

WOOD AND MARPLE

BY CHARLOTTE M. BRAEME

CHAPTER XIV.

Lord Caraven stood in the billiard room at Ravensmere; he had been playing with one of his friends, who, having received a telegram, had gone to answer it. He stood alone, leaning carelessly against the open veranda, something more than his usual indifference darkening his face; he never lifted his eyes from the floor.

"A most unpropitious moment," thought the young countess, as she caught sight of him; but, having given her word to Sir Raoul, she would have marched up to the mouth of a loaded cannon rather than have broken it.

Looking up, the earl could not but confess that he had seldom seen a lovelier picture than his young wife at that moment presented, with a flush on her face, and her hands filled with sprays of fragrant mimosa.

She would not reveal her hesitation, but went straight to him, smiling so that he little guessed how her heart beat. He raised his eyebrows as she drew nearer to him. What was going to happen? Before he had time to speak his face was buried in a soft, dewy mass of fragrant mimosa.

"There!" said a laughing voice. "You said this morning that this was your favorite flower. I have been looking for the most fragrant sprays of it that I could find."

He could not believe the evidence of his senses; it was incredible that the laughing voice belonged to his cold, proud wife—the girl who had swept imperiously from the room when he saw her last. He looked at her in amazement. She would not see the surprise on his face or make the least difference because of it.

"You have the very pick of the garden here," she said; "every spray has its own special beauty." "Yes, I know no flower lovelier than fragrant mimosa."

"And you really think that I have good taste?" he said. "Yes, why should that surprise you?" she asked, with a smile.

His face flushed, and his eyes drooped. "I fancied," he said, hurriedly, "that you considered me altogether graceless, and without any redeeming quality. I believe this is the first thing that you have ever given me of your own free will, is it not?"

"No," she replied, quietly, "it is not." "Ah, pardon me," he said, with a quick change of face and voice—"you gave me your fortune!"

There was no rebellion for a moment—no, bitter rebellion. Then she remembered Sir Raoul's words. It was for her husband's good. She trampled down the hot impulse of angry pride—she stifled the bitter anger and contempt. Her victory over herself was so great that she was even surprised at it. She laid her hand on Sir Caraven's, she said, gently, "you are quite wrong. I was not thinking of money. Gold is dross—I despise it—I could almost hate it for the mischief that it makes. I was thinking of something very different from money—something that money could not buy."

He was looking at her with keen curiosity. "Hilred, what have you given me that money could not buy?"

"The dark eyes gleamed softly. "I will not tell you, Lord Caraven," she answered.

"But I must know. You have excited my curiosity—you must gratify it. You have enumerated three things that money cannot buy—happiness, virtue, love. It was none of these. Then what could it be?"

"I must go, Lord Caraven," she said, her face glowing hot and her heart beating quickly. "If you weigh every word that I say, I shall have to be very careful."

"Hilred, tell me what you mean?" he requested. "What have you given me?" "I will tell you," she replied, laughing, "when you have counted all those tiny leaves on the mimosa-branch."

She turned to go, but he put out his hand to detain her. She eluded him, and, with a light laugh, disappeared, leaving him by the veranda alone.

"You look astonished at something," said Lord Caraven's friend to him when he returned to resume their game at billiards.

"Yes," replied the earl. "I have seen a ghost."

"A ghost! The ghost of what?" "I am not quite sure," replied the earl; "but I think it was the ghost of what might have been."

CHAPTER XV.

Lady Caraven was pleased as she dressed for dinner. She had seen something in her husband's face that day which had surprised her, something that drove away the indolent, easy expression. Was the sleeping lion roused at last? Had her passionate words, her keen indignation, moved him? Had he grown ashamed of his indolence? Had he tired of his pleasures?

When the gentlemen came into the drawing room she made herself most fascinating and charming. She sang, she talked; the whole party thought her exceedingly entertaining. It was when her husband was looking most pleased, and listening to her with real interest, that she went up to him.

"I have a little favor to ask of you," she said. "Will you give me five minutes of your time this evening?" His look was one of pleased, bright expectation.

"Assuredly, Hilred—as long as you like. I am beginning to think that my interviews with you are welcome ones."

