

A HISTORY  
OF THE  
GREAT MASSACRE  
BY THE  
SIOUX INDIANS,  
IN MINNESOTA,

INCLUDING THE PERSONAL NARRATIVES OF MANY  
WHO ESCAPED.

BY CHARLES S. BRYANT, A. M.,  
AND  
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"For that which is unclean by nature thou canst entertain no hope; no washing  
will turn the Gipsy white."—FERDOUSI.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

**Narrative of Justina Kreiger.**

[JUSTINA KREIGER, the youngest daughter of Andrew Kitzman, was born at Posen, Prussia, July 17, 1835, and emigrated to this country, and first settled in Marquette County, Wisconsin, near Green Lake, where her mother still resides. The father had died some years since, leaving fourteen children, seven girls and seven boys. By death, and the casualties of the late Indian massacre, none of the children, except Justina and a brother, living near Winona, Minnesota, now survive. Justina was, in religious faith, a Lutheran, in the old country, and belonged to the church of her parents, but, in this country, she had united with the Methodist denomination. She married her first husband, Daniel Lehn, in Prussia. He died in five years and three months after the marriage, leaving to Justina's care, as pledges of the union, three children, two boys and a girl, all of whom are yet living. She married her second husband, Frederick Kreiger, in Marquette County, Wisconsin, in July, A. D. 1857. By this marriage she had three children, all girls, one only now surviving, one being killed by the Indians, and one dying from starvation, resulting from the late massacre.

In the spring of 1862, only eleven weeks previous to the great massacre, Mr. Kreiger and family settled on a homestead claim, under a late act of Congress, in the county of Renville, on the left bank of the Minnesota River, forty-five miles above New Ulm, twenty-seven miles from Fort Ridgley, twelve miles below Yellow Medicine, and eleven miles above the mouth of Beaver Creek, where a flourishing settlement had recently sprung up.

On the 18th of August, 1862, while her husband and a cousin

were absent, fishing in the Minnesota River, August Fross and Eckmel Groundman, just at sunset, came to Mr. Kreiger's, on their way back from the direction of the Lower Sioux Agency, to which place they had been going, when the following circumstances caused them to retrace their steps:

Some six miles from the house of Kreiger, they had found, on the road, a woman and two children, who seemed to have been murdered while escaping toward Fort Ridgley. A broken box, a stove, scattered feathers, as if hastily emptied from a bed, the absence of the team and the men in charge of the moving family, were so many evidences that the family had been overtaken while attempting to escape, for some cause yet unknown to these men. Hoping some inquiry of the neighbors might solve the horrid mystery, one remained with the team at the place where the dead bodies lay, while the other hastily visited a settlement, about a mile distant, to report what they had discovered. The residence of Mr. Buss was first visited; there Mr. Buss and wife, and three children, were all dead in the house. He next visited Mr. Monweiler's house. The doors and windows of this house were all broken, and almost every article of value taken away or destroyed. Mr. Monweiler was lying dead, about fifteen yards from the house, shot in the breast. He now ran to the house of John Rusby, near by, and found Rusby and wife lying dead, near the door, at the grindstone, where they had been grinding a scythe, and two children lying near the mother, with their heads split open. He now pondered for a moment, in doubt what to do. He looked in the direction of the several houses around the prairie, and could see no signs of human life; and now, for the first time, came to the conclusion that the Indians had broken out, and were murdering the inhabitants. He hastily retraced his steps to the place where he had left his companion with the first dead bodies discovered, and reported what he had seen. Both Fross and Groundman then returned, with all the speed they could make, to the house of Frederick Kreiger, where they found Justina, as stated above.

Fross and Groundman soon possessed Mrs. Kreiger of the condition of affairs toward the Lower Sioux Agency. They told her to call her husband immediately. Justina left her work, took the children, and ran to her brother's house, some eighty rods across

a field; while Fross and Groundman left their teams at Paul Kitzman's, and ran through the woods to their homes, half a mile distant, to look after their families. Mr. Frederick Kreiger, Justina's husband, had heard the call, and had also reached Paul Kitzman's soon after his wife had arrived there with the children. The largest children were then sent to inform the nearest neighbors; and, within one hour, thirteen families had assembled at Paul Kitzman's, the brother of Justina.

