two Indians who had invaded the camp under cover of darkness moved along as any other Indians or whites might do under the same circumstances. He couldn’t see anything different about them.

But Lukah’s observation was keener, as, indeed, one would expect it to be. The Indian boy, in spite of attending a school conducted by whites, still retained some of his primitive ways and abilities.

And one of his abilities was that of noticing small things about a person or animal—little silent differences that would tell as much as if something had been said about it in so many words.

Crouched down on the sand now, and partly sheltered from observation by several rocks, which cast black shadows in the light of a cloud-obscured moon, Buddy and Lukah watched the silent figures. The Hopi Indians seemed to have no intention of stealing the horses and pack animals that were tethered a short distance from the camp. They were going away from them instead of toward them.

“But maybe that’s only a trick,” whispered Lukah when Buddy called his attention to this move. “They may be edging around to throw us off and then, all of a sudden, they’ll run in and each try to get a couple of horses.”

However, the longer the two boys watched the less did it appear that the Hopis had any designs on the horses. They were now some distance away from the tethered animals and were creeping away from the camp, where Mr. Martyne and the two Indians were asleep in their blankets.

“What are they crawling that way for, on their hands and knees?” asked Buddy. “They seem to be smelling for something.”

Once or twice he and Lukah had observed both the silent intruders leaning over with their noses close to the sand.

“It’s queer,” Buddy went on. “Seems as if they had lost something and had coming looking for it. But it’s hard to find anything at night.”

“Yes,” agreed the Indian boy. “But maybe——”

He stopped suddenly for there was a movement among the three blanket-rolled sleeping figures in the camp circle and Morzrel sat up. Either the whisperings of the boys or the presence of the Hopi Indians had aroused him.

He called something in the Navajo tongue to his brother and then for Buddy's benefit repeated it in English, asking:

"What are you two doing up at this hour? Getting ready to run away again?"

"There are a couple of Hopis here," said Lukah speaking in English.

"Hopis!" exclaimed Morzrel as he threw his blankets off him and jumped to his feet.

"Over there!" Buddy pointed toward the crouching figures, now some distance from the camp.

"So!" exclaimed Morzrel and he reached for his rifle as he said something in the Navajo language.

The Navajo Indians on the reservations are not supposed to have arms or ammunition but many get them in spite of government regulations. The Hopis do the same and in former days there were many shooting affrays between the two tribes. When Mr. Martyne got permission from the government agent to go with Chief Kotcha and his sons into the lands of mesas and deserts after relics, they were specially permitted to carry arms. So now Morzrel had his gun in readiness.

Buddy was greatly thrilled. He was too small to carry a weapon, of course, though he wished he might have one. Nor was Lukah yet allowed to carry a gun. But like all youngsters the two could not help being thrilled by the prospect of a fight.

Mr. Martyne and the chief were now awake and a few words told them the story.

"Buddy, you come back here!" ordered his father as he saw Chief Kotcha reach for his rifle and stalk after Morzrel who was already proceeding silently toward the Hopis.

"Oh, can't I stay here and watch?" asked the red-haired lad.

"There won't be any danger," said Lukah.

"I'm not so sure of that," remarked Mr. Martyne. "This isn't our fight, Buddy, if there's going to be a fight. You come back here with me. Perhaps you'd better also, Lukah."

The Indian boy hesitated a moment but his father said something to him in Navajo and then Lukah said to Buddy:

"He says we'd both better go back. He and Morzrel will look after the Hopis. It may be they are in our camp for some peaceable reason."

"Why would they come at night?" asked Buddy.

“I don’t know. But we’ll find out when my father and brother get back. Come on.”

Somewhat reluctantly Buddy and his Indian chum went to where Mr. Martyne was now out of his blankets, sitting up. There was hardly a glow from the camp fire, the blaze of the night before having been banked with ashes to keep it just alive for quicker starting in the morning.

There was a little period of anxious waiting as the three looked in the direction where Chief Kotcha and Morzrel had vanished in the shadows of the night, even as the Hopi Indians had disappeared from view. They were all listening for the sounds of shots, but none came. Then, in about five minutes, the chief and his son returned. They did not seem excited as they laid aside their guns which had not been used.

“What was it?” asked Mr. Martyne.

“Two Hopi scouts, just as the boys guessed,” said Morzrel.

“Were they after our horses?”

“No. They are hunting snakes.”

“Snakes!” exclaimed Buddy. “Well, they should go to Chimney Rock.”

“That’s what I told them,” said Morzrel.

“Why do they want snakes and why are they after them this time of night?” asked Buddy’s father.

“They are priests of some Hopi tribe,” Morzrel answered. “I guess you know about the Hopi snake dance, Mr. Martyne.”

“Yes,” was the answer.

“Well, these Hopi scouts or priests were out looking for a new supply of rattlesnakes to use at the dance which takes place in a few weeks. Seems that the supply of rattlers ran low out on their reservation. So they came to ours. Though I never knew them to hunt for snakes at night. I’d think it a bad time. But they say it’s the best. Anyhow they aren’t up to any harm so we can all go back to sleep.”

CHAPTER XI

BUDDY AND THE BABY

BUDDY was up early next morning. He rather hoped to get a glimpse of the Hopi Indian priests and some of the rattlesnakes they might have caught in the night, but he did not see them. Nor were there any traces of the deadly serpents around the camp.

"I'm not so sure those two were really after snakes," said Morzrel as they sat about the breakfast fire next morning.

"What do you mean?" asked Mr. Martyne.

"Well, they might have told me that so I wouldn't ask any more questions. We all know the Hopis use snakes in their dances and other ceremonies. But those two may have come for something else and have made up that story when they saw us after them. Anyhow they're gone now."

"Are you going to follow them?" asked Buddy.

"No," answered Morzrel after a talk in Navajo with his father. "We'll let them alone and the snakes too."

"Can we ride past Chimney Rock and see if they went there after snakes?" asked Lukah.

"It might be a good idea," said his brother. "It's on our way. We're going to try to take you to an Indian village where you may get some blankets, turquoise ornaments and other things you want for your collection, Mr. Martyne," continued Morzrel.

"That will be what I want," spoke Buddy's father. "I would like to start making the museum collection soon."

Camp was broken, the things were loaded on the pack animals and with Buddy, Lukah and the others riding their horses they started off toward the north west. The way was along a flat country, like a sandy desert in some places and again over stretches where scattered rocks and boulders strewed the ground.

Sometimes they rode through patches of stunted cottonwood trees and occasional bushes. Off in the distance Buddy saw what looked to be very steep hills. He spoke of them and Morzrel said:

"Those are buttes. They are masses of rocks, with very steep sides that are often as flat on top as a table. Then they are called table buttes. Sometimes they are of colored sandstone. We'll come to some of those soon."

They did a little later, riding past one of these strange steep masses of rock. It was colored bright blue in places and when the sun shone on it was very beautiful.

The next one was red in color and these buttes, or hills, were known among the Indians by native names which meant “Red Butte” or “Blue Butte.”

“There are yellow and brown ones, too,” said Lukah. “And once I saw a purple one.”

“They look as if they had been painted,” said Buddy.

“Yes,” his father said, “in some parts of our desert country there are so many of these colored buttes and long deep canyons, or river valleys, the walls of which are also colored, that the regions are known as painted deserts. Sometimes even the sand on the ground seems to be colored.”

“We’ve come to a good place, haven’t we?” Buddy asked.

“It seems so,” said his father. “It’s a different adventure from any you’ve had before, Buddy.”

But there were more adventures in store for the red-haired boy who could jump up and click his heels together three times before landing. Only now he didn’t get much chance to do this. He was in the saddle much of the time and was becoming a good rider, almost as good a one as Lukah, his Indian chum.

They stopped for lunch that day in a lonely region of stunted cottonwoods and bushes near a little stream where they filled their water bottles and also let the animals drink their fill.

“No telling when we’ll strike good water again,” said Morzrel.

After the animals had been picketed and Chief Kotcha started to get the meal, Morzrel rode off a little way.

“Where’s he going?” asked Buddy of Lukah.

“To scout around,” was the answer. “We’re getting near to Hopi country now and we don’t want to be surprised.”

Morzrel came back, however, to report there were no signs of any hostile Hopis so they ate their lunch quietly, rested and then took the trail again.

They did not reach the Indian settlement that day so they camped out on the desert as they had done before. It was a “dry” camp, no water being found. It was well they had filled the bottles and canteens at the last stop. As for the animals, they had to make a dry supper.

Buddy rather hoped, and perhaps Lukah did also, that there might be an alarm in the night—an attack by Hopi Indians. But nothing like that happened. In fact nothing happened. They all slept soundly until morning and after breakfast started off again.

They rode over a flat country, with slightly rolling hills of rock and stunted trees here and there. Far off could be seen the shadowy outlines of several buttes.

“We’ll get to big Navajo village by noon,” Chief Kotcha said as they rode along.

“You get things there for museum, Mr. Martyne—blankets—Indians make good blankets where we go.”

“I want a collection of blankets,” said Buddy’s father.

It was planned that whatever he bought of the Hopi or Navajo Indians on the trip out would be put aside and held for him until the party returned. Mr. Martyne wanted to cover as much ground as he could but did not want to be burdened with the pieces for the collection. So he decided to make arrangements to gather them all on his way back when more pack animals would be bought to carry the load.

Shortly before noon the party approached a valley through which ran a small stream. At first the valley seemed to hold only several groups of rocks and big stones. But as they rode nearer it was seen that these rock piles were the homes of many Navajo Indians.

The Navajos who lived in this part of Arizona made their houses out of pieces of trees and the rocks which were scattered far and wide. Their homes were called “hogans” and were more permanent than the buffalo robe tents of the plains Indians.

