The Prairie Schooner

William Francis Hooker

The Prairie Schooner

Illustration and Patent Color Process by J. D. Johnsen

The Prairie Schooner

By

William Francis Hooker

CHICAGO
SAUL BROTHERS
1918

To My Wife

MAMIE TARBELL HOOKER

A Pioneer of the
Jim River (Dakota) Valley

CONTENTS.

		Page
	Introduction	11
I.	Letters Pass Between Old Pards .	15
II.	Trains That Run Without Rails .	27
III.	Hunton and Clay—Bull-Train Magnates	43
IV.	Guarding an Overland Freight Outfit	57
V.	Rattlesnakes and Redskins .	67
VI.	Belated Grace for a Christmas Dinner	75
VII.	The Fate of One-Eyed Ed. .	85
VIII.	Track-Layers Fought Redskins .	99
IX.	"Bill" Hickok, City Marshal .	105
X.	When Cheyenne Was Young .	113
XI.	The Lost Indian at Bedtick Creek	119
XII.	A She-Bear and Her Cub . .	129
XIII.	A Kick From a Playful Bullock—and a Joke	135
XIV.	The Indian and the Trousers .	143
XV.	There's a Reason; This Is It! Conclusion	149

INTRODUCTION

WHEN the Union Pacific Railroad was completed from Omaha, Nebraska, to Ogden, Utah, it passed through a territory about as barren of business as one can imagine. It apparently was a great Sahara, and in fact some of the territory now growing bumper crops of alfalfa, grains and fruits, was set down in school text-books in the 70's as the "Great American Desert."

Its inhabitants were, outside of the stations on the railroad, largely roaming bands of Indians, a few hundred soldiers at military posts, some buffalo and other hunters, trappers, a few freighters, and many outlawed white men.

The railroad had no short line feeders, and there was, in the period of which I write, no need for them sufficient to warrant their construction. There were military posts scattered along the North Platte, and other rivers to the north, and the government had begun, as part of its effort to reconcile the Red Man to the march of civilization started by the Iron Horse, to establish agencies for the distribution of food in payment to the tribes for lands upon which they claimed sovereignty. These oases in the then great desert had to be reached with thousands of tons of flour, bacon, sugar, etc., consequently large private concerns were

formed and contracts taken for the hauling by ox-teams of the provisions sent to the soldiers as well as the Indians.

The ox was the most available and suitable power for this traffic for the reason that he required the transportation of no subsistence in the way of food, and was thoroughly acclimated. Usually he was a Texan—a long horn—or a Mexican short horn with short stocky legs, although the Texan was most generally used, and was fleet-footed and built almost on the plan of a shad.

Both breeds were accustomed to no food other than the grasses of the country, upon which they flourished. These included the succulent bunch grass.

Oxen were used in teams of five, six and seven yokes and hauled large canvas-covered wagons built for the purpose in Missouri, Wisconsin, Illinois and Indiana. In the larger transportation outfits each team hauled two wagons, a lead and a trailer, and frequently were loaded with from 6,500 to 8,000 pounds of freight. These teams were driven by men who were as tough and sturdy as the oxen.

Most of the freighting was done in the spring, summer and fall, although several disastrous attempts were made to continue through the midwinter season to relieve food shortages at the army posts.

It may seem strange, but it is nevertheless true, that Indians frequently attacked the very wagon trains that were hauling food to them,

in Wyoming and Western Nebraska. Perhaps they were the original anarchists; anyway, they often tried—seldom successfully—to destroy the goose that laid the golden egg, but the course of civilization's stream never was seriously turned, for it flowed rapidly onward, and between 1870 and 1885, the country was quite thoroughly transformed from a wild and uninhabited territory to one of civilization and great commercial productivity.

Cattle ranches with their great herds came first, then sheep, and by degrees the better portions of the lands, where the sweet grasses grew, and even on the almost bare uplands when water was made available by irrigation projects, were tilled. Settlements followed quickly—towns with schools and churches; then branch railroads, the development of the mines of gold, silver, coal, etc., all came in natural order. And finally, at a comparatively recent date, rich fields of oil were discovered and made to yield millions of gallons for the world's market and millions in wealth.

It is difficult to realize that the now great territory was, in the day of men still active, regarded as of little or no value—the home of murderous, wandering tribes of savages in a climate and soil unfitted for agriculture and containing little else of commercial value.

But science and enterprising men and governments have wrought almost a miracle.

Go back with me to the days of the prairie schooner before the Wild West was really dis-

covered, and let me try to entertain you with just a glimpse of things that are in such wonderful contrast to those of today.

The freight trains with ox-team power have vanished, never to return, and with them most of the men who handled them.

The "color" of what follows is real, gathered when the Wild West *was* wild; and I make no excuse for its lack of what an Enos R. Mills or a Walter Pritchard Eaton would put in it, for they are naturalists while I am merely a survivor of a period in the development and upbuilding of a great section of the golden west.

In relating incidents to develop certain phases of pioneer life real names of persons and localities have not always been used; and in some of the narratives several incidents have been merged.

Letters Pass Between Old Pards

CHAPTER I

Letters Pass Between Old Pards.

My Dear Friend:

Can you put me in correspondence with any of the old boys we met when the country was new, out in Wyoming? * * * Of the Medicine Bow range, or Whipple, the man I gave the copper specimens to? * * *

Have you forgotten the importance you felt while walking up and down the long line of bovines, swinging your "gad" and cursing like a mate on a river boat? You looked bigger to me than a railroad president when you secured that job, as you used to say, breaking on a bull-train. I should say you were an engineer, but I suppose you know best. Those were happy days. When I recall the fool things we did to satisfy a boy's desire for adventure, I wonder that we are alive. How we avoided the scalping knife; escaped having our necks broken, or being trampled to death under the feet of herds of buffalo is a mystery to me. * * *

When the building of the Union Pacific road checked the buffaloes in their passage from summer to winter feeding grounds, and they were banked up along the line near Julesburg in thousands, I recall the delight we took in watching them "get up and get." What

clouds of dust they would kick up when they got down to business! And such dust as the Chalk Bluff would make never entered the eyes or lungs of man elsewhere. Weren't we whales when we could divide or turn a herd? And how we would turn tail-to, "spur and quirt" for our lives if the bunch did not show signs of swerving from their course. How a cow-pony can carry a man safely over such treacherous ground as the dog-towns is almost a miracle.

O! to have my fill of antelope steak or buffalo "hump" broiled on a cone of buffalo chips! Nothing better ever entered my mouth on the plains. The soothing song of the lone night-herder of the bull-train as he circles and beds his stock is not more conducive to sweeter slumbers than we enjoyed by the rippling streams in the hills of Wyoming.

The difficulty we had in boiling beans until done in so high an altitude; our hunt for a gun at old Dale Creek where "Shorty" Higgins died suddenly; the fool act on my part when, afoot and alone, I recovered the horse the Comanches had stolen from us. I wish we might corral some of our old-time friends and go over the past before we leave this land, "for when we die we will be a long time dead."

The wild horse that roamed the West, among which was the stallion who so valiantly guarded his harem on the Laramie Plains, was a model for a Landseer. The great herds of

buffalo that looked like shadows cast on the plains by clouds passing the sun and the myriads of passenger pigeons, are among the things that man will never see again, and as read from the chronicles of history a few years hence, will be classed with the Jonah and the Whale story.