Here we propose to give the personal narrative of Justina, as reported by a sworn German interpreter attending on the Sioux Commission, and taken down by the author, with the permission of the Commissioners, for such use as might, in the future, seem proper.—EDITOR.]

It was about eight o'clock P. M., of Monday, August 18, 1862, when we all determined to flee to Fort Ridgely. One of the neighbors, Mr. Schwandt, had not been informed of the raid, and a delay took place, while messengers were sent to inform him. When the messengers arrived at the house they found Mr. Schwandt's oxen standing at the door, eating flour. Feathers were seen lying around the yard, and the house seemed to have been plundered. John Waltz, son-in-law of Mr. Schwandt, was lying in the door, dead, shot through with three balls, causing, no doubt, instant death. It was dark, and no other dead bodies were then discovered. The house had the smell of fire, as though something had been burning and had gone out. The daughter of Mr. Schwandt, *enciente*, was cut open, as was learned afterward, the child taken alive from the mother, and nailed to a tree. The son of Mr. Schwandt, aged thirteen years, who had been beaten by the Indians, until dead, as was supposed, was present, and saw the entire tragedy. He saw the child taken alive from

the body of his sister, Mrs. Waltz, and nailed to a tree in the yard. It struggled some time after the nails were driven through it! This occurred in the forenoon of Monday, 18th of August, 1862. Mr. Schwandt was on the house, shingling, and was there shot, and rolled off, falling to the ground dead. The mother of this boy was taken a few yards from the house, into newly-plowed ground, and her head severed from her body. Mr. Fross, a hired laborer, was lying near to Mrs. Schwandt, dead. The boy remained in his retreat until after dark, when he came over to a settlement three or four miles distant, and stopped at a Mr. Suche's house, on the prairie. Here he found about thirty dead bodies, and a living child, two or three years old, near its mother, wounded, and unable to walk. He took the child, and traveled with it toward Fort Ridgley. After carrying his burden three or four miles, and being exhausted, he placed it in a house, promising to come after it the next day. He did this to get rid of the child, so that he might possibly make his own escape. The child was afterward found, a prisoner, at Camp Release, and brought to Fort Ridgley, and there died, from the effects of wounds and the hardships endured among the Indians. The lad, August Schwandt, arrived at the fort, after traveling four nights, and lying by during the daytime. Young Schwandt is now living in Wisconsin, doing well. The three messengers who went to Mr. Schwandt's brought with them to Paul Kitzman's the bloody coat of Mr. Fross, as an evidence of the murders committed there.

Thirteen families, with eleven teams, now started, and moved forward as fast possible toward Fort Ridg-

ley. We first made toward the Chippewa River, on the prairie, thinking it safer to do so than to go by any traveled route. We had journeyed all night, until two or three o'clock in the morning of Tuesday, the 19th, and then inclined our course toward Beaver Creek, heading around that stream toward the fort. In this direction we went until the sun was some two hours high, and found we had made about fourteen miles. Eight Indians, on horseback—some naked, and some with blankets on, all armed with guns—now came up with us. In our train were eleven men, armed with such guns as they had in the neighborhood. Our teams, including the wagons and oxen, were so arranged as to afford the best protection. The men, at first, determined to fight the Indians, but, as they came within about one hundred yards, and our men were about to fire upon them, the Indians put down their guns and made signs not to fire, pretending that they were friendly Indians; and, sad to relate, our men, believing them to be friends, did not fire. One Indian, with whom all were acquainted, who had frequently been at my brother's house, and spoke good English, came up to us. Paul Kitzman, my brother, stepped out from behind the wagons, and shook hands with this savage. The Indian kissed my brother, and showed great friendship. Judas-like, he betrayed us with a kiss! This Indian inquired after our concerns, and where the teams were going. Paul Kitzman replied that "We were in a flight to the fort, as all the people in the neighborhood had been killed by the Indians." The Indian answered, that "the Sioux did not kill anybody;" that "the people had been murdered by the Chippewas;" and that

"they were now on their way after the Chippewas to kill them;" and wished our folks to return, as the Chippewas were down near Beaver Creek, or toward the fort, and that we would probably be killed by them if we went on.

At the same time this pretendedly good Indian placed his hand on Kitzman's shoulder, saying, "You are a good man; it is too bad that you should be killed!" Our folks were still determined to go on, and would not yet consent to return. This Indian then went around and shook hands with all of us, and said he would not hurt us, and that he was going to save us from harm. Paul Kitzman had great confidence in this man. He had frequently hunted with him, and thought him a good Indian.