So, when most of the visitors had gone to their respective rooms, the earl lingered. It was something novel to him, this appointment with his own wife—something pleasant. He waited for her in the drawing room, where the blinds were still drawn, and through the windows of which a lovely moon was shedding floods of silvery light.

whole of my life depends. In granting it you will make me happy; if you refuse it I shall be miserable."

"What is it, Hilred?" he asked. "I do not in the least understand."

"It is this. I want you to let me be your steward—I mean, let me have charge of your estate. I could do the duties far better than Mr. Blantyre."

"I give him a large salary," said Lord Caraven, half laughing—"he ought to do that well."

"But you have seen for yourself that he does not," she returned, "he is not a just steward."

"No," was the grave admission, "he is not just. It is that which grieves me. He has abused my trust. I shall never believe in him again."

"Then let me take his place," she cried, eagerly. "I do not mean in the mere keeping of accounts—you will always want some one for that—not even in the looking after little details; but let me be your head steward, Lord Caraven, and the mistress of your tenants and dependents, the well-being of your estate, the care of your property shall be my one interest in life. I will be content to work early and late, to live without pleasure, if you will only grant my prayer."

"If you are a lady, Hilred. How could you find time for it?"

In her eagerness she forgot her reserve—she laid her hand upon his arm, and looked into his face.

"I am not a fine lady; I am a lawyer's daughter. It may even be that I inherit my father's liking for business. I find time, believe me, if you will give your consent."

"What would you do, Hilred, supposing I gave my consent?" he asked.

"Say rather what would I not do. I would reform all abuses. I would make Ravensmere a model estate; people should point to it as a pattern. I would make your laborers men; they are now only soulless drudges. I would pull down those wretched cottages where squalor and disease run riot, and build in their places houses such as even the poor could love. I would educate the children. What a question it is you ask me! What would I not do?"

The earl rose from his chair; he bent his head with chivalrous grace before her.

"My wife," he said, "you shame me."

"No," she cried, "you must not say that to me."

"Repeat it—you shame me," he went on, "I give my consent—my free, full, hearty consent. You will make a better mistress of Ravensmere than I do a master. You shall be the queen regent; I will be your prime minister. I place and leave all authority in your hands, and I promise you most faithfully that I will never interfere; you shall pull down and build up, you shall do just as you will, I will never interfere."

She was so overjoyed with his promises, with the change in his manner, with the earnestness on his face, that she forgot all about her restraint and indifference, and she kissed the hand that held her own. She saw her husband's face flush crimson, and she drew back suddenly.

"I beg your pardon," she said; "I am very sorry. I did not think of what I was doing. I was so overjoyed."

He took no notice of the involuntary caress, nor of the apology, though both had struck him.

"I am glad that you are pleased, Hilred," he said. "In placing my interests in your hands I feel that I have done to-day the wisest action of my life. To-day you have taken the reins from my hands, and you shall control them."

She left him then, pleased, happy, confused, with an overwhelming sense of the responsibilities she has assumed, and with something in her heart, while Lord Caraven looked in amazement at the hand she had kissed. He wondered if he should ever understand her; and he began dimly to perceive that in the money lender's daughter he had found a noble, high-souled, glorious woman.

Before many days had elapsed it became apparent that a new reign had begun at Ravensmere. Sir Raoul was charmed and delighted; he never wearied of praising Lady Caraven, and telling her what a noble work she was doing; he did his best to help her. A wonderful change was coming over the earl. Not that he was beginning even in the least to love his wife—that idea had not yet occurred to him; but he was beginning to treat her with great respect, to recognize the fact that she was a high-souled woman.

But, although the idea of love had not occurred to him, their relations toward each other were fast changing. The beautiful, gifted wife was fast taking her place in every respect and in every way, except in her husband's heart.

Lady Caraven lost no time when her husband had once given her permission to act. He affected to laugh and feel amused at her zeal and her enthusiasm—in reality it shamed him. He asked her what her first reform was to be; and she told him all the laborers' cottages were to be pulled down, and fresh houses built for them—houses where the first laws of health could be regarded. She wanted in every room, walls, pure water, plenty of room. She did not rest until the workmen were busy in removing what she called the "fever-acres."

She was to have her own way, yet she showed the sweetest submission to her husband. When the architect and builder waited upon her with plans for the model cottages, she took them at once to him. He looked up laughingly.