Old Man, when convenient, write me a long letter recalling some of the old days, for—

"I'm growing fonder of my staff,
I'm growing dimmer in my eyes,
I'm growing fainter in my laugh,
I'm growing deeper in my sighs;
I'm growing careless in my dress,
I'm growing frugal with my gold,
I'm growing wise—I'm growing—yes,
I'm growing old."

Sincerely yours,
VAN.

The reply:

My Dear Old Pard:

Your note concerning the events of long ago out on the Laramie Plains and the Harney flats shoots across my vision events in the Cache de La Poudre (the Poodre), the Chugwater country, old Cheyenne, Sherman, Fort Laramie, Fetterman, Camp Carlin, both Plattes, the Medicine Bow waters and range, Allen's "Gold Room," McDaniel's hurdy-gurdy, the dust-stirring, dust-laden buffalo east of Chalk Bluffs, the deer and antelope of the whole Wyoming territory, the sage-hens, and I don't know what not.

It makes me stop and lope back into the sage-brush. It makes me climb the mountain sides and urge the bulls to fill their piñon yokes, tighten the chains, and hurry along the four or five tons of bacon or flour or shelled corn in gunny-sacks that Uncle Sam wants delivered somewhere over the range, across the desert sweeps, through cactus-grown, prickly pear sprinkled wastes, on through the dog-towns, in the heavy sand sifting through the spokes, and falling off in a spiral fount from the slow-turning hub.

Ah, yes, old pard, and as I whack my bulls in the train that runs without rails to the top of a long divide, I look for three things: water, smoke and Indians.

There were no railroads north of Cheyenne —nothing but the "bull-trains." There away on the edge of the horizon, over the yellow bunch grass, cured by the sun, is a strip of green. It is box-elder, and underbrush. Standing out here and there like grim sentinels on guard are the big, always dead and leafless cottonwoods, white as graveyard ghosts, day or night. It seems to be only a flat surface haul to this refreshing looking strip of green. and, as I have stopped the whole wagon-train by making this observation, and the wagon boss is moving my way on a big mule, I tap the off leader, who is thirty odd feet away, with my long lash and yell:

"Whoa, haw, Brownie," but not too loud at first; just an encouraging word or two, and

then string 'em out. My leaders are light of feet and built like running horses. The pointers—or middle yokes—come in reluctantly, but I attend to that, and with the butt end of my stock, jab the near wheeler in the ribs, and away we go.

But, old pard, inside of three minutes my strip of green is gone! In its place is the quivering, broiling sun over the yellow bunchgrass; the ashen stalks of the sage seem never to have had a drop of sap in them—everything is dead. Even the jack-rabbit that stops for a look seems bedraggled and forlorn, but I whistle, pick up a moss agate, throw it in my jockey box, and jog along, for the surface is now hard as a stone, though off ahead there I will unwind my lash and send its stinging thongs to the backs of my noble beasts, touching only selected spots where the hair has been worn away until the surface looks like the head of the drum in a village band.

Yes, I know they used to think us bullwhackers were brutes, but they (an occasional tenderfoot) only saw the surface. They had never been initiated; they didn't know the secrets. It was only when the load just had to be yanked to the top without doubling teams or dropping trailers, that we used the undercut which sent the long V-shaped popper upon the tender spots of the belly, and then, Pard, the thing looked worse because the Comanche-like language we hurled with it was so unusual to ears that had been trained

east of the Missouri River. It sure was picturesque language!

But we were all day reaching that green belt strung like a ribbon across the face of central Wyoming, and from the time we first hove in sight of it, until we pulled the pins from the steamy yokes, and dropped the hickory bows at our feet, it appeared and disappeared so often that I wonder that both man and beast did not go mad. However, inasmuch as this was a daily programme for me for several years, I know that man can stand a whole lot of hardship, if he only thinks so.

And then ring in the change from the desert heat of midsummer to trifles like thirty below in winter along the same landscape, when you see the ghostly cottonwoods and anticipate your arrival among them some hours later. Won't there be a roaring fire? And beans? And bacon? And pones of bread for everyone? Wet stockings piled on inverted yokes or held on pieces of brush, are drying, we are nursing our chilblains and discussing the incidents of the day's drive, and not a weakling in the outfit. Every man has been frozen or soaked all day, but he's as happy as a lark. Sleep? You bet! You know it; but if you and I tell our friends around our comfortable firesides now or in the lobby of an onyx-walled Waldorf-Astoria, Belmont or Biltmore, that we just kicked a hole in the snow, rolled into our blankets and dreamed of being roasted to death, they would look at your

well-shaven face, my biled shirt, and then at your highly polished shoes, then at my black derby, and, dammit, I believe they might be justified in forming the opinion that neither one of us had ever been deprived of breakfast food, or bath tubs, or a manicure artist's services. * * *

You want to know if I can locate any of the old gang. Sure! Some sleep in the sidehills along the swift-flowing waters of the North Platte, one or two are parts of gravel beds down on the wild meadows—or what were the wild meadows of hundreds of square miles between the North Platte and the Poudre; but not a few, like you and I, stalk abroad on the face of the earth—cheating first, as we did, tribes of Sioux, Arapahoe, Cheyenne and the Comanches who swept up across Kansas and Nebraska; escaping the blizzards, periods of starvation, cold, heat, fire, water, whisky, and finally the surgeon's knife. I tell you, the world only thinks it knows a thing or two about how the human body is made, and how much it can stand. But to answer your questions:

Jim Bansom, the last time I knew of him, in 1875, was headed east with a fine span of hosses and a fair-to-middlin' wagon.

Don't know where he went and don't know what he did with the hosses or the wagon! 'Taint none o' my bizness, neither! In those days it wasn't customary to be too gol-darned inquisitive about such things, unless you

owned the hosses or the wagon, or a bit, or a halter, or something of that sort you happened to loan to the outfit; and then, of course, you could take the trail if you wanted to.
* * *

Sam Smith, old U. P. conductor, walked into my office a while ago, and, as he closed the door behind him, I said, "Hello, Sam; haven't seen you since 1875, but you're the same Sam!" Then I told him my name.

And then Sam gasped and acted like maybe he might pull a gun, thinking me an impostor; because when Sam saw me the last time, stretched out in his caboose on the old mountain division of the U. P., and the train sailing down the toboggan that slid us into Laramie City, past Tie Siding and old Fort Saunders, my hair was black, and I had a different look.

Maybe I looked bad. I guess I did, for I carried a gun and a belt of forty rounds, and a butcher knife in a scabbard, just as we all did, for it was the custom of the country; and I had long hair, too, and it was matted and dirty, mixed with pitch that came from campfires in the hills. No doubt I looked wretched, but, old Pard, I didn't even feel that way. I felt good, and I was as harmless as a pigeon.

But I said something about a hatband of rattlers' rattles that I gave his little girl at Cheyenne, as I rode up to his door aboard a cayuse, and that settled it. We talked about

snow-sheds, the Sherman hill, once the highest railroad point in the world, and of old times in general.

But what's the use? When you come to New York, I'll meet you at the Waldorf and we'll talk about it all night, and wish the buffalo were still there, and the sagebrush, and the bull-trains, and the other things undisturbed by civilization. So long. *BILL.*

New York, August, 1917.

[NOTE—The above letters are from the author's files. "Van" is a multi-millionaire manufacturer living in a middle-western state. For several years his pastime was buffalo hunting and "roughing it" in the wild and woolly west.

The author, when a boy of 16, was developing a case of tuberculosis of the lungs, and to escape the fate that had overtaken other members of his family, took Horace Greeley's advice, went west, and grew up with the country. He had been a clerk in a railroad office, and still is in the railroad business in New York City, more than forty years after the events related in the following chapters. He is the only survivor of a family of fourteen, including all of his own children, eight in number.]