Seeing now his advantage over us, he beckoned to the others to come up. When they came, they were exceedingly friendly, shaking hands with the men and women, and telling the women to quiet the children, who were frightened at the sight of the savages. All of us were now fully assured that they were really friendly.

Seeing their success, the Indians put up their guns into cases kept for that purpose, and the whites put up their guns in their wagons. All now joined in a friendly meal of bread and milk, and our folks, each of them, gave them some money; and, as they had given such conclusive evidence of friendship, a return was agreed upon. All the teams were turned around, and we began to retrace our steps, the Indians traveling in company with us for some five or six miles. Our men now asked the Indians if they could unyoke the

oxen and let them feed. The Indians made no objection, but seemed pleased with the idea. Our pretended friends now wished something to eat. We gave them some bread and butter and water-melon. They retired about a fourth of a mile, and ate their meal alone.

After the dinner they motioned us to go on. Paul Kitzman, going toward them, was again requested to go on, the Indians saying they would follow directly. And again assuring us that they would not leave us, but would protect us from the Chippewas, and see us safe to our homes, we moved on. The Indians coming up, some took position alongside of the train, and others in front and rear. This new manner caused some suspicion, and the whites talked to each other in German, and thought it was best to fire on the Indians; but all the guns were in the wagons, and no one dared to touch them, lest the motion should be recognized by the savages as a commencement of hostilities. Notwithstanding the difficulty, all the men, at one time, except Paul Kitzman, were determined to fire upon the treacherous foe. He persuaded them not to do it, as he had all confidence in them. "Besides," said he, "our guns are in the wagons, while each Indian has his in his hand, ready to fire in an instant, and every white man would be killed at the first shot, before a gun could be got out of the wagons."

We had now, by various stages, arrived at the place where Fross and Groundman had discovered the dead bodies on the afternoon of Monday, the 18th. Our hitherto *friendly* Indians now showed signs of anger, became impudent and frantic, and drew up in a line of battle behind our train, all having double-barreled guns



except one. Our enemy could make fifteen shots at one round, without reloading. They now came up and demanded our money. One savage came forward and received the money; the others all remained drawn up in battle-line. I had a pocket-book, and my husband came up to me for the money. I gave him five dollars, and kept the balance myself. He told me, at this time, he was going to be killed, and gave me a pocket-knife by which to remember him. After the Indians had received all the money, they started off to the settlements where the white people had been killed.

We still went on with our train toward our homes, and within a mile and a half of our house we found two men dead, who had been recently killed. These men were not recognized by any of our folks, but had evidently been killed by the same Indians. We now all concluded that our race was about ended. We were to die by these fiends. The men took their guns out of the wagons, and concluded that if they could reach a house, they could protect themselves pretty well; but while going forward toward our house, thirteen or fourteen Indians came up behind us, when within one hundred yards of the house. The Indians immediately surrounded us and fired; all the men but three fell at the first fire. It was done so quickly that I could not see whether our men fired at all; yet I believe some of them did. No Indians, however, were killed by our party. Mr. Fross, a Mr. Gotlieb Zable, and my husband, were yet alive.

The Indians then asked the women if they would go along with them, promising to save all that would go, and threatening all who refused with instant death.

Some were willing to go, others refused. I told them I chose to die with my husband and my children. My husband urged me to go with them, telling me that they would probably not kill me, and that I could, perhaps, get away in a short time. I still refused, preferring to die with him and the children. One of the women, who had started off with the Indians, turned around, halloed to me to come with them, and, taking a few steps toward me, was shot dead. At the same time, two of the men left alive, and six women, were killed, leaving, of all the men, only my husband alive. Some of the children were also killed at this last fire. A number of children yet remained around the wagons; these the savages beat with the butts of their guns until they supposed all were dead. Some soon after rose up from the ground, with the blood streaming down their faces, when they were beaten again and killed. This was the most horrible scene I had yet witnessed.

I stood yet in the wagon, refusing to get out and go with the murderers, my own husband, meanwhile, begging me to go, as he saw they were about to kill him. He stood by the wagon, watching an Indian at his right, ready to shoot, while another was quite behind him, with his gun aimed at him. I saw them both shoot at the same time. Both shots took effect in the body of my husband, and one of the balls passed through his body and struck my dress below the knee. My husband fell between the oxen, and seemed not quite dead, when a third ball was shot into his head, and a fourth into his shoulder, which, probably, entered his heart.