At first Buddy was a little disappointed not to see Indians living in tepees for these “hogans” or stone houses, were more like huts, hardly high enough for a person to stand upright in.

But the red-haired boy was learning that Indian life today is quite different from that of many years ago when the Redmen roamed about as they pleased and hunted buffalo, or bison, which latter is really the name of those shaggy animals after which Buffalo Bill is named. They are bison and not buffalos, a buffalo being a somewhat different animal, native to Europe.

The Indians no longer roamed as they pleased though they did travel about rather freely on their reservations. And they found it much more comfortable, though perhaps not so healthy, to live in their stone hogans instead of tents.

Chief Kotcha and Morzrel rode on ahead into the Indian village. Some men came out to meet them and there was a short talk after which the chief and his son, who had Buddy and his father in charge, rode back to them and Morzrel said:

“It’s all right. We can camp just outside their village.”

“Will they sell me some blankets and other things for the museum collection?” asked Mr. Martyne.

“Maybe,” answered Morzrel. “There may be a little trouble. It seems there was a white man here a little while ago and the Indians feel he cheated them when he bought some of their things. So we will have to go a bit easy. They are not very friendly.”

“That’s too bad,” said Mr. Martyne. “I hoped we would have no trouble.”

“Oh, it may blow over,” said Morzrel with a smile. “We’ll just have to take it easy and wait. Don’t try to buy anything now.”

Buddy’s father promised not to, but when he passed one hogan, outside of which was set up a large loom made of rough limbs of cottonwood trees, and saw a half finished Navajo blanket of beautiful design, he wished he could have a chance to purchase it.

As in that dry and sunny part of Arizona rain is almost unknown, many blanket looms were found set up outside the hogans. The looms were of the upright sort, like those of the oriental rug weavers and were very primitive. In the old days the weaving of a Navajo blanket took a long time and was carefully done. They were made from the wool of sheep raised by the Indians and the colors were made from roots, barks and berries, being most beautiful and lasting.

Now it is said the blankets are not so well made and they are dyed with chemical colors which, though brighter, are not so beautiful or lasting as the old natural ones.

As the party rode through the village, being stared at by many Navajo Indian women, girls and boys, Mr. Martyne saw another loom and half completed blanket outside another large hogan. Inside the Indian house he saw several other finished blankets.

“Couldn’t I get some of those?” Mr. Martyne asked Morzrel just as the Indian owner came to his doorway. Though an old Navajo with, doubtless, little understanding of English, the Indian seemed to know what the question meant. For he shouted something in his own language—something fierce and angry.

“What did he say?” Mr. Martyne asked Morzrel.

“He said he would never treat with a white man—he hates them,” said Morzrel. “I’m sorry. But they don’t seem to like you out here. Perhaps we had better go on to the next village.”

“No,” said Mr. Martyne. “We’ll wait a while and try again. They may change their minds.”

Leaving the surly Indian and his beautiful blankets behind, the party rode out to the edge of the village and in the shade of some small trees near the little stream, they made camp and got lunch.

After lunch, when Chief Kotcha, Morzrel and Mr. Martyne went to take a little rest, which is always a good thing to do in a hot country, Buddy thought he would walk around and see what he could see. Lukah had to mend his pony’s bridle so he did not accompany his chum who set off alone.

“Don’t go too far and don’t get lost,” Lukah warned.

Buddy promised he wouldn't and strolled down the edge of the little stream. He saw no signs of Indians all of whom seemed to be in the village.

As Buddy walked around a bend in the brook, where there was considerable shade from small trees and bushes, he suddenly heard a sort of wailing cry. As he turned to see whence it came he saw something like a bundle of blankets roll down a little slope toward him. As it reached him he saw what it was.

“An Indian baby!” exclaimed Buddy.

The little child was wrapped and rolled in blankets, with arms and legs confined and Buddy reached out and stopped it just in time to prevent it from splashing into the water, where, in its helpless condition, it surely would have drowned.

CHAPTER XII

THE INDIAN MOTHER

Buddy had acted on impulse when he saved the Indian baby from rolling into the brook. It was the most natural thing for him to do—any boy would have done the same.

But when Buddy had picked up the helpless little bundle—and he couldn't tell whether it was a boy or girl baby—the red-haired lad didn't know what to do with it. He stood on the bank of the brook holding the bundle of small beautifully woven and colored blankets in which the child was wrapped closely.

“Well, now I've got you, what next?” Buddy asked aloud.

The Indian baby didn't answer. It just stared up at Buddy with big, brown eyes. It didn't even cry. Indian babies seldom do. It may be because in the olden days a crying Indian baby might have told the enemies of a fleeing band the whereabouts of the warriors. And so Indian babies may have been brought up never to cry.

Of course now, when the Navajo Indians were at peace, even with their traditional enemies the Hopis (save for occasional quarrels) there was no need for any Indian baby not to cry if it felt like it.

“But you don't seem to feel like it even though you fell out of some place and rolled down hill almost into the brook,” said Buddy, still speaking out loud and looking at his little friend.

It wasn't the first time Buddy had held a baby, though it was the first Indian one he had ever had in his arms. Some of his aunts had babies and once or twice, on visits to their homes, Buddy had been allowed to hold for a few moments some little squirming boy or girl dressed in silks and laces.

“But those babies were a lot different from you,” Buddy said with a laugh. “They'd be yelling their heads off now if what happened to you had happened to them. Why don't you say something?” the red-haired boy went on cuddling the cute little Navajo in his arms.

There was no answer, of course. The Indian baby was too young to talk. But, suddenly, it smiled up at Buddy. Even Indian babies can smile, you know.

“That's better!” laughed Buddy.

A moment later he heard the sound of some one rushing toward him through the bushes that lined the bank of the brook. An instant later a young Navajo woman, her moccasined feet treading the ground softly, rushed toward Buddy, her eyes showing fear and anger. The gay red and black blanket with its triangular designs, was almost off her shoulders and the silver and turquoise ornaments she wore jingled as she ran

forward. She shouted something in Navajo to Buddy and then fairly snatched the baby from his arms.

There was no mistaking what the Indian mother was saying and thinking. Though Buddy understood but a few Indian words he could realize what was being shouted at him.

“Golly!” thought the red-haired boy, “she thinks I was trying to steal her baby, I guess. This may make a lot of trouble and then dad won’t get the relics he wants for the museum. All the Indians around here, where there are so many things dad wants, will be against us. I’ve got to do something!”

The Indian mother, cuddling her baby close to her, kept on scolding Buddy in her own language. Then, with a final outburst of words, she started back the way she had come, carrying the blanket-wrapped baby with her.

“She’s going to tell her husband,” thought Buddy. “She’ll raise a row and they’ll come after me. Hey! Hold on! Wait a minute!” he shouted after the fleeing Indian mother.

Though Buddy spoke in his own language which, except for a few words, the Indian woman didn’t understand, she caught the meaning from Buddy’s tone of voice. She turned and stood looking at him.

“I didn’t try to take your baby,” Buddy went on. “I just caught the little fellow as he was going to roll into the brook. I saved him. I just grabbed him up before you came along. Oh, gosh!” exclaimed Buddy as he saw that the woman still looked angry. “I wish I could speak Navajo or that you understood English. Now don’t go!” he begged as he saw her move as if to continue on. “I want to explain——”

Then, suddenly, Buddy had a bright idea. He had seen some of the “sign language” used since he came to Arizona. Many times, when a white man wanted to make an Indian understand something but didn’t know the Navajo word for it, a sign would be used—a quick gesture of the head or hands.

Sign language is used all over the world. You use it when you wave your hand in friendly greeting to a chum, the traffic policeman uses it when he holds up his hand toward an oncoming automobile, those who wish to ride in a car instead of walking use the sign language when they motion with their thumbs over their shoulders to passing autoists. Thus “thumb-riders” or “hitch-hikers” talk without saying a word by use of this sign language.

“That’s what I’ve got to use!” was Buddy’s sudden thought. “Hi there, wait a minute!” he called again.

Then Buddy did some pretty good acting for a small boy. He pointed to the place whence the bundled-up baby had come rolling down the slope toward him. He

indicated where the child had rolled over little bushes and weeds, bending them down. He pointed to the edge of the brook and then to himself. He even ran to the water's edge and made motions of stopping the rolling baby on the brink. Then he imitated himself picking up the child and holding it in his arms. His last "sign" talk was to point to the woman herself holding her baby safely.

Then over the face of the Navajo woman came a change. Instead of looking angry and scowling she smiled at Buddy. She said something again in her language and then, walking quickly toward the boy, began to examine the ground.

To her keen Indian eyes the whole story was now almost as plain as if she had seen it happen. She could trace the path her blanket-wrapped baby had taken in the involuntary roll down the little hill toward the water. She uttered strange words but they were, without doubt, Buddy knew, words of joy and happiness. Now she understood.

Then she caught hold of Buddy's hand and led him into the bushes. She pointed to a little nest in the leaves—a hollowed out place—where she indicated she had left her child for a moment.

The child, managing to twist and turn in spite of its close wrappings, had started to roll down the slope while the mother was off a little distance gathering, as Buddy learned later, some roots, herbs and barks. She returned to find her child gone and, naturally, seeing it in Buddy's arms, thought he had taken it.

But now everything was explained and the Indian mother was using sign language in her turn to apologize to the red-haired boy. She continued to lead him along by the hand, after showing him the place where she had left her baby, and soon they were out in the open. A young Navajo man met the woman and they talked quickly together, looking at Buddy occasionally. Finally the man said haltingly:

"Good boy—Indian much like—t'anks. You come with um?" The last was evidently a question and as the Indian pointed to where Buddy's party were encamped, Buddy took it to be an inquiry about them.