"You pay me a compliment, Hilred," he said, "but it is your affair entirely, not mine."

"I shall find no pleasure in it unless I have your approval," she replied. "I am your head steward, not your guide. Look over these with me."

They discussed them in full detail, and that conversation had something so interesting, so pleasant in it, that the earl was deeply interested.

"Thank you," said Hilred, looking up with a charming smile—"I am grateful to you for relieving me of my perplexity."

"The pleasure has been all on my side," he answered; and that was the most gallant speech that the earl had yet made to his wife.

So time passed on, and the beautiful summer days were filled with schemes and plans for the benefit of others.

It seemed to the earl that he was really waking up from a long sleep. The world was wearing a different aspect for him. He had never even given a thought to politics. With the arbitrary insolence of youth he had pronounced them nonsense. He now deplored. Hilred, too, was sorry for it. She had been so successful in other matters that she ventured at last upon this. It was by a series of well-directed questions that she first aroused

his attention. In trying to answer them he grew interested himself. "If I could vote," Hilred had a fashion of saying, "I should try to urge that measure." At last Lord Caraven awoke to the consciousness that in the government of Britain's mighty empire he, too, ought to have a voice.

They had seen nothing of John Blantyre since his abrupt dismissal. The earl had been told that he had left Mere Cottage, but that he was living at Court Haven. That piece of intelligence did not trouble him; the unjust steward was part and parcel of the past—a past he was beginning to think of with regret. Nevertheless, John Blantyre lived only for his revenge.

(To be continued.)

LITTLE LOTTA.

The Old-Time Favorite Is Happily Resting in Retirement.

It is given to few actresses to retire gracefully from the stage. In fact, it might almost be said of them that none resign.

Yesterday, however, says a New York correspondent of the Chicago Chronicle, I ran across the case of an actress, second to none in America in her day, who has contrived to retire from the stage without unseemly talk and to stay away from it in the peaceful contemplation of a life of perfect privacy and quiet. Lotta is happy to be Miss Crabtree now and until she dies. She loved her calling when the country rang with her praises, but she has no regrets, or, if she has, conceals them thoroughly from her most intimate friends. Her disposition is sunny, and those of you who remember her, let us say, as "Musette," can understand what I mean when I say that Lotta is "Musette" still, cheerful childish in a sweet, unaffected way, devoted to her mother first of all and always, and rejoicing in her old friends, for she makes few new ones now.

Miss Crabtree's devotion to her mother is a source of delight to those who are privileged to see it. She has concentrated her affection—and she is full of it—upon the dear old lady. This life is all returned, and the two are almost inseparable. The other day Miss Crabtree—I can hardly resist calling her Lotta—much against her will, had to leave her mother for the best part of the day. The cruel man who caused this separation was the agent who looks after the renting of the flat buildings in Upper New York which belong to Miss Crabtree. He insisted upon her inspecting her property. Her description of the tour afterward was awfully funny. She saw the amusing side of everything—even the janitors failed to depress her spirits.

Miss Crabtree is a very wealthy woman, which makes her simplicity of life and the pleasure she finds in it the more remarkable. "There is a halo of happiness about that little red head," said one of her best friends to me the other day, "and she keeps it aglow. I believe, by thinking most of the time of others, and especially of her mother. She has a beautiful home here in New York, and she stays in it a great deal longer every year than one of her means in this part of the world usually does."

Lotta will never return to the stage, and it is a privilege to be able to recall her charming impersonations, but I can not help feeling that if she had been born a generation later and then found some one to direct her artistic instincts in a proper way, she would have achieved greater triumphs and left upon the public a deeper impression. Her genius was never extended fully. The plays in which she appeared were the very best of her time. She shone in spite of them. We remember Lotta in the character of that, but the very names of the plays to which they belonged are fast being forgotten. But what does it matter to Lotta, still the darling of every one who saw her, and, most of all, beloved by her own sex, "though lost to sight to memory dear?" So Lotta the actress retired without regrets to Lotta the contented cricket of her own happy hearth.

Marine Hospital, Key West.

Where some of the wounded of the Maine are being cared for.

of national sentiment showing how profoundly this great nation is agitated.