I now determined to jump out of the wagon and die beside my husband; but, as I was standing up to jump,

I was shot, seventeen buck-shot, as was afterward ascertained, entering my body. I then fell back into the wagon-box. I had eight children in the wagon-bed, and one in a shawl. All these were either my own children or my step-children. What had now become of the children in the wagon I did not know, and what was the fate of the baby I do not even now know.

All that I then knew was the fact that I was seized by an Indian and very roughly dragged from the wagon, and that the wagon was drawn over my body and ankles. I was not dead. I suppose the Indians then left me for a time, how long I do not know, as I was for a time almost, if not quite, insensible. When I was shot the sun was yet shining, but when I came to myself it was dark. My baby, as my children afterward told me, was, when they found it, lying about five yards from me, crying. One of my step-children, a girl thirteen years of age, took the baby and ran off. The Indians took two with them. These latter were the two next to the youngest. One of them, a boy four years of age, taken first by the Indians, had got out of the wagon, or, in some other way, made his escape, and came back to the dead body of his father. He took his father by the hand, saying to him, "Papa, papa, do n't sleep so long!" Two of the Indians afterward came back, and one of them, getting off his horse, took the child from the side of his father and handed it to the other on horseback, who rode off with it. This child was afterward recovered at Camp Release. The other one I never heard of. Two of the boys ran away on the first attack, and reached the woods, some eighty rods distant. One climbed a tree; the younger,

aged seven, remaining below. This eldest boy, aged eight years, witnessed the massacre of all who were killed at this place. He remained in the tree until I was killed, as he supposed. He then came down and told his brother what he had seen, and that their mother was dead. While they were crying over the loss of their parents, August Gest, a son of a neighbor, cautioned them to keep still, as the Indians might hear them, and come and kill them too.

Here these boys remained for three days, hiding as well as they could from the savages, who were passing and repassing. They went to neighboring houses and turned out cattle and horses, and whatever live stock was shut up in stables, sheds, or pens, and, in this way, occasionally found something to eat. On Wednesday morning, the 20th, they saw our house on fire. On the third night after the massacre, they concluded to go to the fort, twenty-seven miles distant, in reaching which they spent eight days and nights, traveling only at night, and hiding by day in the grass. They all reached the fort in safety, but made some very narrow escapes. They saw Indians often, but were not themselves discovered.

At one time these children, hungry and lonely, found a friendly cow, on whose rich milk they made a delicious meal. Another time, on their journey, while lying hid in the prairie grass, they discovered a team coming on a road near by. It carried, most likely, some white family to the fort. They were almost ready to jump up and shout for joy at the sight; and now, when about to run toward the team, what an awful shock these little children were doomed to experience! Behold, a

company of painted savages arose from a clump of grass close by them, who ran and captured the team, and, turning it the other way, drove off; the screams of a woman in the wagon rending the air as long as her cries could be heard in the distance! Thus disappointed, they hid closer in the grass until night, and again took up their weary march toward the fort. They knew not how many dangers unseen they had escaped. They saw on the route many dead bodies of men, women, and children, and animals. In one place, seven dead Indians were all placed in a row. This was near Beaver Creek, as they supposed. There were also many white people dead at the latter place.

I must now turn back for a moment, to trace the fate of my baby. My step-daughter, aged thirteen years, as soon as the Indians had left the field, started off for the woods. In passing where I lay, and supposing me dead, and finding the baby near, crying, she hastily took it up, and bore it off the field of death in her arms. The other girl, my own child, six years old, arose out of the grass, and two of the other children, that had been beaten over the head and left for dead, now recovered also, and went off toward the woods, and soon rejoined each other there. These last two were also my step-children. I was still lying on the field.