Trains That Ran Without Rails

CHAPTER II

Trains That Ran Without Rails.

BEFORE railroads were built in the country west of the Missouri River there was, nevertheless, considerable doing in the transportation line. And even after the Union Pacific was built from Omaha to Ogden to connect with the Central Pacific, which carried the rails to the Golden Gate, most of the transportation of the then great Wild West, in the mountains, on the plains and the "Great American Desert," was done by ox-teams. These were run in trains of from ten to fifty or sixty teams, the teams consisting usually of from five to seven yokes of oxen and lead and trail wagons built for the purpose.

These wagons were called prairie schooners, because they were supplied with canvas coverings. The first of these, made in St. Louis, were called "Murphys," and were provided with iron axles. Later many of them were made in Indianapolis, Chicago, and Kenosha, Wis., the latter known as the Bain. The Schuttler and the Bain wagons were almost as big and substantial as a box car and were well painted and put together to stand hard knocks on mountain "breaknecks" or in Bad Land sands.

The lead wagon would carry an average of

6,500 pounds, while the trailer—fastened to the lead by a short tongue—had a capacity of perhaps two tons. In a sandy place or on a mountain road, the bullwhacker (teamster) would slacken his team, pull a coupling pin from an iron half-circle arrangement on the axle of his lead wagon, drop his trailer to one side of the road and proceed to the top of the hill, if in the mountains, or to an "island" of hard ground in the desert, unhook his wheelers and go back for the trailer. Sometimes a "bull outfit" would spend a whole day doing this. Lead wagons were parked one at a time and the trailers brought on later and hooked up. These parkings were in the shape of an oval, called a corral, a narrow opening being left only at each end.

Inside this corral, when it came time to yoke up, the cattle were driven in by the herders, if the camp had been for over night or a long mid-day stop. Then the bullwhackers, carrying the heavy piñon yokes over their left shoulders, hickory bows in their right hands and iron or wooden pins with leather strip fastened to them in their mouths, would seek out their teams, yoking them together and leading them to their wagons.

When a "whacker" had his "wheelers," or pole oxen, in place, he would bring on his "pointers," and the rest, including the leaders. The wheelers were always the heavyweights, old and trained, and able to hold back the load or their unruly teammates until the

whackers could throw on a brake or "rough lock," the last named a log chain fastened at one end to the wagon, thrown through the wheel spokes in such a way as to be between the ground and the wheel on the "near rear hind wheel" of the lead wagon.

New cattle just being trained to yoke were always put in the center of the team, where they were easily managed with the assistance of the "leaders," which were always light weights and most always long-horns from Texas—long horns, long legs and bodies, thin as a razorback hog. These leaders were always the best broken oxen, and would respond to the low-spoken word of "haw" or "gee," especially if the word were uttered in the peculiar musical tone of the whacker which cannot be described in print, not only because it is impossible to convey sound in that manner but because the language that goes with the music—the request to gee or haw—would not be pleasant reading. Alone, the leaders would trot like horses.

The average person outside of Texas and the southwest and some of the western states has a mental picture, perhaps, of the Texas steer of the long-horn variety. Those who lived thirty or forty years ago, even in the East, remember him as a member of the quadruped family consisting largely of horn, for it was not an infrequent thing to see him in a cattle car on a sidetrack. He was, as a matter of fact, also entitled to a reputation for his legs,

for they were unusually long. His body, too, was slim, and he never was fat for the reason that while free to roam the ranges at will he devoted most of his time to using his horns in goring his mates and neglected to eat. He raced about from place to place, whereas, if he had no horns he would have been a peaceful animal and consequently much more valuable for the market.

The old-time Texas steer often was as fleet-footed as a Kentucky racehorse of the thoroughbred variety, and it took a good horse to catch him when he made up his mind to run.

Nevertheless, thousands of these Texas steers were broken to yoke, and used in overland transportation; and once broken they were good workers, even though their horns were always in the way, and the cause of a great deal of trouble in a herd.

While I have no authority for the statement, I believe practical dehorning began with the bullwhackers of the plains, for they frequently bored holes in the horns which in a few weeks caused the horns to drop off. Then it was noted that if the dehorned cattle were kept separate from those with horns, the dehorned ones, even when working hard every day, took on flesh and were better workers. Finally nearly all the work-oxen were dehorned, and they were as meek and quiet as lambs.

The whacker always began his orders to his bulls in a low tone, increasing it as the neces-

sity for action presented itself, and ending in a string of oaths that would make an old-time Mississippi steamboat mate ashamed of his reputation. Frequently teams were stalled on a high hill or in the sand, when it would be necessary to gee the team of seven yokes at an almost right angle, with chains between each yoke slackened and with "wheelers" filling their yokes. Then the whacker would walk out half way to his leaders and soothingly coax them to come haw—toward him—on a trot, until all the chains between the other yokes were tightened. By this time, however, Mr. Whacker was back to his wheelers, perhaps punching the near one in the ribs, and then throwing his eighteen or twenty foot lash over the backs of any of the yokes that were not clawing the sand properly. In this way the men often worked for days at a time, making sometimes only a few rods by each repetition of the operation. Then again, the wagon boss would order a doubling-up process and two whackers and fourteen yokes of oxen would work on one pair of wagons, taking them along perhaps a mile, and then returning, repeat the process until the bad road was left behind.

This was transportation in the old days, and "trains" of this kind first hauled the heavy traffic from Leavenworth and Nebraska City to the Pacific and intermediate settlements in Colorado, Utah and Wyoming. After the Union Pacific was built this bullwhacker transportation increased, especially in the country

between Utah and the Missouri River, in both directions away from the railroad, for the government had a line of forts on the North Platte River and Indian Agencies were established in Western Nebraska, Wyoming and what is now South Dakota.

Two of these agencies, Red Cloud, on White River, and Spotted Tail, forty miles to the north, were big traffic points. Train loads of bacon, flour, sugar and other things were hauled to these agencies on government contract, the provisions being in payment to the Sioux and other tribes for the land they occupied near the North Platte River. Along the Platte there were forts—two famous in their day—Fort Laramie at the junction of the Platte and Laramie Rivers, and Fort Fetterman, one hundred miles west of Fort Laramie, on the Platte at Lapariel Creek. Soldiers here depended upon the "bull outfits" for their provisions, nearly all being hauled in over mountain range and plain by contractors.

Those were wild and woolly days, and the man who lived the life of out-of-doors was a rugged, devil-may-care, hungry, healthy, happy fellow. He knew how to face a freezing blizzard, or a baking sun without flinching; he knew how to take care of himself with a minimum of discomfort under the most adverse circumstances. He was afraid of nothing. It wouldn't do otherwise. He was there, usually beyond the arm of any law other than ordinances made and provided by himself and com-

panions and enforced by the same law-givers. Stealing was a worse crime than life-taking. There never was an excuse for the first, but nearly always one could be trumped up for the latter. To take a man's horse was worse than cold-blooded murder; to rob him of his gun or his blankets was equally as bad a crime. But if he had been cheated in a game of "freeze out," or called a name that reflected upon his origin it was not uncommon for him to become judge and executioner then and there.

So men who engaged in this early day transportation of food and fodder for soldiers and their mounts and for the followers of Sitting Bull, Old Red Cloud and other chiefs, were careful in their social intercourse, and when the harsh word was passed, as frequently was the case, it was no uncommon thing for men to settle their score with pistols; and the winner in these duels seldom, if ever, was punished. But a cold-blooded murder—a wanton killing—was never tolerated. In a fight with pistols it was always considered that the man who did the killing was justified.