"Yes," he answered, though he didn't know whether or not he would be understood, "I came with my father. He wants to get some blankets, rugs, turquoise and Indian things for museum. We came with Chief Kotcha, Lukah and Morzrel."

"Sure. Kotcha, Lukah, Morzrel," repeated the Navajo who was evidently the woman's husband and father of the baby. "Good! You come—me show."

Suddenly the Indian woman, who had not let go Buddy's hand, raised it to her lips and kissed it.

"Oh, gosh! Don't do that!" said Buddy, squirming a little. This was the first time anything like that had happened to him. But he knew the mother wanted to thank him

—this was the only way she knew.

“Good boy!” grunted the man, smiling now as was his wife. “You come. I show.”

Buddy didn’t know just where he was supposed to go nor what the Indian was going to show him, but he went along while the Navajo mother with her child shuffled off in another direction.

Somewhat to his surprise, Buddy’s guide led him to the hogan with the loom outside where, a short time before, Mr. Martyne had tried in vain to bargain for some blankets and rugs. The same Indian who had refused to sell came out and there was some rapid talk in Navajo between him and the baby’s father.

While this talk was going on Morzrel, who had awakened from his noontime nap, strolled up from where he had left his father, brother and Mr. Martyne. After listening to the talk of the two Navajos, Morzrel said:

“Well, Buddy, you sure have gone and done it this time!”

CHAPTER XIII

BLUE STONES

FOR a moment Buddy thought perhaps he had not understood aright the sign language and the half-grunted talk of the Indian man and woman. Perhaps he had done something the Navajos didn't like and the museum party might be driven away.

But the smile on Morzrel's face did not indicate anything like this and his explanation, a little later, made Buddy realize that by chance he had done something that had endeared him to the hearts of the Indian father and mother.

"Your father can buy all the stuff he wants now from this rug and blanket weaver, Buddy," said Morzrel. "And he's one of the best on the reservation. You've made a friend of him for life."

"How?"

"By saving his grandchild from going in the brook. You did that, didn't you?"

"I caught some baby as it was rolling down hill," Buddy said.

"It was his," went on Morzrel, indicating the young Navajo. "And this rug-weaver is his father," nodding at the older Indian who had refused to deal with Mr. Martyne. "So the whole family is friendly with you now and your father can have anything he wants. We'll go tell him."

Morzrel paused to hold a little talk with his Indian friends and then he and Buddy walked back to the little camp outside the village. Mr. Martyne and Chief Kotcha were awake now and Lukah, having finished the repairs to his pony's bridle, was looking for Buddy.

The story of what Buddy had done was soon told.

"Pretty lucky," commented Lukah with a laugh.

"Oh, it just happened," said the red-haired boy.

"It was a lucky happening," said his father. "I was much disappointed when that Indian rug-weaver wouldn't sell me any of his loom work. It is of the very best and just what the museum and library wants. I hope I can now do business with him."

"Don't worry about that," said Morzrel. "You'll find yourself among friends now. Everyone will hear the story of what Buddy did. You can buy all the relics you want and at fair prices."

This proved to be true and the next few days Mr. Martyne spent in buying some very choice pieces of loom work and other Indian things which were later exhibited in Mountchester. He arranged to have the things he had bought stored away until he had completed his trip and could pick them up on his way back. For Mr. Martyne had decided to go on to the Hopi Indian reservation. He wanted to see the

celebrated rattlesnake dance and also get some relics of the Hopi tribe.

During the time Buddy and his friends remained in camp near the Indian village he again met the father and mother of the Indian baby he had saved. He was a guest at their hogan and was allowed to hold (though he didn't much care to) the child he had saved from possible drowning.

"This Indian boy now has a name given in honor of you, Buddy," said Morzrel whom with Lukah went with the red-haired lad on his visit to the grateful parents.

"What do you mean?" Buddy asked.

"Well," explained Morzrel, "up to the time he started to roll down the hill, this little boy hadn't any name. Now he is going to be called Senegathe, which means Wanderer."

"Well, he did wander away from the place where his mother left him," said Buddy with a laugh. "It's a nice name—Senegathe—the Wanderer."

He spoke the Indian name softly—a little uncertainly—but the child's mother repeated it after him with more emphasis, smiled and added something in Navajo.

"She says," translated Morzrel, "that she is glad you like her son's name she gave him in honor of you."

"Well, I guess I'm glad, too," said Buddy with a laugh. They were all happy together. Indeed all the Indians in the village seemed to have taken a great liking to Buddy and his friends. There was a different feeling than the one manifest on their arrival. The Navajos are a friendly tribe to those who are friendly to them and they have, as, indeed, have all Indians, a great love for their children.

When Buddy called to see Senegathe he found the Indian baby wrapped in blankets and in a sort of carrying case. It was the Navajo cradle in which most Navajo babies are kept until they are old and strong enough to walk by themselves. The cradle consists of a board or some pieces of wood, into which the child fits. The baby and cradle are blanket-wrapped and over the place where the baby's head comes is a wooden hoop which protects the child's face and upper part of the body.

"When the Indian women work," explained Morzrel, "they can hang their babies in the cradle to some tree branch or even lay it on the ground. The blankets protect the lower part of the body and the hoop protects the head, face and upper part. So even if the cradle fell down from where it was hanging the child wouldn't stand much chance of getting hurt."

"The baby I saved wasn't in any cradle," Buddy said.

"No," agreed Morzrel, "its mother had taken it out for a little while and was going to put it back, and then it couldn't have wiggled away and become a wanderer. But she was delayed getting some roots she wanted and when she came

back she found little Senegathe had gone off by himself. It will never happen again.”

“Well, if it does, I probably won’t be here to see it,” laughed Buddy. “Anyhow I’m glad it did happen.”

“Yes, it was a lucky break for your father.”

Mr. Martyne said the same.

After several days in “Baby Camp,” as Buddy afterward called the Indian village, the little party went traveling on again. They were now going up into higher ground or hills, mesas and mountains with occasional desert patches. Chief Kotcha knew of another village where exceptionally fine blankets and relics could be obtained.

One afternoon, when the party was ambling slowly along looking for a good camping place where there was water, for they had not found much that day, Buddy, who had ridden on ahead, found himself in a rocky region rather lonely and desolate.

“I wouldn’t want to get lost here,” he thought. “Guess I’d better not go on this way any farther. I’ll turn and go back to the others.”

But as he pulled his pony to a stop he heard, amid the silence of the rocky defile, a series of tapping sounds.

“That can’t be a woodpecker,” reasoned the red-haired boy, “for there aren’t any woodpeckers out here now—not enough trees for ’em, I guess.”

He continued to listen and finally he located the tapping sounds as coming from around a shoulder of towering rocks a little way ahead. Without thinking of possible danger, Buddy urged his pony in that direction and as he turned the corner he saw before him an old Navajo seated on the rocky ground hammering and tapping away with a short miner’s pick.

Some noise Buddy or his pony made, that was heard above his own tapping on the rocks, caused the Navajo suddenly to look up. He saw Buddy and leaped to his feet. As he did so there rolled to one side several stones of a pale blue color.

Buddy knew them at once as turquoise. He had come upon a Navajo miner getting these ornamental stones out of where they were formed in the rock.

“This is great!” thought Buddy. “Just what dad has been wanting—some turquoise stones just as they come in the rough.”

For a moment the Navajo miner stood regarding Buddy with either fear or anger, the red-haired boy couldn’t decide which. Then as Lukah rode his pony into the defile, having followed his white chum, the turquoise miner gave a shout of dismay and fled farther up the rocky valley.

“What’s the matter with him?” asked Buddy.

“I don’t know,” Lukah answered. “Maybe he’s gone after some of his friends. I

hope there won't be a fight." Then he called something in Navajo after the fleeing Indian. But there was no reply nor did the man return.

"We'd better get out of here," Lukah advised Buddy, wheeling his pony.

CHAPTER XIV

BUDDY'S RACE

PAUSING only for a moment to gaze after the retreating Navajo, Buddy also turned his mount and followed Lukah out of the defile.

"I hope I didn't start any trouble," Buddy murmured as he rode on after his Indian chum. "I didn't know the man was there."

Buddy and Lukah rode back to join the others and Buddy told what had happened.

"I think it won't amount to anything," Morzrel said. "He was probably a lone turquoise miner and he thought you were the advance scouts of some party after the same stones. He may return to his mine after we pass on or he may go get some of his friends so as to be ready for a hostile raid. But of course we haven't any such ideas. We'll just pass on and let him alone."

"But couldn't I go see this turquoise mine?" asked Mr. Martyne. "I'd like to get some specimens in the rough."

Morzrel and Chief Kotcha talked together for a little while in their own language. It was evident they were a little worried as to what might happen. Finally Morzrel said:

"My father thinks it will be all right for you to go and see this turquoise mine that Buddy found. It is a small one, as this isn't the place where most of the blue stones are dug out of the rocks. And if the Indian who was picking out the turquoise comes back he may sell you some. If he doesn't it would not be wise to take any as he might claim you had robbed him and then there would be trouble."

"I wouldn't want that for anything," Mr. Martyne said. "If I can't buy some turquoise specimens of this Indian I will wait until I can find another. But I would like to pick a few stones out myself for souvenirs and also get some for the museum exhibit."

"We will go back there tomorrow," Morzrel decided. "It is getting late now. There is a good camping place not far from here. We can stay there for the night and come back to the turquoise mine in the morning."

"Do you think," asked Buddy, "that the miner ran away to get some friends to come and fight us?"