The three largest of the children who went to the woods returned to the place of massacre, leaving the baby in charge of the girl six years old. As they came to the field, they found seven children and one woman, who yet evinced signs of life, and had, to some extent, recovered. These children were a son of Paul Kitz-

man, aged two and a half years; two sons of August Horning, one three and the other one year old; a son and daughter of Mr. Groundman—daughter aged four, son aged about one year, the girl having her hand shot off; two sons of Mr. Tille, one aged two, and the other not one year old; and a son of Mr. Urban, aged thirteen. All these were covered with blood, had been beaten by the butt of the gun, and hacked by the tomahawk, except the girl, whose hand had been severed by a gunshot. The woman found was Anna Zable. She had received two wounds—a cut in the shoulder and a stab in the side. These were all taken to the house of my husband by these three girls. It was now on the evening of Wednesday, the 20th of August. They remained in the house all night, doing all that could be done for each other. This was a terrible place!—a hospital of invalid children, with no one older than thirteen years to give directions for the dressing of wounds, nursing the infant children, and giving food to the hungry, in a house that had already been plundered of every thing of value!

The children cried piteously for their mothers, who were dead, or in a bondage worse than death itself. The poor child with its hand off moaned and sighed, saying to its suffering fellows, that “Mother always took care of her when she was hurt, but now she would not come to her.” Poor child! her mother was already among the dead.

When daylight first dawned, Mrs. Zable, thinking it unsafe to remain at this place, awoke the eldest girls, and, on consultation, concluded to leave the young children and go into the woods, or into the prairie. The

girl of thirteen years, and principal dependence of the little company, awoke my two step-children, and the one six years old, who had taken charge of the baby in the woods the day previous, and August Urban, aged thirteen. These, taking with them the baby, quietly left the house, and went to the place of the massacre to look after me, as they knew I had been left on the field the day previous. As this little company were looking over the field, they saw a savage, as they supposed, coming on horseback, who turned out afterward to be Antoine Freniere, a half-breed, from the fort. As he approached the field of slaughter, he exclaimed, "O, my soul, bless God!" or words to this effect. In this expression the children may have been mistaken; but so they reported to me. Freniere came from toward my house, where the children had been left. He did not see the hunting party, who had dropped in the grass at his approach, first supposing him to be an Indian, a mistake easily made by children. Freniere soon hurried away toward the fort, as they supposed, and was directly out of sight.

These children and Mrs. Zable, after seeing Freniere, went about eighty rods from the field of the late massacre, and hid in the grass, near a small creek. They were here but a very short time, when the savages from the river, with the ox-teams previously taken from the party now dead, came to the field, and, stripping off the clothing from men and women, went toward the houses. They were soon seen at our house, gathering plunder; and, when this was completed, they set fire to the house, and with its destruction perished the seven children left there a short time before! To this

awful scene the escaping party were eye-witnesses! The Indians departed while the house was in flames, and the children came to Mrs. Tille's house, near the woods, and, being very hungry, diligently hunted the house over, and found flour and butter, and there cooked their dinner. Here, too, they fed the baby. They remained in the woods and around the houses of the settlement for three days. The third day they saw a body of Indians go to August Fross's house, plunder it of all valuables, and carry them away in a wagon. The baby had been left at Mr. Tille's house, asleep on the bed, where the party had last taken dinner.

The little girls and Mrs. Zable, being frightened by the sight of these Indians, hid themselves in the woods until dark. They then started for the fort, and soon passed by our house, yet smoldering; they also passed the field of death, resting by day and traveling by night. In this way they journeyed eleven days, and all arrived at the fort alive.

The incidents of this wonderful journey would be worthy of a long description. They saw many dead bodies, both of white people and Indians. The latter, in small parties, were frequently seen prowling over the prairie, and in the timber. The food of the children was principally corn, eaten raw, as they had no means of making a fire. They found a camp-kettle, which they used in carrying water during a part of the time. They left the baby at the house of Mr. Tille, and no further tidings has ever been heard of it. Who shall tell the fate of the innocent sufferer?

Our escaping party, when in sight of the fort, did not know the place. They feared it was an Indian



camp. Before this, one had come near being left for dead. The child six years old, on the last day of their travel, had fallen down from exhaustion and hunger, and Mrs. Zable advised the eldest girl to leave her and go on; but the other children screamed and cried so piteously at the very idea, that the advice was not heeded. The little sufferer, too, showed signs of life. They all halted, and the advanced ones came back, and being near a creek, the child was taken to it, and was soon revived by the free use of water upon the head. Here they remained for some time, and, finding the rind of a melon in the road, gave it to the fainting child, and by rest, and the tender care of the other children, it was again able to journey on with the others.

