

places the cane-brake afforded, we felt fairly safe; though this peace commission business did not at all appeal to us. The white flag was high upon the stalk of a nearby century plant, but we all felt that it took more than any flag to make us bullet proof. As it turned out, Geronimo saw us all the time but never noticed the flag, though he had good field glasses; and he wondered greatly what fool small party it was dogging his footsteps.

About sundown that day Martine returned and reported that the hostiles occupied an exceedingly rocky position high up in the Torres Mountains in the bend of the Bavispe, some four miles from our camp. Both Indians had been there and had delivered General Miles' message; and Geronimo, keeping Kayitah with him, had sent back Martine to say that he would talk with *me* only, and that he was rather offended because I had not come straight into his camp myself. Knowing Geronimo, I had my opinion of that; but Natchez, the real chief if there was any, sent word that we would be safe as long as we started no trouble, and he invited me to come up right away. His influence among the band being greater than any other, I felt much easier; especially since Lawton's Scouts, thirty in number, under Lieutenant R. A. Brown, had arrived in camp, and Lawton, with the rest of his command, was supposed to be near. It was too late to visit the hostiles' camp that night, so we remained in the cane brake.

III

The next morning August 24, 1886, we moved out on the trail with Brown and his detachment. Within a mile of the hostile camp, we met an unarmed Chiricahua with the same message for me that had been delivered the night before. Then, shortly, three armed warriors appeared, with the suggestion from Natchez that his party and mine should meet for a talk in the bend of the river, that Brown and his Scouts should return to our camp, and that any troops that might join him should remain there too. These conditions were complied with. Our little party moved down to the river bottom, after exchanging shots and smoke signals with the hostiles to indicate that all was well.

By squads the hostiles came in, unsaddled and turned out

their ponies to graze. Among the last was Geronimo. He laid his rifle down twenty feet away and came and shook hands, said he was glad to see me again, and remarked my apparent bad health, asking what was the matter. Having received my reply, and the tobacco having been passed around—of which I had brought fifteen pounds on my saddle—he took a seat alongside as close as he could get, the revolver bulge under his coat touching my right thigh; then, the others seated in a semi-circle, he announced that the whole party was there to listen to General Miles' message.

It took but a minute to say, "Surrender, and you will be sent with your families to Florida, there to await the decision of the President as to your final disposition. Accept these terms or fight it out to the bitter end."

A silence of weeks seemed to fall on the party. They sat there with never a movement, regarding me intently. I felt the strain. Finally, Geronimo passed a hand across his eyes, then held both hands before him making them tremble and asked me for a drink.

"We have been on a three days' drunk with the liquor the Mexicans sent us from Fronteras," he said. "But our spree passed off without a single fight, as you can see by looking at the men in this circle, all of whom you know. There is much wine and mescal in Fronteras and the Mexicans and Americans are having a good time. We thought perhaps you had brought some with you."

I explained that we had left too hurriedly to bring any liquor, and he seemed satisfied. Then he proceeded to talk business. They would leave the war-path only on condition that they be allowed to return to their Reservation, re-occupy their farms, be furnished with the usual rations, clothing and farming implements, and be guaranteed exemption from punishment. If I were empowered to grant these modest demands the war could end right there!

I replied that the big chief, General Miles, had told me to say just so much and no more, and it would make matters worse if I exceeded my authority; this would probably be their last chance to surrender, and if the war continued they would eventually all be killed, or if they surrendered later the terms would not be so favorable. This started an argument, and for an hour or two Geronimo narrated at length