"I hardly think so," Morzrel answered, "though some of these lone turquoise hunters are suspicious. But we'll be on our guard."

The camp site, a little later, in a place where there was water and grass for the horses, was selected so that no party of hostile Navajos could approach from the

rear. In front was a natural fortification of rocks and the three men arranged to take turns standing the night watch.

Buddy and Lukah wanted to do their part in keeping awake to give a signal if any Indians approached under cover of darkness but Mr. Martyne for Buddy and Chief Kotcha for his son decided against it.

“Anyhow, we’ll be ready, in case there is trouble, to do our share in fighting,” said Buddy to his chum.

“Sure we will!” agreed the Indian boy.

So they went to sleep, wrapped in their blankets and stretched out on the warm desert sands with the bright stars twinkling above. That is they all turned in except the one who was to stay awake on watch. First Mr. Martyne took a trick, having the first watch. Chief Kotcha said if any hostile Indians came it would be around the dawn hour and it would be best for some one with Navajo ears to be listening then. So he and his older son would stand guard the last two watches of the night.

In spite of a determination to remain awake though their services weren’t needed, Buddy and Lukah dozed off in a few minutes after they had rolled themselves up and stretched out.

Once Buddy, who was sleeping near his chum, was awakened (what time it was he didn’t know) by hearing a sound far off.

“What was that?” he asked in a whisper. He didn’t believe Lukah was awake but the Indian boy was and answered with a little laugh:

“Just a coyote. Go to sleep.”

Which Buddy did.

So the night passed quietly and after breakfast it was decided to go to the turquoise mine to see if the old Indian had returned. He had, and there was a younger one with him helping to get out the blue stones which, with native silver, form such a large part of the ornaments worn by the Navajos.

Before the two miners could run away in alarm, Chief Kotcha spoke to them quickly, explaining their errand. There was an exchange of talk and then Morzrel said to Mr. Martyne:

“They will be glad to sell you some turquoise stones and pieces of rock in which they are found. They are glad to know we are friends.”

“Then he took me for an enemy yesterday, did he?” asked Buddy.

“First he did,” Morzrel answered. “But it’s all right now.”

Mr. Martyne left it to the chief and Morzrel to bargain for the blue stones as they could do it better. Then he and Buddy watched the work of the Navajo miners and Buddy’s father told him something about the pale blue stones.

Mr. Martyne related how the turquoise was so called because, in olden times, the best stones came from Persia by way of the country of Turkey. The Italians of Venice, who used many of the stones in their beautiful ornamental work, called them “turchesa” and from that the name was turned to “turkis” and finally, by the French, to “turquoise.”

In Eastern countries, where the first turquoise were found, the stones are considered lucky and are much used for ornaments. They are not precious stones and, except for the very finest, do not bring a high price. The pieces of blue turquoise stone are taken out of other rocks in which they occur and are cut into round or oval shapes and polished.

Eastern people, besides using the turquoise for personal ornaments in rings and bracelets, set them in the handles of daggers and fasten them to the leather of their horses’ saddles and bridles.

“That’s just what the Navajos do,” commented Buddy. “They’re just alike in that.”

“Yes,” agreed Mr. Martyne, “in many ways the Arabs of the East are like the Navajos of our West.”

With several fine specimens of turquoise and some large pieces of the native rock in which they were embedded, Mr. Martyne and his party again took the trail.

They reached another Indian village where there were several fine silversmiths, at least they did fine work from an Indian view. As Mr. Martyne wanted some of this work he arranged to stay a few days and collect some samples.

There was no trouble here as there had been at first when he wanted to get blankets and rugs. The Indian silversmiths were very friendly. Later it was found that word of what Buddy had done in saving the Indian baby had come to this village and the red-haired boy and his friends were looked on with favor.

“You’re our mascot, Buddy,” his father said with a laugh.

“Well, I’m glad I can do something to help,” said young Mr. Martyne.

Having purchased what he wanted in the way of silver work, some of it being beautifully decorated with turquoise stones, and having arranged to pick it up on his return trip, Mr. Martyne with Buddy and his Indian friends once more headed for the northwest. Eventually they expected to arrive at the Hopi reservation.

One afternoon, when they had reached a good stopping place among a series of low hills and the ponies had been staked out and camp made, Buddy strolled off by himself to see that his mount was well tethered.

As he approached the bunch of animals, Buddy was surprised to see them exhibit signs of alarm and disturbance. When he started toward them they had been

quietly grazing. But suddenly they raised their heads and all looked in one direction.

“I wonder what that means?” said Buddy to himself. “I’m going to find out,” he added.

He hurried forward in time to see a figure which he knew to be that of a Navajo Indian, spring up from the ground, leap to the back of Lukah’s pony and speed away on it.

“By golly, he’s a horse thief!” cried Buddy. “He’s got Lukah’s pony! I’ve got to stop him!”

Buddy ran to his own mount, paused only long enough to throw a blanket over it in place of a saddle and then he thumped his pony with his heels and urged it into a racing gallop. The pony was without a bridle, which had been removed to enable it to graze with more comfort. But Buddy knew he could guide his animal by the halter which was on. He had pulled up the peg to which one end of the halter rope had been fastened.

“I’m going to ride you down!” cried Buddy as he started the race after the thief.

CHAPTER XV

ALL ALONE

HAD Buddy stopped to think what he was doing or what might be ahead of him in that desolate, sparsely settled country, he might not have been so ready to start off alone in pursuit of the Indian thief.

Yet, on second thought, perhaps Buddy would have done just what he did even if his father had warned him. Buddy was impulsive. That's what made him the boy he was.

"My pony's faster than Lukah's," thought Buddy as the two animals thudded away from where the others were tethered. This Buddy had proved in a friendly race only the other day. "I think I can catch that fellow, whoever he is," mused the red-haired boy.

He did not stop to think that he was not armed whereas the Navajo might be. From the short glimpse he had of him as he leaped to the pony's back, Buddy took the Indian to be a youth not much older than himself.

"I wish I had Lukah with me," thought Buddy as he saw that he was gradually overtaking the other, "but I haven't so I'll make the best of it. I'm going to get him!"

The thief had the advantage of a start of several seconds and was making the most of it. He was leaning low on the neck of Lukah's pony and by drubbing the animal with his heels was spurring him on. As Buddy was doing, the Indian lad guided the stolen animal by knee pressure on either side. Most Indian ponies, and many horses ridden by cowboys, can be directed in this way. They also respond to bit and bridle but in this case neither Buddy nor the Navajo had such things on which to depend.

Buddy had learned to ride and guide a horse by pressing with his knee on either the right or left side according to which way he wanted to turn. This ability was now very useful.

"I hope I can catch up to him and stop him before he gets too far away," thought Buddy as he urged his pony on at its best speed. "I don't want to get too far away from camp. I might not be able to find my way back."

He wanted to look to the rear but he was riding fast over dangerous ground and he did not like to take his eyes off the trail nor cease in urging his pony on.

"Go on there, Cactus!" Buddy called encouragingly. He had thus named his pony. Lukah called his Silver.

Cactus increased his strides a little but Silver still maintained his lead.

"It's queer," Buddy thought, "that a horse doesn't know when he's being stolen.

If he did he wouldn't run when a thief gets on his back but would stop and buck or do something to keep from being taken away.”

But horses and Indian ponies, as Buddy knew, obeyed the person on their backs. They had no way of knowing their master from a thief. They went where they were guided and as fast as they could go.

Buddy soon emerged upon an open, rolling country of considerable vegetation though it was somewhat stunted. It was not unlike a stretch of real prairie in a fertile valley.

The race had now settled into a long one and Buddy's hopes of soon overtaking the thief had vanished. Still he had not given up. He wanted to be able to ride back to camp, leading Lukah's pony and say:

“I chased the thief that got him but I ran after him and got your pony back, Lukah.”

Only, the farther away he got from camp and the longer the chase continued, the less Buddy felt that he could have this triumph.

It was when he noticed the long picket rope, which he had made into a coil, as he vaulted upon the blanket in place of a saddle, that Buddy got a brilliant idea.

“Why can't I rope that fellow if I can get close enough?” Buddy thought.

He knew how to handle a lariat for Powder Pete had taught him the summer Buddy spent on Triangle X ranch.

“Of course this picket rope isn't exactly a lariat,” reasoned Buddy as he looked at the coils he held in one hand. “But maybe I can make it work. I'll try it.”

Carefully he made a loop as Powder Pete had taught him. The picket rope did not run as smoothly as a regular lariat would have done. But it was the best Buddy had. When he had his rope ready he looked ahead and noticed that Silver was slowing down.

“Getting tired!” exulted Buddy. “If I can spurt a little I'll have him!”

He hated to call on Cactus for any more speed. The faithful pony had carried him far that day over a rough trail and was tired. But if Lukah's horse was to be caught, some little pain must be inflicted on Cactus.

“Sorry, pony, but I've got to ask you to go a bit faster,” said Buddy kindly as he patted the neck of Cactus before drubbing him with heels to make the animal think he was being spurred. “It's got to be done if we want to get Silver.”

Like the stout-hearted little animal he was, Cactus responded well. He let out another kink of his speed and soon the open space between Buddy and the escaping Indian was much less.

Turning on the back of Silver, the thieving Navajo saw how close Buddy was

and shook his fist at him.

“If you don’t do any worse than that I shan’t mind!” Buddy chuckled. “I only hope you don’t take a shot at me.”

But the red-haired boy realized that had the Navajo been armed he would have fired before this to drive Buddy back and keep him at a distance. Not having done so, it was fair to conclude that the thief was unarmed.

“Then I’m as good as he is,” Buddy decided.