They had ascended the hill near the fort, and there sat down to deliberate what to do. Whether what they saw was an Indian encampment, or Fort Ridgley, they could not readily determine. The children first claimed the discovery that what they saw was Fort Ridgley; but Mrs. Zable supposed it the camp of the savages! In this dilemma, it was hard to decide what to do. Finally, the children declared that they saw the troops plainly. This turned out to be so, as the troops soon came toward them, having discovered this little company on the prairie. The five children were soon in the wagon brought for their rescue; but the doubting Mrs. Zable, supposing the Indians coming, made off from the rescuers as fast as she could. The troops soon caught her, and all were brought into the fort. They were a forlorn-looking company: some wounded by hatchet-cuts, others beaten by the butts of guns, and

others still bleeding from wounds made by gunshots; and all nearly famished by hunger and parched by thirst, and scantily covered by a few rags yet hanging to their otherwise naked persons!

[The reader will recollect that our narrator has related all she knew of the little sufferers, before she completed the sad story connected more immediately with her own personal history. We now return to that awful field of slaughter once more, and record her most horrible, wonderful, and yet truthful story.—EDITOR.]

I remained on the field of the massacre, and in the place where I fell when shot, until eleven or twelve o'clock at night, on Tuesday, August 19. All this time, or nearly so, unconscious of passing events, I did not even hear the baby cry. All that part of the narrative covered by this period of time I relate upon the testimony of my children, who reported the same to me. At this time of night I arose from the field of the dead, with a feeble ability to move at all. I soon heard the tread of savage men, speaking in the Sioux language. They came near, and proved to be two savages only. These two went over the field, examining the dead bodies, to rob them of what yet remained upon them. They soon came to me, kicked me, then felt my pulse, first on the right hand and then on the left, and, to be sure, felt for the pulsation of the heart.

I remained silent, holding my breath. They probably supposed me dead. They conversed in Sioux for a moment. I shut my eyes, and awaited what else was to befall me with a shudder. The next moment a sharp-pointed knife was felt at my throat, then, passing downward, to the lower portion of the abdomen, cutting not

only the clothing entirely from my body, but actually penetrating the flesh, making but a slight wound on the chest, but, at the pit of the stomach, entering the body, and laying it open to the intestines themselves! My arms were then taken separately out of the clothing. I was seized rudely by the hair, and hurled headlong to the ground, entirely naked. How long I was unconscious I can not imagine, yet I think it was not a great while. When I came to, I beheld one of the most horrible sights I had ever seen, in the person of myself! I saw, also, these two savages about eight rods off; a light from the north—probably the aurora—enabled me to see objects at some distance. At the same time I discovered my own condition, I saw one of these inhuman savages seize Wilhelmina Kitzman, my niece, yet alive, hold her up by the foot, her head downward, her clothes falling over her head; while holding her there by one hand, in the other he grasped a knife, with which he hastily cut the flesh around one of the legs, close to the body, and then, by twisting and wrenching, broke the ligaments and bone, until the limb was entirely severed from the body, the child screaming frantically, "O God! O God!" When the limb was off, the child, thus mutilated, was thrown down on the ground, stripped of her clothing, and left to die! The other children of Paul Kitzman were then taken along with the Indians, crying most piteously. I now lay down, and, for some hours, knew nothing more.

Hearing nothing now, I tried to get up, and labored a long time to do so. I finally succeeded in getting up on my left side and left arm, my right side being dead

and useless. I now discovered, too, that my clothing was all off. I tried to find some dead persons, to get clothing from them to cover me. I could not get any; for, when I had found a dead person with clothes yet on, I saw Indian ponies close by, and, fearing Indians were near, I made no further attempt. I then crawled off toward my own house, to hunt something to put on me; and, when near the house, I discovered something dark, close by, which turned out to be my own clothes. I bound them around me as well as I could, and, not daring to enter the house, which was not yet burned, I turned my course toward Fort Ridgley. It was yet night, but it was light—from the aurora, perhaps; at least, I saw no moon.

I made first to a creek, some five hundred yards from the house, and washed the blood from my person, and drank some water. This night I made six miles, according to my estimate of the distance passed over. I here came to a settlement in the timber, on some creek that put into the Minnesota River. I did not know the name of the settlement. It was now near daylight. Here I remained, weak, sick, wounded, and faint from the loss of blood, for three long days, drinking water; and this was my only nourishment all this time. At the end of these three days I heard Indians around, and, being afraid of still other injuries, made my way to the left, through the prairie, and thought to find the Chippewa Indians, but I found none. I saw plenty of Sioux Indians.