Unlike the present day fliers, bull trains did not run on schedules, although there was a pretense of regularity about the day's routine, and it was about as follows:

At break of day the night herder who had been out with the bulls all night—it is always daybreak to him whether three o'clock or five—drives his herd into the corral, usually singing some refrain of his own composition, but

always having for its motive the same that animates the pestiferous alarm clock set by a master to disturb the slumber of a tired servant. However, a half hour before the herder appears the cook and his helper, both bullwhackers, doing their turn of a week, have been on the job with the coffee and bacon, and as soon as the herder sounds his first note, the cook takes up the song, which is perhaps:

Bacon in the pan,
Coffee in the pot;
Get up and get it—
Get it while it's hot.

And then, and it is always so, some of the lively stock, as it approaches the corral, takes the notion that there is some nice sweet buffalo bunch grass to the rear that looks better than a day's work, and there is a bolt often approaching a stampede. Curses? You never heard the like, for the wagon boss and an assistant are already in their saddles helping the herder. If you tried to sleep just a minute longer it would be impossible, therefore you roll out from your bed on the ground, fold up your blankets, tie them with a strap and throw them on your trail wagon.

Coffee and bacon are swallowed in haste, and if you are like the majority, you grab a piece of bacon and a chunk of bread, bang them together into a huge sandwich and put them in the jockey box of your wagon for a lunch at eight or nine o'clock.

Yoking and stringing out the oxen is the

next operation, and a short one in a well regulated outfit. Twenty minutes, usually, from the time the bulls are driven in, the lead team is moving, and when the "outfit," as every train is called, is well under way, the lead wagon is perhaps a half mile from the last one, which is the mess wagon, containing the provisions, cooking utensils, levers for raising a load of four or five tons, the iron jacks, extra tires, coils of rope, pulleys, wheels, extra spokes, bars of iron, and almost always a small forge—a regular wrecking outfit.

In hot summer weather on fair roads a bull train would make four or five miles before the sun was high enough to burn—usually nine o'clock. Then, if the camp was to be a "wet" one—at a creek, river or spring—there would be a "layover" until four o'clock in the afternoon, during which time the boys could sleep under a wagon, wash their clothes, or if in a creek or river bottom, shoulder a gun and look for moccasin, lodge pole or bear tracks.

All day long, however, the men who were on the cook trick would make bread in Dutch ovens. And let me tell you, no bull outfit ever stopped for a long mid-day rest without putting on a huge kettle of beans, for the army or white bean was the staple food in those days; and there was always, on these long mid-day stops, plenty of soup.

Perhaps one of the boys in his meanderings up or down the creek would bag a deer. If he wandered out upon the plain he was sure

of an antelope, if he was a good shot. The deer kept to the trees along the rivers and the hills, while the antelopes' territory was the open plain, hard to get at unless the plain were rolling, and the hunter could be in the right place as regards the wind.

Sometimes there were poker games, usually freeze-out, which the men played with plug tobacco cut up into small cubes. Others would spend their time braiding whips or mending clothing.

The bullwhacker's whip not only made a tenderfoot open his eyes with wonder, but it usually shocked him. It was something he had never seen before, and if he had been told that a man of ordinary strength would be able to wield it he would have been decidedly incredulous.

Differing from a cowboy's or herder's whip, the bullwhip lash was attached to a stalk of hickory or white ash three feet long upon which the whacker could firmly plant both hands. The lash at the butt, which was attached to the stick by a soft strip of buckskin, formed in a loop or swivel, frequently was more than an inch thick. These lashes were from eighteen to more than twenty feet long and were graduated in thickness from this great bulk to the tip, which was the thickness of a lead pencil. The number of strands in a bullwhip were also graduated. At the butt there were as many strands as the maker—usually the bullwhacker—could weave, often fourteen. At

the tip, this number was reduced to six. The top, and down to six or eight feet from the end, the whip was made of leather, often old boot tops. The rest was of tough buckskin or elkskin. But on the very tip of the whip—the business end—was a "popper" of buckskin cut in the shape of a long V, the bottom end of the V running into a strand which was braided into the tip.

The bullwhacker, when using this instrument, first threw it out before him upon the ground; then by the use of all his strength he swung it in over his head, to the right, often whirling it several times before he let it go upon the back of the bull he wanted to reach.

To the man who never saw this operation before, there was a shock, for as the whip landed on the bull the popper made a roar like the report of a cannon.

As a matter of fact the bull was uninjured, unless the bullwhacker was careless and allowed his popper to strike a tender spot, the nose, an eye or the belly.

It was almost a crime for a bullwhacker to cut a bull and draw the blood, and he seldom did it unless his popper had been wet and then dried. The spot usually aimed for was the hip, and bulls that had been in service any length of time had a spot on the rump that was hairless, resembling the head of a drum. But the spot was tough. The noise of

the popper, however, was what startled the team and caused it to "dig in."

Frequently in the summer the afternoon drive lasted until ten or eleven o'clock, especially if there was a moon. You cannot imagine a more impressive, weird, wild sight. The shadows, the rattle of the wagons, perhaps the scream of a night bird or a wild cat—maybe the zip of an arrow from a redskin's bow, or the report of a gun, all calculated to keep even the hardened bullwhacker on his mettle. And for this the bullwhacker got $75 to $100 a month and "grub." He usually spent his money at the end of his trip much after the habit of the sailor who rounds the Horn.

In the cold weather the hardships were many. There were, remember, no bridges and the roads crossed numerous streams, all of which had to be forded; and there was but one way to cross, and that was to wade and guide a team.

Usually the heavy freighting was done before December, but often it was necessary to fight through blizzards and zero weather. It was this kind of work that tried the soul of even the hardy bullwhacker, and not infrequently his hands, feet, ears or face were frozen. It was hard on the cattle, too, although it was almost always possible to find plenty of good feeding ground of buffalo grass, which grew in heavy bunches and was very sweet in its dry state, for the wind usually

kept places bare. If not, the bulls would nose it out from under several inches of snow and manage to get something approaching a meal. Otherwise, they went hungry, for no feed of any kind was ever carried for them.

Indians, usually, were too lazy to hunt the white man in winter, so there was seldom any trouble from this source after the first snowfall. But when the grass was green it was different, especially in the mountains or foothills. Redskins seldom fought a real battle in the open. To the bullwhacker he was nearly always an invisible foe, shooting his arrows or his gun from behind a rock, or from the top of a bluff, well out of range himself. When the Indians were known to be following an outfit it was common practice to keep a couple of horsemen outriders on each side of the train where possible. Frequently bull trains were obliged to corral and put up a fight, and usually the Indian lost.

Hunton and Clay
Bull-Train Magnates

CHAPTER III

Hunton and Clay, Bull-Train Magnates.

AMONG the bull-train magnates of the early 70's were Charley Clay, said to be a relative of the famous statesman, and Jack Hunton. They were pioneers of Wyoming who have no doubt been quite forgotten, though in their day none in the then sparsely settled frontier territory was better known. They were not only pioneer freighters, but among the very first of the daring frontiersmen to go beyond the limits of civilization, and into the stamping grounds of the warlike tribes of Indians to establish homes. Both built ranches in the Chugwater country along the trail leading from Cheyenne to Fort Laramie. Clay's log house was directly under one of the famous landmarks of the territory—chimney rock—a chalky butte formed, geologists say, by erosion. Hunton built his ranch on the northwest end of the Chugwater at a point near Goshen's Hole, a great basin, where the Laramie trail wheeled directly north to Eagle's Nest, another butte. At Hunton's a trail less used branched off to the northwest, across what was then considered a desert and reaching Fort Fetterman, perhaps 125 miles away on the North Platte river at Lapariel creek.