He now saw, for a certainty, that he was overtaking the lad in front. Lukah’s horse was slowing very much. Buddy got his rope ready to throw. He was going to aim the coils at the head of Silver. They might encircle the rider or the neck of the animal. In either case the runaway would be halted.

Once again the Navajo looked back at the oncoming Buddy. Then he seemed to be in fear and called out something in his language. Buddy could catch a word here and there and the message seemed to be one in which the thief told Buddy to keep away and let him alone.

“But I’m not going to do that!” decided the red-haired boy. “I’m out to get you and I will!”

Silver was slowing up more now and it wasn’t hard for Buddy to get within rope distance of the stolen horse. The boy whirled the coils around his head a few times and then let them fly.

The noose started down over the thief’s neck and Buddy began winding his rope around his waist to withstand the shock, for he had no saddle horn.

Then, with a quick motion, evading the coils, the youth on Silver’s back leaped off just as the animal, now roped about the neck, slid, skidded and went down in a somersault. That was just what Buddy wanted. He had not intended to harm Lukah’s pony.

Leaping to his feet after jumping from the back of the pony he had stolen, the thief raced away among some low hills and rocks. He now realized he never could have gotten away with Lukah’s horse. Buddy was too fast for him.

“Sorry I had to stop you like this, Silver,” the boy said as the surprised animal got to its feet and seemed content to stand there quietly. “I hope I didn’t hurt you.”

The horse shook himself and then began cropping grass.

“Now to get back with Lukah’s horse and tell them where I’ve been,” mused Buddy. “I’m afraid it will be a long ride.” He looked in vain for a sight of the Indian lad. He was nowhere to be seen.

“Well, I’ve got two ponies all alone to myself,” said Buddy. “I wonder if I can manage them? There’s no one here to help me. And camp is a long way back. I

hope I may find it.”

Buddy thought perhaps Silver might bolt as he approached to secure the end of the dangling halter rope. Often when on his grandfather’s farm, where he had once raised a big prize pumpkin, Buddy had gone to the pasture to help catch a grazing horse. He remembered that the animal would let him get within a certain distance and then, as if playing a trick, bolt to the other end of the field.

“If that happens now,” thought the red-haired boy as he quietly approached Lukah’s mount, “I’ll be out of luck. It may take me a long time to catch Silver.”

Buddy had tethered his own mount to a spur of rock in order to give his attention to catching the animal he had roped. Slowly he approached Lukah’s horse. He was out on a lonely part of the big desert tract and night was coming on. He must act quickly.

“But will Silver let me catch him?” was the one thought in the boy’s mind.

CHAPTER XVI
BY THE NORTH STAR

SLOWLY and cautiously Buddy approached the grazing horse. His own animal, farther back, was also now quietly nibbling some of the sparse grass that grew in this region. Buddy could see the trailing rope of the halter on the ground. The fleeing Navajo lad had dropped it as he leaped off and ran away.

"If I can get hold of that rope," mused Buddy, "I'll be all right. I can ride my horse back and lead Lukah's. If only I can get hold of Silver."

He walked slower, now that he was nearer the pony. He was within two feet and could almost reach out his hand and get hold of the trailing rope when, suddenly, as though disturbed by something, Silver raised his head with a snort and wheeled away.

"Whoa there!" cried Buddy. Silver didn't run far but he gave the boy a look as much as to say:

"Well, you didn't get me that time!"

Buddy was disappointed but he wasn't going to give up. He didn't dare. He was the only one who could catch Lukah's pony and bring it back. And the pony would be needed. They had no spare mounts and though the Indian boy might be able to ride one of the pack animals or perhaps get another at some Indian village, it would delay Mr. Martyne in his search for museum exhibits.

"I've just *got* to get Silver!" mused Buddy. "I wonder what scared him that time? I hope it isn't that Indian coming back."

He paused to look across the dreary waste of rock and sand. He saw nothing of the Navajo he had chased. But something had certainly startled the horse. Buddy didn't believe it was his own near approach that had made Silver shy.

"I've got to be careful," decided the red-haired boy.

Again Buddy began a cautious approach toward the horse which was grazing again. He looked back to see that his own mount was still tethered and kept on stalking Lukah's pony.

Foot by foot, inch by inch Buddy shuffled forward, trying to advance as quietly and as cautiously as an Indian might have done. This time he was within a foot—within six inches of the trailing rope.

Silver went on quietly eating.

Then, with a sudden motion, Buddy had hold of the rope. He took a firm grasp and exclaimed:

"I've got you now!"

To Buddy's surprise Silver made no attempt to get away. The pony quietly raised its head and looked at the boy this time as if to say:

"What's all the excitement about? I've been waiting for you all the while. Let's go back home."

Then, seeing how gentle the horse was Buddy thought of its seeming scare and its surprised leap away a short time before and he said to himself:

"There's something around here you don't like. I wonder what it is? It can't be that Navajo fellow coming back. You weren't afraid of him. You let him ride you. It must be something else. I wonder what it was?"

Holding the halter rope firmly, Buddy looked all around. He saw nothing suspicious. The sun was going down behind the low mountains in a glory of red and gold clouds. And then, seeing this, and knowing it would soon be night, Buddy began to feel a little alarmed. He wasn't frightened, though.

"I'll just have to ride back to camp as fast as I can to get there before it's completely dark," he told himself. "Well, Silver, let's go."

The captured pony followed Buddy quietly as he led it back to where Cactus was still grazing. Seeing that the blanket he had hurriedly thrown on his mount for a saddle had fallen off, Buddy decided to fasten it on for the ride back. To do this he cut off from Silver's halter rope a piece long enough to go around Cactus and hold the blanket saddle in place.

The Navajo who had sneaked into camp and ridden off Lukah's pony had not bothered to get even a blanket for a saddle. He rode bareback, which isn't as easy as it sounds.

Having tied his blanket on his pony's back Buddy got up himself and then tied the end of Silver's rope around the neck of Cactus. He thought at first he would tie it around his own waist. But he reasoned against that.

"Silver might take a notion to bolt," said Buddy to himself. "If he did, he might pull me off the back of Cactus and go running away dragging me after him. I'll just fasten the two ponies together."

This, he decided was a good thing to do.

"Then," he said, talking aloud, a habit he had when alone, "if I fall off, or get thrown off, the two animals will be together. And two animals are easier to find than one."

It wasn't until he was all ready to go back to camp that the thought occurred to Buddy he didn't know where camp was. He hadn't the least idea. Impulsively he had raced away in a hurry. He had told no one where he was going—indeed he didn't know himself, except that he was after a horse thief.

Whether his father or either of the Indians had seen him ride away, Buddy didn't know. And he had been so foolish as not to notice which way he rode in reference to camp. He had failed to take his bearings and, as a Boy Scout, he knew he had been very foolish.

"What's the good being a Boy Scout if I don't do what I was taught?" Buddy asked himself reproachfully.

Then he tried seriously to think back and remember which way he had come and recall where the camp lay. He looked back over the trail which showed faintly in the rays of the setting sun. There were the marks of the feet of the two horses in the sand.

"It seems to be a straight trail," Buddy reasoned. "I think I rode straight most of the time. In that case the camp would be back this way." He pointed to the north, as if that would help him to fix a compass direction in his mind.

The sun was almost down. It would be dark in a little while except for the stars. There would be no moon that night.

"Well, here goes for it!" said Buddy as cheerfully as he could. "I hope I'm right."

As he rode toward the north, the other horse with the halter rope around the neck of Cactus, Buddy felt quite sure he was right. He seemed to remember having the western sun on his right as he pursued the Navajo. Now to reverse this he must ride with the sun on his left. This he was doing.

"But soon there won't be any sun to go by," mused the boy. "I wonder if I can pick out the North Star and keep right by that."

Quickly he remembered something his father had taught him years before. In the northern sky is a constellation known as the Big Dipper to some and to others as the Big Bear. It really seems shaped more like a dipper than a bear.

Two of the stars in the Dipper constellation point directly toward a small bright light in the sky. This is the North Star and the two indicating stars in the Dipper are known as the "pointers."

"I think I can find it," Buddy decided and the remembrance of this gave him hope and courage. He wasn't altogether lost if he could locate the North Star.

As a matter of fact Buddy wasn't in the least admitting that he was lost—at least not yet. True he was some distance from the camp and he didn't exactly know where it was. But he felt sure he could find it.

"Besides, they may come out looking for me," he reasoned. "I hope they do. But it would be a lot of fun if I could find my way back alone and with Lukah's horse. I almost hope they won't come now." He was beginning to feel more confidence in himself.

Both horses were rested now and jogged along easily, Silver giving no trouble and seeming to be glad to be with his mate. Buddy sat on the blanket saddle with more comfort now that it wasn't slipping all the while.

The sun seemed to go down rather suddenly. Buddy felt the least bit lonesome when he could no longer see the cheerful red ball. But he knew it wouldn't be completely dark for some time yet. Though Arizona is a hot land it isn't like the tropics where there is hardly any sunset glow or twilight.

Riding back along the trail as nearly as he could remember it, Buddy watched the darkness creeping over the land. It began to get cooler. He urged the horses to a little trot and hoped he was going in the right direction.

Then, one by one, the stars came out. Buddy looked for the Big Dipper and saw it. He saw the "pointers" and then picked out what he felt sure was the North Star.

"I'm all right now," he told himself.

On into the gathering darkness he rode, guided by the star that has been compass to many a shipwrecked mariner.

CHAPTER XVII

A STRANGE SIGNAL

SOMEHOW Buddy was more cheerful once he felt he had the North Star with him. In boyish fun, he waved a hand toward it. Cactus, thinking this was a signal for him to go faster, did so and Buddy, unprepared, was nearly thrown off.