I think it was Saturday, the 23d day of August, I lay down, and thought I should die of hunger. I then took to eating grass, and drank water from the sloughs.

In this way I traveled at night, and lay by during the day. On Sunday night I came to a creek, and found many dead persons. I turned over one of these, to see whether he was a white man or an Indian. He smelled so badly I turned him down again without ascertaining. He had on a white shirt and dark pants, and I supposed he was a white man. I saw great quantities of bedding and furniture, and books scattered and torn in pieces, at a creek far out on the prairie. It was not Beaver Creek. The same night I crossed this creek. The water was up to my armpits, and the cane-grass tall and thick. Here again I saw more dead persons. One woman was lying on her back, and a child near by, pulled asunder by the legs. I then traveled around on the prairie, saw no roads, had nothing to eat, and no water for three days.

During my wanderings, early in the morning, I gathered the dew from the grass in my hand, and drank it; and when my clothes became wet with dew, I sucked the water from them. This gave me great relief from the burning thirst I experienced. Finally, at the end of these three terrible days of suffering, I came to a road. This road I followed, and, in a low place, found some water standing in puddles in the mud, and tried to get it in my clothes, but the water was too shallow. I then got down and sucked up and eagerly drank the water from the mud. My tongue and lips were now cracked open from thirst. After this, I went on and found two dead bodies on the road, and, a few steps further, a number of men, women, and children, all dead! On the thirteenth day I came to Beaver Creek, and, for the first time, found out, for certain, where I

was. Here I discovered a house in a field, went to it, and saw that every thing had been destroyed. The dog was alive, and seemed to be barking at some one, but showed friendship for me. Being afraid that savages were around, I went again into the woods. After staying there for a short time, a shot was fired, and then I heard some person calling. I thought the person calling was a German. I did not answer the call. It was not intended for me, as I thought. But, after all was still, I went on, and passed Beaver Creek, went up the hill, and then saw an Indian, with a gun pointed at some object. He soon went off in an opposite direction without discovering me. Fearing others were about, I went to the woods, and, being wearied, lay down and slept. I do not know how long I slept; but, when I awoke, it was about noon.

I was again lost, and did not know where to go. I wandered about in the woods, hunting for my way, and, finally, as the evening star appeared, I found my way, and took an eastern course, until I came to a creek again. I now saw that I must be near the Minnesota River. I went into a house near by, took a piece of buffalo-robe, went to the river bottom and lay down to rest. Here I found wild plums, and ate some of them. This night it rained all night long. On the next morning, I found that I was too weak and tired to travel, and so remained all that day and all the next night, wishing that the savages might come and put an end to my sufferings. It rained all this day.

Here I felt sure I must die, and that I should never leave this place alive. The cold sweat was on my forehead. With great effort I raised up to take one more

look around me, and, to my surprise, I saw two persons with guns, but could not tell whether they were white men or Indians. I rejoiced, however, because I thought they would put an end to my sufferings., But, as they came near, I saw the bayonets, and knew that they were white soldiers, and made signs for them to come to me. The soldiers, fearing some trick, seemed afraid to come near me. After making sundry examinations, they finally came up. One of my neighbors, Lewis Daily, first advanced, and, seeing I was a white woman, called to his partner, who also came up. They soon brought me some water, and gave me a drink, and wet my head, washed my face, and then carried me to a house near by. Here they proposed to leave me until the other troops came up; but, yielding to my earnest entreaty, they carried me along until the other portion of the soldiers came up. One of them went into a house and found a dress, and put it on me, the clothes I had on being all torn to pieces. Dr. Daniels came along directly, examined my wounds; and gave me some water and wine, made a requisition for a wagon, fixed up a bed, and had me placed on it. Now the train followed along the river bottom some distance, then took to the open prairie. Here we found a woman, cut into four pieces, and two children by her, cut in pieces also. They buried these bodies, and passed down from Henderson's house in the direction of the fort. All the soldiers seemed to take great care of me. The Doctor dressed my wounds, and did all that could be done for me. The wagon I was in soon came into company with the burial party who were going into camp at Birch Coolie.