The Maine was one of the finest battle-ships afloat; one of the most perfect in construction, one of the most complete in equipment. All that modern invention, long experience and trained intelligence could do to make her efficient and safe had been done. And yet this magnificent vessel, at anchor in the harbor of a friendly nation, was destroyed with greater loss of life than would have followed an engagement with the whole Spanish fleet in Cuban waters. Had the Spanish cruisers and torpedo boats attacked the Maine, and sent her to the bottom with the loss of 250 lives, the calamity would have been hard to bear. But to have the Maine destroyed as she was destroyed is calamity unbearable. It was useless to cry patience when there was no patience. It was useless to ask for suspension of judgment when judgment had been given. That judgment was against Spain, and if reversed it would be only on the testimony of witnesses who had standing in the court of public opinion.

No foreign country can appreciate the full depth of American patriotism, writes a Washington correspondent, and it takes an incident of this sort to show it up in its full strength and magnificence.

Gov. Tanner of Illinois was the first to offer the fighting forces of his State to the nation. Gov. Mount of Indiana telegraphed that Indiana would make a generous response to arms. Gov. Black of New York sent word that militia of the Empire State, numbering 14,000, could mobilize within twenty-four hours after orders were received. The belief is also expressed that there are 600,000 men in New York State available for service. Gov. Atkinson of West Virginia insists that he will furnish at short notice five regiments of the best men that can be raised in the Union. Gov. Holcomb of Nebraska will supply 1,200 well-drilled men and pledge 200,000 volunteers. Gov. Wells of Utah says his State will do its full duty when it comes to raising troops. Adj. Gen. Sykes of Tennessee will enlist 1,800 experienced soldiers and raise 50,000 volunteers. Gov. Clough of Minnesota wires: "Minnesotians are fighters, and will only be satisfied in the front ranks." Gov. Stephens of Missouri declares that if war is declared he will issue a call for 150,000 troops.

And so it goes and so it comes, with other warrior States to hear from. There is no lack of soldiers. Spain can depend upon that. But the tears were shed for the dead in Havana, but it proudly and defiantly waves in the breezes that blow from the north, south, east and west, and it will be well for the Spaniard if the good ship Maine went to the bottom of the Havana harbor as the result of an insupportable act of provocation.

This Washington correspondent, whose assertions are thought to be reliable, says that private talks with members both of the Senate and House clearly indicate that there is a volcano at the Capitol which may burst into activity at almost any time. The pictures of the wreck received in Washington, reproductions of which are shown on this page, coupled with the general tone of newspaper dispatches, have gone far to convince members of Congress that the Maine was blown up from the outside. They are willing to wait a reasonable length of time for the board of inquiry to discover the positive definite, but as the general opinion is in favor of a torpedo or sub-

marine mine, failure to discover positive evidence of an accident will only serve to confirm this opinion.

Several well-known Senators talked with letters and telegrams regarding the catastrophe in Havana harbor, and that ninety-nine out of a hundred of them look upon the explosion as the result of a Spanish plot and demand action

cannot have his wife abroad. It is a strict rule with the big trans-Atlantic steamship companies that the wife of the captain shall not travel in his ship. The supposition is that if anything should happen to the ship the captain, instead of attending to his public duty, would devote his attention mainly to the safety of his wife.

There are few higher qualifications than that of reflection on surmounted evils, when they were not incurred nor protracted by our fault, and neither approach us with cowardice nor guilt.

DOGS OF WAR GROWL

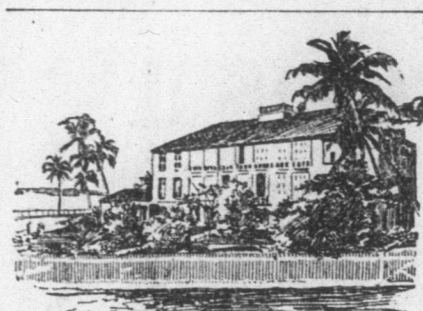
Belief that a Conflict with Spain Is Impending.

DONS COULD NOT PAY.

Unable to Make Proper Indemnity for Maine Disaster.

The Most Reliable Advice, Pending Official Reports, Are to the Effect that the Ill-Fated Ship Met with Foul Play—Senators and Representatives at Washington Become Aroused—Governors of Many States Offer Troops.