“Steady old fellow!” he said, pressing both knees against his mount. Cactus slowed and Silver, who had also begun to trot, did the same. Then Buddy rode on farther into the night. It was quite dark now, but the air was so clear that the stars seemed to give more light than in Mountchester where Buddy lived.

“They’re almost as good as a moon,” said Buddy to himself.

As he rode on he listened for any shouts that might indicate his friends were searching for him. He also hoped he might hear signal shots from the guns.

But all was silent in the dark, desert-like region where Buddy was lost. For he now began to fear that he was lost. He must have gone back the wrong way. Or, rather, he hadn’t gone back at all. He had, instead, gone farther away from camp. That would account, he thought, for not hearing anything—no shouts and no shots.

“Golly!” he exclaimed aloud, for his voice seemed company now even as the North Star was. “Golly! What shall I do?”

Several thoughts were in Buddy’s mind. The first was that he must be lost. Others were worries about what to do and how he was going to spend the night. As to the last he told himself with a little chuckling laugh:

“Well, I guess I’ll have to sleep in the open. But we’ve been doing that ever since I came on this trip with dad. That part won’t be any worse than if I was back in camp except I’d have more blankets than this one. And I’d have more company in camp.

“But then I’ve got two horses. They ought to be company enough. I’ll tether them close to where I roll up in my blanket. But maybe I’d better not go to sleep. If I do, that same Indian who tried to take Lukah’s pony may come back. Golly! That would be fierce!”

But the more Buddy thought of it the less he thought it likely that the Navajo would return. He seemed to have been badly frightened when Buddy took after him. And the manner in which the red-haired boy had roped Silver and given the Indian a tumble must have had an effect, Buddy thought with modest praise of his own part in it.

“Besides,” he reasoned, “I don’t believe he could trail me now. I’ll stay awake part of the time but I don’t believe I could keep my eyes open all night.”

By this time the boy had reached a decision that it would be foolish for him to keep on riding throughout the night.

One reason for deciding against this was that he feared he might fall asleep while on his pony's back. Then he might fall off and the animals would go on without him.

"I'd never get them again," he thought.

Another reason for making up his mind to stop traveling and make camp, if such it could be called, was that he feared he was continually going farther and farther away from his friends.

"I'd better make a halt and wait for them to locate me in the morning," Buddy reasoned. "They can find me more easily than I can find them. I'll stop right here."

He had made up his mind at the right moment and, as he soon found out, in the right spot. For he had ridden into a little rocky defile and in the starlight he saw the gleam of water in a small pool. The ponies smelled it and whinnied in delight.

"A water hole!" cried Buddy in delight. His brief travel in this land had taught him the value of water. Slipping off the back of Cactus, Buddy ran forward and, first tasting the water carefully he felt it was clean and good to drink. In some parts of the West there is what is called "bad water," that is it is thick with alkali and not fit to drink. But this was pure and good, though not very cold.

The pool was large enough for Buddy to drink at one end and the horses could get what they wanted at the other. They drank eagerly and then lay down. They were tired from the day's travel and from the race.

"Well, I'll tie you up as best I can," Buddy decided, "and then we'll see what happens in the morning."

Buddy took the blanket off Cactus. It was to be his only bedding for the night, but then it wasn't cold. It was cooler than during the day when the hot sun blazes down, but there would be no danger of catching cold even by sleeping on the ground. The Arizona air is so pure that cold germs don't exist.

Selecting a sheltered place between two rocks, which still held some heat from the sun that had been shining on them all day, Buddy arranged his bed. It didn't take long.

Now he began to feel hungry. This sensation hadn't bothered him before. He had been too anxious about getting back to camp. But now he realized he hadn't eaten any supper.

"And I'm not likely to get any," he told himself with a sigh. "Gosh! I wish I hadn't thought of it!"

The chances are that, whether Buddy had thought of supper or not, his stomach would have made known to him the fact that he hadn't eaten anything since noon.

And it was now nearly 8 o'clock, he guessed.

"I ought to pack a lunch with me all the while," said Buddy with a short laugh. "There's no telling when I'm likely to run away from camp and be lost. Yes, I ought to carry an emergency lunch."

Before stretching out to roll himself in his single blanket, Buddy put his hands in his pockets. He felt something in the right side of his coat and, a moment later, he uttered a cry of joy as he pulled out something that glistened in the starlight like silver.

"A big chocolate almond bar!" cried Buddy. "Am I lucky! I'd forgotten all about this. Now I can eat!"

He and Lukah had bought some of the candy bars at the last village they stopped at where there was a government store and trading post. The Navajos are as fond of sweets as any boy.

As a matter of fact Buddy had bought several of the bars of which he was very fond. He had eaten all but this one and how he missed that he didn't remember.

"But I'm sure glad I have it now," he said.

As a Boy Scout he knew how nourishing and sustaining is the combination of nuts and chocolate. Probably it wouldn't do as a steady diet but as an emergency ration it is almost perfect for a time. More than once on a hike Buddy and his chums had used chocolate almond bars to take the edges off their appetites until they could have a regular meal.

Peeling off the tinfoil which had glistened so brightly in the starlight, Buddy began to eat the candy. It was better than he had ever before tasted, he thought, though it wasn't the very best of its kind. The Indians were easily satisfied.

The bar was a big one, thick with nuts and Buddy, after eating about half of it, decided to put the remainder away.

"I'll need something for breakfast," he decided.

Eating the candy made him thirsty so he went again to the water hole and got another drink.

"Now I guess I'm all set for the night," he decided. "And I'm not going to stay awake and watch. I couldn't do much anyhow, if somebody tried to steal the horses. I haven't any gun and I couldn't run after 'em in the dark. I'll just take a chance and trust to luck."

Which is about all any one else, alone at night could have done.

So Buddy rolled himself up in the blanket, his hunger and thirst appeased, and went to sleep.

Luck was with him. Nothing happened all night and he wasn't disturbed—not until morning.

When he awakened the sun was shining on him and the two horses. They were up and grazing. Buddy was glad to see they hadn't been stolen. He jumped up, shook the blanket from him, shivered a little in the cool morning air and then looked about to see a sight that filled him with wonder and not a little fear.

A short distance from the rocky nook where he had spent the night, Buddy saw, out in an open place, on a little raised table of rock, a half naked Indian setting up a curious signal.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE HOPI INDIANS

Buddy, for a moment, thought the Indian might be looking for him and was setting up the curious signal as a sign to others that he had come this far in the search for the missing boy. But as he looked more closely, Buddy began to realize that what the Indian was doing had no connection with him.

"He's a Hopi Indian, too," said Buddy in a whisper. He had, by this time, learned to tell the slight difference between a Hopi and a Navajo. "But he isn't like any Hopi Indian I've seen before around here," Buddy went on, still talking to himself in whispers. "Maybe we are in Hopi country now and don't know it. I mean maybe I am, for I guess I'm farther from our camp than I thought."

His own plight was forgotten for the moment as he watched the lone Hopi Indian who truly looked the savage he was. He did not wear the clothes of civilization—just a piece of skin around his hips. His black hair straggled wildly.

Seemingly unaware that he was being observed by Buddy who was still in the rocky defile where he had slept, the lone Hopi went on with what he was doing. And now that Buddy watched more closely, the red-haired boy began to understand that the signal which was being erected on the raised table of rock couldn't be intended to give news about him. It was too complicated.

The outcropping ledge of rock was about ten feet each way but it wasn't square. It stood about two feet out of the ground. The Indian took two long, slender poles, whether he had brought them with him or whether they had been left at the rock for him, Buddy didn't know. The poles were set upright on top of the rock, probably in holes or cracks. There was a crosspiece half way up, which made the whole affair, when upright, look like football goal posts only they were not far enough apart, the distance separating them being only about three feet. The lower part of the poles, about a foot above where they were set in the rock, were bound together with ropes or thongs.

As Buddy, from his hiding place, watched, the Hopi hung over the crosspiece several slender sticks tied together. Some had feathers on them which fluttered in the morning breeze. There were several shorter, slender sticks leaning against the side of the upraised rock where Buddy could see them and he also noted a bundle of sticks on the rock at the base of the poles.

Having festooned the crossbar with sticks, feathers and what looked like strands of hair, the Hopi stood for a moment silent and then began chanting in a sing-song voice. Buddy could not understand the words but he knew, now, who the lone Hopi

was.

“One of the snake priest dancers!” Buddy decided. “And this is one of his signals to announce the coming snake dance. Morzrel told me we’d be seeing some of these signals soon. What did he call them? Oh, I remember, a kiva.”

Having finished his chant, which might have been a welcome to the rising sun or a prayer that he might find many snakes in his quest, the Hopi priest gathered up the loose, small sticks, also picking up a skin bag and what looked like a long, slender feather duster, he hurried away over the desert. The signal was left standing, the dangling objects on the crossbar swirling and dancing in the breeze.

“He wasn’t looking for me at all,” decided Buddy as he strolled over toward the kiva. “He just came out here to put up the signal for the snake dance. He didn’t know I was here, or the horses either. Maybe it’s just as well he didn’t take a notion to ride off Silver and Cactus.”

However, as he thought more of it, Buddy decided the Hopi priest probably wouldn’t be interested in horses. He wasn’t supposed to ride them but to go about on foot.

Buddy walked around the kiva signal. It didn’t mean anything to him but was of deep religious significance to the Hopis. The boy was careful not to go too near and not to disturb anything. If he and his friends were going into Hopi country it would be well to be on good terms with the Indians. Meddling with their religious signs would not be either fair or good policy.

Then, as he thought of his friends, Buddy began to consider what he had better do to get back to them.