This part of Wyoming is now, I understand, a vast wheatfield. To a bullwhacker of the early 70's this is almost a miracle.

Both Hunton and Clay used their ranches to range their work cattle in off seasons, although both had beef herds and lots of horses. These ranch houses were protected from Indians by less than a dozen men at any time; but these men were fighters and were known to be such by the chiefs of the tribes that frequently roamed the territory south of the Platte, although in a treaty with the Federal government they had promised to stay north of the famous stream, the consideration being, on the part of Uncle Sam, a contribution of hundreds of tons of flour, bacon, tobacco and other things. Strictly speaking, this food was in payment for land south of the Platte.

Both Hunton and Clay had a knack of dealing with these roaming bands, however, that prevented any serious raids, although at one time, when Clay had closed a contract with the government and found himself in Cheyenne with his big bull outfit, consisting of a couple of hundred head of oxen and thirty or forty men, word was brought to him that on his return trip to his Chugwater quarters, a band of Sioux would attack him. So he left Cheyenne one night, and taking a course almost due east avoided the Laramie trail, and by a circuitous route reached the Chugwater without having traveled a mile on a trail.

Hunton's and Clay's ranch houses were load-

ed with firearms, looked like armories, and at the height of the shoulder in the log walls were fort holes through which guns could be fired. These were used several times, but none of the skirmishes approached in any degree the present-day pictures one sees in the movies, and I doubt if they ever did, in the West. In the first place, while the Sioux, Cheyenne and other redskins were considered especially bloodthirsty, none of them was fond of exposing his worthless carcass to a shower of bullets, even though outnumbering the whites 100 to 1. The Indian of that day—of the day that history was making on the frontier—was a most miserable coward when dealing with frontiersmen of the Hunton or Clay calibre.

Of course, there were open battles with United States troops, but even then only when, as in the case of Custer and his Seventh Cavalry, the troops were outnumbered and trapped. Even Sitting Bull's band, which has wrongly been represented by some historians as brave, were entitled to no credit of that kind. Custer was trapped in a big bowl and his 300-odd fighters surrounded on all sides by several thousand well mounted and well-armed young bucks. The Custer and the earlier so-called Indian battles both at old Fort Phil Kearney and earlier in Minnesota, were not battles at all—simply massacres. There is no record of an even fight between redskins and whites in the settlement of the country between the Missouri River and the Rocky Moun-

tains. The Modocs fought for months in the lava beds, but seldom did a soldier see a Modoc. So it was with old Geronomo and his Apache followers. They fought from cover, never in the open unless overtaken and surrounded.

Nevertheless, the raiding bands of Ogalala Sioux that slipped over the Platte in the season of good grass were a problem for these pioneer ranchmen and transportation outfits, and it was not an uncommon thing for a bullet or an arrow to reach a vital spot in a bullwhacker from some hiding place just in range of the road. When this happened it was the common practice for members of the outfit to mount their saddle horses, with which every bull-train was well supplied, and give chase unless the lead of the Indians was too great, and usually it was.

Once in a while, however, the Indian made a miscalculation, and the bullwhacker would return to the temporarily corralled outfit with a scrubby Indian pony, a few rawhide thongs, and an Indian's ear freshly amputated for use as evidence at the first camp of bullwhackers or army post that one more "Good Indian" had been put on the list.

This cutting off of ears was reprisal, for the Indians scalped their white victims and mutilated their bodies when they had a chance. Hunton and Clay hauled with their big outfits, at one time, about everything that was sent to the northern line of forts by Uncle

Sam. Clay's contracts were largely confined to Fort Laramie, although Hunton hauled a good deal of the provisions to that post. Hunton and others supplied Fort Fetterman, the principal route being from Medicine Bow station on the Union Pacific across the mountain range of the same name.

It took several days to load the prairie schooners from the freight cars on a sidetrack that was laid upon the sod; and while this work was going on there was sometimes a good deal of drinking and many gun fights.

It was while a bull outfit was loading for one of the fall trips to Fetterman that the first billiard table came to Medicine Bow. I think it was the only one in the territory outside of Cheyenne and Laramie City, both division points on the Union Pacific. There were no women in Medicine Bow, good or bad, at the time and not more than 100 regular residents, yet the town had a saloon because the bull outfits, Hunton's and others, in their occasional trips, and a few adventurers who were prospecting south and west of the "Bow," furnished ample patronage to make the enterprise profitable. It was this saloonkeeper who conceived the idea of importing a billiard table, and also a back bar and mirror.

The bullwhackers watched the installation of the new furniture, and that night informed the saloonkeeper that as there were no women in the camp it had been decided to have a stag dance in the saloon. He protested, but it

did no good. A few drinks in a dozen leaders was followed by a deliberately aimed shot which shattered the mirror, after which the operation of removing the billiard table began. It was a rough job, and would have given a Brunswick-Balke man a chill. The table went out onto the prairie in sections, and the sections were not always separated at the regulation point. The green cover was ruined.

Then the dance began. The German saloonkeeper smiled his protests, but when he became too much concerned about what was going on, someone would snuff a light or plug a barrel of whisky with a bullet. So the night's debauch continued, and it did not end until daybreak. The place was a wreck, and the saloonkeeper was in despair when the wagon boss came along with a roll of money as big around as a ship's cable, saying:

"What's the damage, Fritz?"

"Ach," he replied, "the table cost me $500; a barrel of whisky and cigars, beer, my fine mirror—everything is gone?"

"Yes, I see, the whole bizness," said the boss.

"Well," said Fritz, "the boys spent $600 mit me, so I make it $600 more; maybe I can repair the table."

So the bill was paid, the wagons were loaded, and the outfit sallied forth across the plains, the bridgeless rivers, and the mountain passes to Fetterman where there was a pay-day. Deductions pro-rata were made from every man's

wage to even up the score with Fritz, and every bullwhacker paid his share willingly, saying it was cheap sport for the price. There was no feeling against Fritz because Fritz had not shown fight. If he had—well, most of the men in the outfit were wild and woolly, and rough, but not killers. Still one or two could not be trusted.

Hunton put up a log house, a forge and a charcoal kiln just outside the south limit of the Fort Fetterman government reserve, a section five miles square south of the Platte. Just before this plant was erected a series of Indian depredations began; several men engaged in cord wood chopping for a government contractor were murdered by small bands of Sioux, and many saddle horses stolen. There were also several raids in the Lapariel bottoms; and one day a small band of Sioux, well mounted, forded the Platte almost in sight of the fort, stampeded a herd of mules and drove them far into the Indian country before a company of soldiers took up the chase.

A military telegraph line ran from Fort Fetterman to Fort D. A. Russell at Cheyenne, and the northwestern end of the line was down most of the time, the Indians taking the wire away to use in ear and nose rings and for other purposes, although the line was destroyed many times, no doubt, for pure cussedness. One time I traveled for fifty miles on horseback along this telegraph line, and in places the wires were connected with insula-

tors which were mounted on buffalo horns. In many places the wire was on the ground.