Since the terrible destruction of the battleship Maine in Havana harbor the United States has been facing the gravest crisis of the last thirty years of its history. The people have been stirred by the disaster as they have not been since the close of the war for the Union. From the South, from the North, and from the far West have come magnificent outbursts



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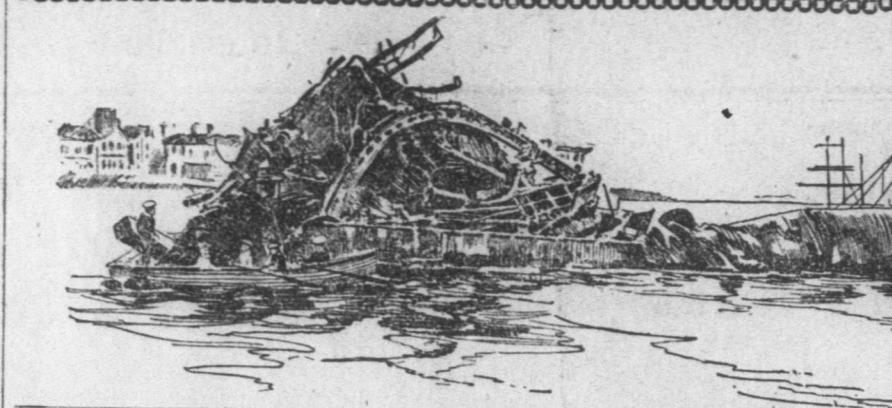
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THE WRECK OF THE MAINE--FROM A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN THE MORNING AFTER THE EXPLOSION.

NAVAL experts claim that the appearance of the twisted and torn wreck is in itself evidence of the fact that the Maine was destroyed by outside influences. The position of the wreck shows that the shock was from the port side. The main deck between the forward and after magazines is blown upward and to the starboard. The forward smokestack is thrown back and to the starboard. The whole wreck has a list to port. It is claimed that the picture indicates that the Maine was destroyed by a submarine mine. After arising in view; ship's rail is six feet under water; superstructure twisted and thrown aft; forward superstructure thrown 200 feet from the ship forward; smokestack lying down.



cordingly. Conservative leaders are becoming startled by these expressions of public opinion, and they say this is evidence of a rising tide of popular indignation which will sweep Congress from its feet unless something is done to allay the excitement.

The newspaper reports indicate with surprising unanimity that a submarine mine destroyed the Maine. If these reports are not contradicted promptly and officially Congress will surely respond with a declaration of war, which is clearly within its powers, and which the President will be forced to obey. The people demand that if ships and men are to be lost it shall be in open warfare, and not in so-called peaceful harbors. Any police magistrate would hold the Spaniards under the evidence now at hand on suspicion and require them to prove their innocence. This is exactly the position taken by nine-tenths of the members of Congress. This opinion, declares the correspondent, represents clearly the private sentiment of Senators and Representatives. They all say that the time has come for any questions of belligerency and that the only point at issue now is whether the United States shall seize Havana harbor, root up its submarine mines and make it free and safe to the navies of the world. The administration fully recognizes the dangerous situation.

May Ask Big Indemnity. A statement was made Tuesday by an official of the Navy Department who is thoroughly conversant with the Spanish

situation, that if it should be proved that the Maine was destroyed by an outside explosion, a submarine mine or torpedo, whether with the knowledge of Spanish officials or not, that Government must be responsible, and that President McKinley would demand an indemnity in the neighborhood of \$15,000,000. The value of the vessel is estimated at \$5,000,000. The rest to be paid to relatives

of officers and men who lost their lives by the destruction of the vessel. Another official very close to the administration said that there is no danger of the United States being suddenly plunged into war. Public sentiment, he said, is in favor of fighting rather than to suffer injury and insult, but the public is powerless to declare war. That function belongs to Congress, and though a provocation of war may be upon us it is a safe assumption that no ill-considered step will be taken.

In case indemnity is demanded, Spain will spar for time and cause a convenient delay, and when this state has been reached the administration can do one or all of the several things. It can, at any time, attempt the collection of its indemnity at the mouth of the cannon. Subsequent to payment, an abject apology can be demanded, and when made and the debt paid, it will be concluded that the stain upon American honor has been wiped out.