“First, though, I’m going to eat this,” he told himself as he took from his pocket what was left of the chocolate almond bar. “This is breakfast.” It was rather a slim one, washed down with water and then, making sure both horses were securely tethered in a new place where they could nibble fresh grass, Buddy made his plan.

“I’m not going to travel on,” he decided. “I don’t know which way to go and I may be going away from camp instead of toward it. I’ll stay here until they come after me. This signal will be a good landmark.”

Indeed the Hopi kiva was an outstanding sight in that low region. There were no towering masses of mesa rock to hide it from view. And Buddy decided that his friends, missing him, would not only make a search but would also make inquiries among the Indians, both Navajos and Hopis.

“Chief Kotcha will hear about this kiva,” reasoned Buddy, “and he may guide dad out here to get me. I’ll just hang around here.”

It was a lonesome, desolate place and Buddy wondered how any Hopi Indians

were going to see the signal and know that it was a sort of advertisement of the coming snake dance.

“But these Indians wander all over,” said the boy, “and some of ’em will probably come out here, see this kiva and tell others.”

That is exactly how it was, as Buddy learned later.

There was nothing for him to do except stay in such shade as he could find among the rocks and so tie the horses that they, also, could have some shelter from the hot sun.

What seemed like many hours passed and Buddy was getting weary and anxious and his hunger was increasing. But really it was a considerable time before noon, as he afterward learned, when he saw two figures riding toward him, heard shots and then calling voices.

The red-haired boy jumped up, waved his hat and shouted:

“Here I am! Here I am!”

A few minutes later he was greeting his father and Morzrel.

“Are you all right, Buddy?” asked Mr. Martyne.

“Sure, Dad! I got lost, that’s all. But I got back Lukah’s horse.”

“So I see,” said Morzrel. “How did it happen?”

Buddy told his story and was congratulated by his father and the Navajo for having done just the right thing.

“Only,” Morzrel said, “it would have been just as well for you to have stayed right where you overtook the thief. You started for camp in quite the wrong direction and if you’d gone on any further along this trail you’d be farther than ever away.”

“I went by the North Star,” Buddy said.

“Only you went the wrong way,” said the Navajo. “You got turned around. Our camp is back there,” and he pointed south.

“Then how did you come from where you did?” asked Buddy.

“Because,” his father answered, “we rode out trying to find you. We started as soon as it was daylight this morning. And when we didn’t overtake you, or see any traces of you, Morzrel decided you had become confused so we rode back and here we are.”

“I guess I was sort of foolish to ride off after that horse thief all alone,” Buddy said, “but I didn’t want him to have Lukah’s pony.”

“Lukah will give you his thanks,” said Morzrel. “He remained in camp with my father. We couldn’t tell what might happen. And when I saw this kiva,” he motioned to the Hopi signal, “I said to your father perhaps you might see it, also, and head for it. So we did the same.”

“I’ve been here all night,” Buddy replied. “I saw the Hopi Indian put this signal up. It is a snake dance sign, isn’t it?”

“Yes,” Morzrel said, “it is. And we plan to take your father and you to see it. Maybe you won’t like it, though.”

“Oh, yes I shall,” Buddy declared.

They were soon on their way back to camp, which lay in quite the opposite direction Buddy had thought it did. He was warmly welcomed by Lukah and more calmly by the chief who, like most old Indians, did not show much emotion one way or the other.

“But I sure am glad to get Silver back!” exclaimed Lukah, who had some characteristics of an American boy. “Thanks a lot, Buddy. It was good work.”

“Oh, it was just luck,” said the red-haired lad.

After a more substantial meal than the chocolate almond bar, Buddy was ready to travel on with his friends. As Mr. Martyne wanted to get some Hopi Indian relics as well as Navajo for the museum and library, it was decided to go to that reservation, which was not far away. Buddy had guessed right in this matter.

“We’ll also take in the snake dance,” decided Mr. Martyne. “I’ve often read about it but have never seen one.”

Two days later they rode into a fertile little valley where there was a settlement of Hopi Indians who lived by farming and sheep raising. Springs in the valley produced enough moisture so that it was almost like an oasis.

“Well, we’re among the Hopis now,” said Morzrel as they rode through the village. “I hope they don’t drive us back.”

CHAPTER XIX

THE SNAKE DANCE

MR. MARTYNE looked at Morzrel and asked:

“Do you think there might be trouble?”

“There sometimes is,” said the Navajo. “There are often fights and quarrels between our people and the Hopis. But my father is a friend of theirs and I guess he can fix things up.”

Chief Kotcha, looking very sedate and dignified in spite of his rather civilized attire, was soon in conference with the head men of the Hopi village and they talked, using a great many signs and gestures. When the meeting was over Buddy was glad to hear Morzrel say, after a little talk with his father:

“It’s all right. They’ll let us see the snake dance.”

“I thought it was always open to the public,” said Mr. Martyne. “At least I’ve read of tourists who attended it.”

“They do in some parts of Arizona,” Morzrel answered. “But we are not on a tourist trail and the snake dance you’ll see is one the public doesn’t often see. I think the Hopi priests, knowing the tourists want excitement, do a lot of things they wouldn’t do otherwise. Here you’ll see the real dance.”

“What’s the dance for?” Buddy asked.

“Wait until we set up our camp and I’ll tell you all I know,” Morzrel promised. “You may be able to understand some of it and you can see the rest and judge for yourself. It has to do with religion, not the religion you know but a different kind. Indian ways are not white ways,” he said. “In some things the Indian way is best, in others it’s worse. I’ve learned that.”

The camp was established near a large hogan or Indian house that was not in use. It was placed at the disposal of Buddy, his father and the others. It served more as a place for storing their goods than anything else as the air was so warm and dry they preferred to sleep in the open.

When the horses had been staked out and a meal had been eaten, Morzrel told Buddy something about the coming dance which would be held in a pueblo a short distance away from the village in the fertile valley. Pueblo, as you probably know, is a Spanish word meaning a town or people, but it has also come to mean a tribe of Indians who live in high rocks where they excavate holes in which they live. The Pueblo rocks are something like modern apartment houses, with rough ladders instead of elevators to enable the dwellers in the upper parts to reach their rooms.

It was near one of these rocky dwelling places that the Hopi snake dance would

take place three days hence.

“They’ve been getting ready for it quite a while now,” Morzrel told Buddy. “That kiva signal you saw the Hopi putting up was one of the preparations. A kiva is both a signal and also a place where the snake priests keep some of the things they use in the dance.”

Morzrel went on to tell how, before the day of the dance, the Antelope and Snake clan priests spent much time in their kivas, looking over the things they were to wear, preparing their tools and singing their sacred songs.

Then came the snake hunt which lasted four days. The first day the priests went hunting to the north, then to the south and on other days to the east and west. The priests seemed to know where to find the snakes. They went out wearing only a cloth around their hips with moccasins on their feet and carried hoes for digging out burrowing snakes, a small sack of sacred meal and a larger sack for holding the snakes they captured.

“They bring in bull snakes, king snakes and rattlers,” said Morzrel who had often watched the Hopi priests capture the reptiles. “They don’t fuss much about picking up kings and bulls, which aren’t poisonous. But rattlers are different—the priests know that even if they pretend not to be afraid. The rattlers here are small ones, only about two feet long.”

“Will you die if they bite you?” asked Buddy.

“I wouldn’t want to take a chance,” said Morzrel. “Anyhow, the priests are a little more careful picking up rattlers than they are the king or bull snakes. When they see a rattler on the sand they sprinkle some sacred meal on Mr. Snake. Either before or after this ceremony the snake coils and that means he’s ready to strike. He sounds his rattles and that’s where the eagle feathers come in.”

“What eagle feathers?” Buddy asked.

“A bunch of them the priest has tied on a stick. He strokes the snake with the eagle feathers and when the snake uncoils and starts crawling away the priest catches hold of it.”

“In his bare hands?”

“Yes, in his bare hands. But he is careful to catch the snake back of its head so it can’t turn and bite with the poison fangs. The snake is waved in the air and then the priest rubs it along the spine.”

“Why does he do that?” asked Buddy.

“I don’t know,” Morzrel answered, “unless it sort of soothes the angry snake. Anyhow the rattler is put in the big bag with the bull and king snakes and the priest goes on hunting more with the sacred meal and the wand of eagle feathers. It is in

this way that the priests, going each day in a different direction, collect, about a week before the dance, all the reptiles they want. They are kept in a bag until the time for the ceremony. Then you can see what they do with them.”

“I sure will like to see it,” said the red-haired boy. “I’ll have something to tell the fellows back in Mountchester when I get home. I’ve had a lot of adventures.”

“Yes, you have,” agreed the Navajo.

While waiting for the day of the snake dance, Mr. Martyne bought many Indian relics for the museum and library. He found the Hopis, with the influence Chief Kotcha seemed to have with them, very obliging. Mr. Martyne bought some of the sticks, feather-wands and other objects the priests use in the snake dance ceremony.

At last the afternoon of the ceremony came. It was to be held on a plaza, or open space, on top of a mesa, one of those strange upright masses of rock rising abruptly from the level desert.

Buddy and his father were given good places in the crowd of Hopi Indians, braves, squaws and children who had gathered to witness what, to them, was a sacred ceremony. There were not many other white persons present as this pueblo was off the regular tourist trails. Chief Kotcha and Morzrel were near Buddy and Mr. Martyne in case there might be any trouble when the excitement began. Lukah was with Buddy.

“I’ve never seen one of these dances,” the Indian boy said to his white chum.

There was rather a long wait. The sun grew hotter and hotter. Suddenly above the hum of voices sounded the rattle of the gourd drums filled with dried peas, corn or small pebbles.

“Here they come!” cried Lukah.