It was said at the time of the running off of the mules that the Fort Fetterman commandant was unable to follow the Indians without orders from Washington via Fort Russell. However, this was not confirmed. Anyway, on this and many other occasions the army moved slowly and was past understanding on the part of the few citizens in the country. Nevertheless, the soldiers of those days, whenever in conflict with the redskins, usually gave a good account of themselves.

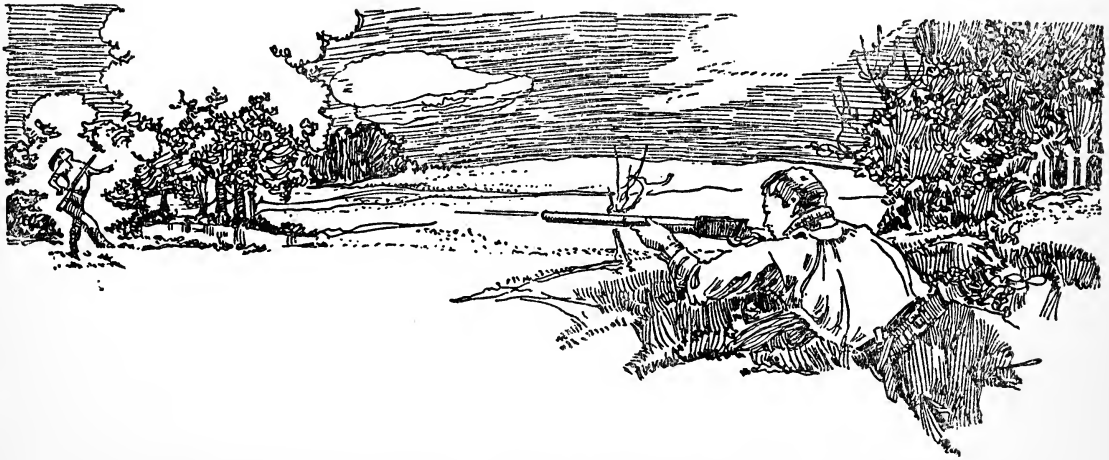
Things got so warm one spring in the vicinity of Fort Fetterman that the thirty or forty citizens camping outside the military reservation organized a secret society known as the Buckskin Militia, and determined to avenge the deaths of several men, Jesse Hammond, a woodchopper, and others, if opportunity should present itself. The only qualification for membership in the Buckskins was a willingness to take the oath, which was as follows:

I, John Smith, do solemnly swear that I will shoot on sight any male Indian, no matter whether he is attacking me or other white men, stealing or attempting to steal my property or the property of others, or whether he is approaching or moving from me. Furthermore, I will answer any call from another member of this band or any other good white citizen, for assistance in the destruction of any male Indian found on the south side of the North Platte river; and will join in any raid upon an Indian camp when called upon by the Chief Buckskin. So help me God.

This oath was taken while standing on the stump of a cottonwood tree in the Lapariel bottoms, the candidate being loaded down with as many log chains as he could hold, and the ceremony, usually taken on a moonlight night, was as weird a sight as one can imagine.

The raids from the north continued nearly all summer. Several more white men were killed, one a lone prospector who thought there was mineral in the hills southwest of Fort Fetterman and near old Fort Caspar.

One of the Buckskins hunting antelope one day in the vicinity of La Bonte Creek crossed the trail of a single tepee or family, and three ponies. This he knew from the lodge pole tracks made by a horse dragging the poles over the ground. The Buckskin took the trail, keeping well out of sight, but finally cut off a lone Indian who had dismounted to drink from a spring, allowing his young buck sons to go on. Buckskin whistled to give his quarry the chance he would give a mad dog—and no more. Then he put a bullet in his head. He remained on the spot from which he fired, waiting to hear from the rest of the tepee, which he did in a few minutes, although the young bucks kept out of sight. They fired a few shots before Buckskin decided to make a dash, and when he did it was a race of ten miles to a ford in the Platte. The young bucks escaped. Buckskin returned to his "Good Indian," removed a lock of his hair, took his gun and ammunition and a greasy card from



"Whistled to Give His Quarry the Chance He Would Give a Mad Dog, and No More."

the folds of his blanket upon which some white man had written:

This is Cut Nose, a "Good"
Sioux Indian; but he is a
Murderer and Thief.

There was a big session of the Buckskin Militia a few nights later, and great rejoicing. Cut Nose was a whole tribe of Indians in himself, and many dark crimes had been laid at his door by the white men who were engaged in freighting food to the Indian agencies and army posts.

It must be understood that there were no settlers or settlements or families in this section of Wyoming at this time, therefore there were never any of those horrible affairs common farther East a hundred years or more ago. There were no women and children for these red devils to kill, and year in and year out the fight was between bullwhackers, a few ranchmen, not more than half a dozen, government woodchoppers, and a few prospectors.

The professional hunters usually "stood in" with the red man, being possessed of some kind of magic that was never fully explained. In those days beaver, bear, buffalo, deer, antelope and other game abounded. The hunter usually had a hut or "dug-out" near a beaver dam, and it usually was well supplied with food and sometimes a squaw was the hunter's companion. Her relatives were sure of good treatment, and I presume for that reason the relatives were able to give the "squaw man"

hunter protection. Still hunters were murdered, but not often.

Finally, along in July, after the grass had lost its sap and turned brown, one of the Buckskins saddled up his pinto horse one day, strapped a blanket, a pone of bread and a piece of bacon to his saddle, and giving free play to his Rowell spur, waved his hat and yelled as he dashed away:

"Good-bye, boys; see you again in a few days. I'm goin' to put an end to these raids."

His brother Buckskins thought he was crazy—some of them did. But one or two winked and looked wise; and about sixty hours later, when some of the "militia" had almost forgotten him, Buckskin rode up, unsaddled his pinto, punched him in the ribs and said: "There now, old boy, go up the creek and enjoy yourself. Eat yourself to death, and I'll know where to find you when I want you. No Indian will get you."

When the boys crowded around him he vouchsafed this much information:

"From a point twenty miles east of this spot to a spot twenty miles west of Fort Laramie—on the north side of the Platte—as far as the eye can reach in a northerly direction, and you know that's considerable distance, there is just one charred mass—every blade of grass has been burned."

There was no more trouble that season. No feed for the Indian ponies within a hundred miles of the fort to the north of the river.

Guarding an Overland Freight Outfit

CHAPTER IV

Guarding an Overland Freight Outfit.

DRIVING seven yoke of oxen hauling two wagons attached by a short rig similar to that used in coupling cars, along a desert road, is enough to keep an able-bodied ox-train brakeman busy. But when, in addition to keeping his wild "leaders" in the road and his "wheelers" filling their yokes, he has to keep an eye on a distant bad land bluff or a roll in the surface, he has his hands more than full.

This was the situation when the bull outfit, from Cheyenne to Spotted Tail, was slowly moving along north of the Platte river in August, 1875—a time when Red Cloud and Spotted Tail agencies were nearly deserted, and all the young bucks were chasing antelope and incidentally collecting scalps of white men when they could find a white man alone and unprepared to defend himself; or when they could outnumber a bull outfit one hundred or two hundred to one and get its members in a "pocket," which was not often.

At this particular time a young man who, a couple of years previous, had never known anything less comfortable than a feather bed, or a job harder than writing railroad way-bills, was one of two in the cross-country

freighter crew who had been assigned by Wagonboss Watson to mount a "pinto" pony and ride all day at least 1,000 yards away from the trail and keep to the high places where he could see what was going on, if anything, in the vicinity. He had been told to dismount and examine any signs of life on the ground where it was bare, or in the grass, and when found to fire one shot from his revolver to let the bullwhackers know that they had "company" not far off; and if he saw one Indian or a hundred to shoot not once but three times in rapid succession and then gallop to the wagon train with details.