READY FOR A FIGHT. In Case of Trouble with Spain the United States Would Be Prepared. In spite of all denials it is well known that unusual efforts are being made to arm and equip every sea coast fortification, and that the regular army officers throughout the country have been quietly notified to put their commands into the best possible condition. The President does not want war, and will go a long way out of his way to avoid it, but he fully recognizes the force of public sentiment and is preparing rapidly for the worst that may come. Press dispatches from different points show preparation that is being made.

Columbus, O.—The Ohio militia is preparing to respond to the President's call for troops in the event war is declared between the United States and Spain. St. Augustine, Fla.—Captain Hubbell, with one battery, has been sent to Sullivan's Island, and a few days ago Lieut. Van Duzen departed for Fort Moultrie

with a detail of twenty men to take charge of coast defenses. Army officials here freely discuss the probability of trouble with Spain.

At Norfolk, Va., the Norfolk navy yard received instructions to have the monitor Terror ready for sea. Both the Puritan and Terror have been shipping recruits for the vacancies caused by the Maine disaster.

Providence, R. I.—The 150 officers and men in the three companies of the Rhode Island naval reserves are fully equipped for any emergency and are prepared to answer a call to duty on board any of the Government war vessels within five hours.

At Cincinnati, O., a recruiting office for soldiers to serve in case of war with Spain was opened at Merger's Hall. Many men signed the muster roll. A member of Nelson Post, G. A. R., issued a dodger headed "To arms, to arms." Hundreds of white badges and buttons with the words "Volunteer—On to Havana" have been distributed.

New York.—Never before since the days of the war of the rebellion has the Brooklyn navy yard seen so pronounced an activity on the part of officers and men. No longer do the officers idly stand by. Government is making the most strenuous preparations "to meet any emergency," as they express it. Such a denial would be useless. For the first time in many years the ordnance warehouse was open on Washington's birthday.

At Charleston, S. C., work on the Gov-

ernment fortifications is being rapidly pushed. The navy yard force is kept busy putting the guns in shape for war. In Fort Sumter a torpedo tube which commands the entrance to the harbor is prepared for work. The garrison, consisting of eighty-five men on Sullivan's Island, is ready for any orders that may be sent from Washington.

Key West, Fla.—The preparation for war can be seen on every hand, and from the naval station stores are being sent to the battleships. Every night the battleships New York and Iowa clear decks for action, and everything suspicious is stopped and spoken. Soldiers can be seen everywhere. Troops that would enlist from this city are accented to yellow fever, and could be sent to the interior of Cuba without fear of taking that dreaded disease.

SPAIN IS LIABLE. Dons Are Peculiarly Responsible for Loss of the Maine. Good authorities on international law say that if it is proved that there were mines in the harbor of Havana, Spain is liable for the disaster to the Maine, whether those mines exploded by accident or through the criminal act of an individual Spaniard, whether an official or not. They believe that if Spain had laid submarine mines in the Havana harbor it was her duty to warn the officers of the Maine of the danger they incurred in anchoring there. They cite precedents, whereby nations have recovered damages in instances very similar to the one in point, to prove Spain's liability, not only for the loss of the ship, but for indemnities for the sailors whose lives were lost in the explosion.

The liability of Spain, they say, could not be denied if neither the place of anchorage was assigned to the Maine by Spanish officials nor the explosion was due to the criminal act of some individual, but simply to some unaccountable accident. For while Spain had unquestionably the right to provide her harbor with submarine mines and torpedoes, she was

entitled to make the three nations settle any differences upon an intellectual basis."

For a Monument to Victims. Representative Cummings of New York introduced the following resolution in the National House of Representatives: "Resolved, That the sum of \$100,000 be and the same is hereby appropriated out of any money in the treasury not otherwise appropriated, to be expended under the direction of the Secretary of the Navy for the erection of a monument at Fort Lafayette, New York harbor, in honor of the officers, sailors and marines of the United States war vessel Maine who lost their lives in the harbor of Havana on the night of Tuesday, Feb. 15, 1898."

Told in a Few Lines. There is a possibility that both branches of Congress will adjourn about May 1. Rich gold quartz has been discovered in the Pembina Mountains, in southern Manitoba.

Last year the exports of the United States were 50 per cent larger than the exports of France.

There have been four mysterious assassinations in Houston, Tex., during the past two weeks.

A French aeronaut is planning to go hunting for Andree with a team of balloons joined together.

A tribe of Indians