In the center of the plaza was a kisi and in a hollow beneath it, covered with boards, were the snakes that had been caught some time before.

The kisi was a bower of cottonwood boughs like a miniature tent or tepee and was erected midway of the plaza, off to one side. It served to cover a hole in the center of the rock floor. The hole beneath the kisi contained a large bag filled with snakes, the opening of the bag being near the opening in the side of the little tepee.

As Buddy and his father watched, they saw the Antelope priests come filing into the plaza from some place where they had gathered. They were rattling their gourds while with slow steps they marched around the kisi four times, and each time every priest stamped with his right foot upon the boards covering the snakes. A hollow, booming sound came forth.

“What’s that for?” Buddy asked Morzrel.

“Either to quiet or soothe the snakes, I don’t know which,” was the answer.

“But here comes the guardian of the bull roarer.”

Before Buddy could ask what this was, he saw the Antelope priests sprinkling meal on the boards of the temporary snake den and then he noticed a big Indian leaping into the center of the plaza. This Hopi carried a big bow ornamented with feathers. It wasn't a bow to shoot arrows. On one end was a long sinew cord and on the end of this cord was a hollow, wooden tube which, when swung in a circle gave out a sound like the bellowing of a bull.

This moaning or bellowing sound seemed to be a summons to the Snake priests who were a different clan than the Antelopes. They now came running and dancing into the center of the plaza.

“Wow! They look fierce!” exclaimed Buddy. And well might he say so. Each Snake priest was naked to the waist, the upper part of his body being painted black with streaks of white in the lightning sign. Their long hair was let down, blowing all about their heads and in their locks were red feathers. There were circles of red paint around their eyes and a circle of white paint around their mouths.

They wore short skirts like the kilts of a Scotchman and hung on them were many strange objects, like stones, sticks, snake-skins, bones and things the priests considered sacred. They wore armlets and bracelets of silver and necklaces of many strands made up of beads, bones and beautiful blue turquoise stones. Dangling down from the back of each priest's belt were one or more skins of foxes, really handsome pieces of fur, Mr. Martyne noticed.

“Your mother would like some of those fox skins, Buddy,” said his father.

“But that's about all she'd like at this dance,” said Buddy.

He noticed that each Snake priest wore, fastened about his right leg, just below the knee, clappers made of tortoise shell. These clappers added their noises to those of the rattling gourds shaken by the Antelope priests. Each time a Snake priest passed the kisi he did as the Antelope members had done—stamped with his right foot on the hollow-sounding boards.

Meanwhile the Antelope priests had formed in a straight line in front of the kisi. Their backs were toward the pueblo houses and they faced the plaza. When the Snake priests had made a circuit they made another line facing the Antelopes.

Now there began a chant in the Hopi language and the priests made curious waving motions with their hands, one dancer twining his wrists around those of the man next to him.

“They look like wiggling snakes!” said Buddy in a whisper to Lukah. “I mean their hands do.”

“I guess that's why they do it,” said the Indian boy. “But look at 'em now! This

is different! Something's going to happen! Watch 'em!"

Buddy did, most intently. The song of the chant had changed. Then came a pause and the line of Snake priests broke up into pairs, each two doing a curious half dance half shuffling step.

Suddenly one of the priests took the covering of boards off the kisi hole containing scores of deadly snakes.

"Wow!" exclaimed Buddy. "I hope they don't get loose!"

CHAPTER XX

END OF THE TRAIL

THERE was now tense excitement not only among the Snake and Antelope priests but among the spectators as well. Buddy and his father leaned forward so they would not miss anything of what was to take place. It was the most dangerous part of the dance.

Suddenly one of the shuffling priests, so strangely painted in black and white, thrust his hand into the snake hole and pulled out a twisting rattler. That it was a rattler was evident for in a moment of silence the buzz and whirr of the membranes on the end of its tail made the characteristic sound. A rattler cannot strike unless he is coiled but he can buzz at any time.

The priest that had drawn out the first snake held it by the middle. Both ends of the reptile were moving. Then the second priest, for they were all in pairs now, placed an arm across the bent shoulders of his companion and began to stroke the head of the serpent with a feather whip.

“Now watch what happens!” whispered Morzrel.

The rattlesnake seemed fascinated by the waving feathers. And while its deadly head was thus away from him, the first dancer put the snake in his mouth, holding it lightly in his teeth by the middle, the buzzing tail and the darting head dangling on each side of him. The two priests, one with the feather whip and the other with the snake in his mouth, went around the plaza doing their shuffling dance, bending and bowing from their hips, their shoulders hunched.

Behind each two priests and their snake walked another priest, known as the “gatherer.” He had something special to do.

Buddy, for a moment, looked down the line of dancing priests and gatherers. Some had harmless king or bull snakes, others the deadly rattlers. Then as Buddy looked back to the first three he saw the Indian who had the rattler in his mouth let it drop to the ground of the plaza, ringed around with spectators now.

“Now watch the gatherer,” said Morzrel.

The rattler dropping with a thud, remained motionless a second. The gatherer approached it and as it coiled the priest sprinkled around it some of the sacred meal taken from a small bag he carried. Next he waved his feather whip over the snake. It struck viciously.

“Oh, look out!” gasped Buddy.

But the priest gatherer was watching and sprang back in time. The other dancers with their whips and snakes turned aside so they would not step on the rattler that

was coiling again. All the while the gatherer watched it. Then, like lightning, the snake darted to one side and began crawling away. It was the chance the gatherer had been waiting for.

Quickly he pounced on the outstretched rattler, grasped it back of the head, swishing it from under the very feet of a crowd of nervous Indian women, stroked its back and popped it into his bag.

“That’s the end of the snake,” said Morzrel.

“Will they kill it?” asked Mr. Martyne.

“Oh, no. After the dance all the snakes are turned loose into the desert again.”

The dance was now at its height. All the priests had snakes, some in their mouths and some in their hands. Not one was bitten as far as Buddy could tell. Of course many of the reptiles were not poisonous and later Mr. Martyne heard some travelers say that the black and white paint with which the priests anointed themselves had a smell the snakes didn’t like so they wouldn’t bite into it.

At any rate no bites were reported.

Finally all the snakes had been taken from the kisi pit and had been danced with, dropped and picked up, some being put into bags and others held in the hands of the gatherers.

Two other priests now made a large circle of corn meal around the kisi rock and into this circle all the snakes were thrown. There was a mass of writhing, twisting, hissing and rattling serpents.

Before they had time to crawl over the meal circle, several other priest dancers ran up and, in their bare hands picked up as many snakes as they could. Out of the plaza, through the opening crowds they rushed with the twisting snakes, to liberate them in the open beyond the pueblo.

As far as the snakes were concerned, the strange dance was over. There would be other ceremonies among the priests, Morzrel told Mr. Martyne and Buddy, but they were not in public. And so, with the taking away of the last of the serpents, deadly or harmless, the crowds began to move away.

“How did you like it, Buddy?” asked Lukah.

“It was great! Not very pretty to look at but something to remember and tell the boys back home. I’m glad I saw it.”

“Yes, it was quite a sight,” agreed the Indian boy.

Chief Kotcha said something to Buddy in Navajo and Morzrel translated it as:

“He wants to know if you would like to be a snake dancer, Buddy?”

“No, thank you, I wouldn’t,” said the red-haired boy. “But did any of those rattlers have their fangs or poison sacs taken out?”

“No,” answered Morzrel. “Government investigators have examined the snakes let loose after the dance and found that all the rattlers were as deadly as ever. It may be they won’t bite through the paint or perhaps the way the priests pick them up, stroke them with the feather whips or with their hands down the backs, sort of soothes the reptiles for a while.”

“Well, I don’t care for rattlesnakes, soothed or not,” said Mr. Martyne. “And now I think we had better get back to camp. I want to get a few more things from the Indians here for the collection. Then we must begin to think of taking the trail back home.”

“Oh, so soon!” exclaimed Buddy.

“We’ve been out here longer than you think,” his father said. “It will soon be time for you to start school again.”

“Oh, gosh!” said the red-haired boy. “Why it seems that I’ve been out here only a week.”

“Yes, the time did pass quick,” said Lukah. “Maybe you’ll come out here again, Buddy.”

“I hope I can.”

A few days later the little party, bidding good-bye to their Hopi Indian friends and with deep memories of the strange snake dance, headed back toward Navajo land.

On the return the blankets, rugs, silver ornaments and a store of the blue turquoise stones were picked up and packed for shipment to Mountchester.

A few days were spent by Buddy and his father in the home village of Chief Kotcha and his family. There they had a good time and there were several “feasts” in their honor. At one there was a curious little ceremony between Buddy and the Indian chief and at the end the chief made what was, for him, rather a long talk.

“My father says,” translated Morzrel, “that he has made you a member of our tribe. You are now one of us and your name—well, in English it is The Red-Haired Boy Who Knocks His Heels Three Times.”

“Golly! Is it?” cried Buddy in delight.

Then and there he jumped up, clicked his heels thrice before coming down and gave a shout. Chief Kotcha and the other Indians laughed heartily. They all liked Buddy—Indian Buddy he might now be called for he was adopted into the Navajo tribe.

So his adventures with Chief Kotcha came to an end.

“But I’ll never forget them,” said Buddy to his father when they were on the train going home.

“No, I don’t believe you will,” said Mr. Martyne. “And there will be a fine collection of relics in the library and museum to remind you in case you forget.”

Buddy didn’t forget.

THE END

TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Misspelled words and printer errors have been corrected. Where multiple spellings occur, majority use has been employed.

Punctuation has been maintained except where obvious printer errors occur.

[The end of *Buddy and the Indian Chief* by Howard R. Garis]