The movement across the desert-like country this day began at four a. m., and continued until ten a. m. The feather-bed youngster was well equipped with an army Springfield of large calibre, forty rounds in his belt, two Remington revolvers and a butcher knife with a five-inch blade for the possibility of close quarters. He had a bottle of spring water and a saddlebag full of sandwiches of bread and fried sowbelly and plenty of chewing and smoking tobacco.

Maybe you think this youngster thought of his soft bed at home or a pot shot from ambush that would leave his skeleton bleaching in a sandy desert sun after it had been stripped of its flesh by wolves; or that he wished someone else had been chosen to guard one side of the overland train of flour, bacon, corn and sugar and its custodians, but that is not so.

It was one of the proudest days of his life and I know he will never forget it. He was highly honored by Watson and he appreciated it, for the reason that only two years before he had come to Wyoming a green city boy and was then known in the parlance of the plains as a "tenderfoot," which was a truthful description of any man or boy when he first entered upon the life of the bullwhacker, the then popular master of transportation between civilization and its outposts. He never dreamed of death when he got his orders, because he was young and foolish. Sometimes it is called bravery, but that isn't the right word. It can't be described unless it is called blind or reckless indifference. Perhaps that isn't it; anyway the youngster, as he mounted and galloped away and waited on a neighboring knoll for the outfit to string out along the sandy trail, hoped he wouldn't be disappointed. He wanted an eventful day and he fairly prayed for it. "I hope," he ruminated to himself half aloud, "that I cross a tepee trail, at least, even if I don't get my eye on an Indian."

It wasn't long until he began to wonder, for it was still barely daylight, if it wouldn't be possible for a buck of good aim to pick him off, especially if the buck practiced the usual tactics of concealing himself behind a sand-dune or a butte. He wasn't afraid—he didn't know the word—but he wondered. For this reason he kept his pony moving, reasoning that it is easier to hit a stationary target than a

swiftly whirling one. But the pony appeared to be a dead one even when a spur was roughly rubbed upon his belly, until, as the train had gotten well out of camp and the teams strung along for a mile, he found his pony to be interested in something, for he insisted on frequent stops and moved his ears back and forward and snorted lightly.

Finally it seemed next to impossible to get him to move, and Featherbed was sure the pony had been owned by Indians at some time and was of the trick variety, being trained to a brand of treachery that meant delivery of his mount into the hands of the reds.

And while these things were passing through the youngster's brain his only concern was that the train was leaving him, and that he was not guarding it. He heard a coyote's mournful note, but that was a common occurrence, although he wondered if it couldn't be possible that an Indian was doing the howling. It sounded like an imitation.

The pony snorted some more, and then Featherbed, finding his blunt pointed spurs were not getting him anywhere, unsheathed his butcher-knife and pricked his cayuse on the back. He tried to buck, but he wore a double cinch—one fore and one aft—and it kept him on all fours.

Things were getting worse and the voices of the bullwhackers yelling at their teams grew fainter and fainter as the outfit slowly but surely put distance between Featherbed

and his companion, when there was a sound that resembled the dropping of a stick in the water preceded by a distinct swish as if it had been thrown through the air like a boomerang.

Then the pinto got busy. It was an arrow!

There were several more, and one of them clipped the pommel of the saddle before Featherbed thought of his orders to fire once on sight of disturbed grass or a moccasin track on bare ground; or, upon sighting an Indian, to fire three times.

Then he let go with his Springfield in the supposed direction of the enemy, and headed for the trail, which he readily found, and soon caught up with the mess-wagon which always formed the rear guard with one whacker, the night herder inside, and the extra herd horses tied behind. Featherbed met Watson galloping toward the rear.

"What is it, boy?" he shouted.

"They got a piece of my Texas pommel," he replied, "but I don't know where the arrow came from. I'll go back and see."

He wheeled his pony to go and would have been off to take up his station a thousand yards from the trail had not Watson said, laughingly:

"You're crazy—wait a minute till I send word up ahead to corral."

"You (to the mess wagon driver) untie them hosses, saddle 'em up and wait for Blu-

cher Brown and Archer; they'll be back in a minute."

Featherbed, as the sun peeped over a rise in the land, waited impatiently. So did the pony, for the miserable Indian-bred cuss had a good nose that was keen to the smoky smell of an Indian, or to the odor of another horse, especially of his own breed, and he was all animation and ready to go.

When the party finally got away Watson, turning to Featherbed as they galloped side by side along the high spots near the back trail, said:

"If yer not afraid, pull out ahead with that pony and lead the way."

Featherbed pressed the Rowell spur to the pony's side and he responded like a real cow-pony, much to Featherbed's surprise, and before Watson could gather his breath to call the youngster back he led them by 200 yards. Finally he did manage to yell between his laughter:

"Hold on, you danged idiot — I didn't mean—

But he didn't finish the sentence, although he continued yelling, this time expressing himself to the effect:

"My hoss has been creased in the neck—dismount, give me your hoss and lead mine back to the outfit; we'll take care of these galoots."

Featherbed protested, but it was no use, and he returned and joined the whackers who had corralled and gathered the bulls inside the

wagons, forming two half circles on a high spot near the trail. There were several other horses in the outfit, so Featherbed quickly slipped the boss' fine $200 rig on the back of a buckskin of the cow-puncher variety and sped back to the scene of action.

But it was all over. The sneaking Indians had disappeared, and the only evidence of their presence was a spot of crumpled grass behind a knoll where several of them had lain in complete safety while they tried to send Featherbed to the Happy Hunting Ground.

The sun was too high for the Indians, so they disappeared, skulking at safe distance to wait for darkness and perhaps other prey.

Featherbed, after another shift of mounts and saddles and bridles, again took his post 1,000 yards from the trail, smoked his pipe, munched his sandwiches and drank the spring water.

At ten o'clock camp was struck for the mid-day stop close to a creek of sweet cold water that ran through some small hills covered with stunted pines, a few miles from a range of black mountains out of the bad lands and sand.

Featherbed was here promoted to the position of assistant wagon boss, presented with a big sorrel horse called "America" (because he was not Indian-bred) and given the lead team to drive in the outfit. This meant that, in co-operation with the "big boss," he would help select the camps, govern the speed of the

"train," look after the manifests, act as check clerk in loading and unloading, and besides wear a red sash to designate his official position.

Featherbed took his honors modestly, in fact he was surprised and couldn't understand it until someone told him the "old man" was pleased when he (Featherbed) took the wounded horse back to the train, saddled up another and returned to help find where the arrows came from.

Rattlesnakes and Redskins

CHAPTER V

Rattlesnakes and Redskins.

THE night-herder's song awoke me at four a. m.—the first streak of day—and I didn't have time to pull on my boots before the bulls were inside the corral; so, in bare feet, I yoked my fourteen head and then proceeded to pull on the cowhides, roll up my blankets and throw them on my trail wagon. Due to the haste—for nearly everyone else in the outfit was ready to "pull out" in response to the assistant wagon boss' order—I proceeded to pull on the left boot without the usual precautions. My fingers were in the straps as I sat on the ground,* and in another minute my toes would have been in the boot. But the rattler that had spent the night in it stuck out his head. I shook him out, first calling my pard to come with his whip.