The savages attacked this burial party on the same night after I was rescued by the soldiers, or rather on the following morning, Tuesday, the 2d of September. In that disastrous affair, it was thought proper to overturn all the wagons, as a means of better security against the murderous fire of the Indians. When they came to the wagon in which I lay, some one said, "Do not overturn that wagon, for it contains a sick woman," and they passed by. This was the only wagon left standing. Behind the wagons and the dead horses, killed by the Indians, our men lay on the ground, and fought the savages with a determination seldom, if ever, equaled. It was victory or death. I was in a good position to see and hear all that went on during the battle. I was, too, in the most exposed position. The wagon was a fine mark; standing up, as it did, above every thing else on the open prairie, it afforded the best possible target for savage marksmen. The wagon was literally shot to pieces. Some of the spokes were shot off. The cover was completely riddled with ball-holes. The cup in which I attempted to take my medicine, during the fight, was knocked away from my mouth by a passing rifle-ball. I did not attempt to reclaim it. The smell of gunpowder almost took my breath from me. Some five slight wounds was all the actual damage I sustained in this awful battle. I saw it all, from the commencement to the close. Sleep was impossible, and my hearing was wonderfully acute. The battle lasted all the day, Tuesday, and all the night following, until about midnight, when the firing ceased for awhile on both sides. Whether the weary white men or the savage Indians slept, I know not; but,



I could not sleep. About daylight, on Wednesday, the 3d of September, the firing commenced again on both sides. Some time in the forenoon of this day, I heard our soldiers crying aloud for joy. The shout went up, "Reinforcements coming!" The Indians ceased their firing, and went toward the soldiers coming to our relief. Finding they could not drive off the reinforcements, the Indians soon returned, making good time to keep out of the way of the shells which the coming soldiers were occasionally dropping among them. The Indians have a great dread of cannon, and particularly of the "*rotten balls*" they sometimes throw out in advance, to drive out a hidden foe from some secret hiding-place. Soon as the Indians found that Colonel Sibley had prepared himself well with big guns throwing shells, they fled over the prairie like chaff driven by the wind. They were soon out of sight.

When the Indians left to go toward the reinforcements, the Doctor and an officer came to look after me, supposing I could not have escaped so murderous a fire. They seemed perfectly astonished on finding me alive, and unhurt, except by the slight marks left by some five balls, merely drawing blood from the skin. How I escaped must ever remain a mystery to myself and others. The blanket given me by a soldier, and on which I lay wrapped up in the wagon during the battle of Birch Coolie, was found, on examination, to have received over two hundred bullet-holes during the fight, and yet I was not hit, except as stated. Who can imagine such an escape? Yet I did escape, and am now alive to tell the story.

When the troops had buried their dead, they returned

to Fort Ridgley. Here I was placed under charge of Dr. Müller, surgeon of the post. I hardly knew whether I was in the hospital or at the Doctor's own house; but I shall never forget the kind care taken of me by Mrs. Müller. The Doctor extracted some nine buck-shot from my shoulders, and the other eight are yet there, as they could not be taken out. My various wounds did not trouble me much, but were soon all healed.

At the fort I found four of my children; all but one, children of my first husband. Two of my own boys were already sent from the fort to St. Paul. These two boys were the two who escaped with August Urban, a lad of thirteen years of age. My oldest boy was nine, and the other eight years old. Here, too, I found the five girls who came in with Mrs. Zable. Three of these were my first husband's children; one of them my own by my first husband. After remaining two days at the fort, I was able to go on to look up my other children. The third day I came to St. Peter, a distance of forty-five miles, and from that place, by steamboat, came directly to St. Paul; and, from the latter place, made all haste to my mother's, in Wisconsin, to see my children, who had been taken there. I returned soon after, to look after the child that had been a prisoner among the Indians; but, when I arrived at St. Paul, the child had already been sent to Wisconsin by a Mrs. Keefer. I had missed her on the way.

In St. Paul I became acquainted with John Jacob Meyer, a countryman of mine, who had lost all his family by the late Indian massacre. On the relation of our mutual sufferings, we soon became attached to each

other, and, on the 3d day of November, A. D. 1862, we were married. My present husband is (June, 1863,) in the service of the Government, under Brigadier-General H. H. Sibley. I was twenty-eight years of age on the 17th day of July, 1863. My experience is a sad one thus far. I hope never to witness another Indian massacre.