After the rattler was dead I plucked off eleven beautifully graduated white rattles and a black button, later on adding them to a hat-band of several hundred which I had sewn to-

*This was in the center of a prairie dog town covering perhaps twenty acres; and the "town" was inhabited not only by these marmots but rabbits, owls and rattlesnakes, apparently living in perfect peace and harmony in the same burrows.

gether, using silk thread and a cambric needle. The other boot was tenantless.

The blankets, in a neat roll secured by a heavy leather strap, were thrown on top of the freight in the trailer, and away we went for a dry camp in the bad lands, where we spent six hours of the middle of the day hiding under our wagons to escape the hot rays of the sun.

A late afternoon start ended at nine p. m., in a moonlit camp on a creek that ran swiftly through chalk-like bluffs—perhaps the headwaters of the Niobrara river. In those days none but a geographer or a government surveyor knew the names of many of the waterways, if they had names. It had been a hard drive through deep sand most of the way, and after the bulls had been relieved of their yokes and the chains that held the teams together, all hands raced for the water, both for internal and external purposes.

Our night camp was on a flat between the bluffs and a few yards from the stream in a most inviting spot, the edge of the crooked channel being lined with stunted and gnarled box-elder, while farther back were a few dozen dead and gaunt cottonwoods. Some small bushes grew in clumps here and there, but our camp commanded a good view, even in the night, of the country for a mile in at least two directions—north and south.

Though tired, it was too nice a night even in this wilderness to go to bed; for a young-

ster who had acquired two revolvers, a Winchester rifle, a butcher knife and other weapons believed the crumpled grass he had seen at the edge of the creek indicated the presence not far away of others of the human family, and he intended to find out about it. He had confided this suspicion to one other youth of the outfit, and as the supper campfire died down to a bed of coals and a cool wind began to fan the hot earth these boys stole out of camp, waded the creek, and carefully examined the earth up and down its margin until they came upon a distinct moccasin, pony and lodge pole trail. They followed it along the bottoms for two miles to a jutting bluff where around the corner they saw six tepees, near which were picketed several ponies.

All was silent as the boys, concealed in a safe spot, viewed the scene. Then there was a sound, low at first, like the crooning of a mother to a babe, which grew louder and louder, until finally there emerged from one of the tepees a big buck who stood silently for a full minute, listening. He wore nothing but a breech-clout, and over his shoulder hung a buck-skin strap upon which was attached the arrows for the big bow held in his hand. He did wear a bonnet and it consisted principally of feathers that looked exactly like some of the creations worn by women of the present day.

When he had located the sound he moved toward the hiding boys but stopped at the

nearest tepee. The crooning grew to a lamentation. Then other tepees showed signs of life, and in a few moments bucks, squaws and papooses were running hither and thither in a bewildering way. But the boys remained silent, for there was no sign of a movement of camp and not an indication that there was an outside alarm. Then what could it be? What was all this fuss about? The lamentations became louder and louder and the excitement apparently greater.

Finally a number of squaws who had gone to the creek bottom appeared in the center of the little camp. They carried bundles of green willows, dozens of large hard-head boulders and rawhide receptacles filled with water; also a bundle of dry faggots.

After the stones had been piled in a neat heap a fire was built upon them which was allowed to burn briskly for half an hour. Then the coals and ashes were brushed off and a tent-like covering put over a quickly woven basket-like structure that had been built over the stones. Then the water was dashed upon the stones and the steam began to ascend.

Presently out from a tepee came a squaw with a bundle which she gently shoved under the elkskin covered cauldron of steam.

"Say," said one of the boys, "are you on?"

"Sure enough," the other whispered, "they are giving that kid a Turkish bath."

And that's what they were doing; but it wasn't Turkish—just Injun.

Returning to camp the boys proceeded to slip into their blankets quietly, say nothing about what they had seen, and go to sleep. They believed the straggling band of Arapahoes were not on the war-path and had work for the "medicine-man"—the big buck they first saw come out of his tepee.

You have no idea how cautiously the boys went about getting the blankets off the wagon so as not to disturb the boss, a man they feared. So they moved noiselessly.

One threw his roll of blankets from the top of the trailer and the other caught the bundle and proceeded to flatten it out into a comfortable bed when he heard a familiar noise, and forgetting that they were to be silent, the youth on the ground yelled:

"Look out—a rattler!"

It woke up the whole camp. The snake had occupied the blankets from four a. m., at least, until this time—midnight. Perhaps he had slept with the boy until four a. m.; I think he did; anyway, he had rolled him up and put him where found.

Belated Grace
For a Christmas Dinner

CHAPTER VI

Belated Grace for a Christmas Dinner.

AFTER fighting through a ten-hour blizzard that swept across the plains from the Elk Mountain country our wagon-train reached the foothills of the Medicine Bow range, where there was shelter for the work cattle along a swift running stream. The snow was piled in great drifts everywhere except upon exposed high spots, and it seemed impossible for us to proceed farther, for we knew that along the government trail just beyond, and 1,000 feet higher, that the drifts would be so deep that a long camp where we had stopped would be necessary.

Ten men were tolled off by the wagon-boss to chop down young quaking aspen trees, the bark and small twigs of which furnished appetizing fodder for the bulls. Another gang climbed a sidehill and with axes felled a group of stunted pines for the side walls of a cabin; still others were sent into a "burnt and down" piece of timber to gather well seasoned dead pitch pine for firewood.

The storm lasted until six o'clock in the evening, then continued as an old-fashioned heavy snowfall with no wind, increasing the level of the snow to the tops of the wheels of

our corraled wagons. Apparently they were doomed to stay where they were until spring.

Next morning there was a let-up. Then the blizzard began again in all its fury—only such a blizzard as one can see in but one other place on earth, judging from Dana's description of his experience in going around the Horn. The cattle, with almost human intelligence, 200 head of them, crowded toward the big bonfires of pitch, and with long faces looked mournfully upon the scene. They seemed to know, as we did, that the prospects were not bright for our cavalcade. Certainly there was no grass in sight now, not even on the round-topped knolls bordering our little valley, for the night fall of snow was heavy and damp, and finally, when the thermometer registered a few degrees below zero, the grass was sealed against the tough noses and even the hoofs of the hungry bulls. An attempt was made by a scouting party to find a clear feeding place on the back trail, but a day's investigation resulted in failure. Not a blade of grass could be found—all sealed with a heavy crust that would, in most places, carry a horse and rider.

The storm continued, after an eight-hour let-up, the temperature rising. Two feet more fell on top of the crust, then came another freeze and a new crust. After twenty-four hours another blizzard from the north, consisting of sleet and snow and some rain, was like a sandstorm in summer on the plains below. It was

fierce, nearly freezing and blinding both men and cattle. The poor bulls were more forlorn than ever. They gnawed the very wood of the aspens, and there wasn't enough of that.

On the last crust of all this snow and sleet it was finally found possible to take the oxen farther along into the mountains, where four men drove them. Others went ahead with axes and for two weeks cut aspens and sought out hidden protected places in the valleys where there were a few blades of grass and some succulent underbrush.

One day, when the sun was shining brightly on the white mantle and the distant peaks of the majestic mountains of blue stood out like a painting, Nate Williams, wagon-boss, spoke: "Do you know," he said to the fellows who were carving the carcass of a faithful old bullock, "that tomorrow is Christmas?" None had thought of it.

"And," he continued, "do you know we are liable to stay where we are until the Fourth of July, if we don't get a move on?" There were no suggestions.

"Furthermore," added Williams, "we haven't much else to eat but beef—there are just five 100-pound sacks of flour in the mess wagon—no bacon nor canned goods. Its a case of shoveling a road to Crane's Neck."

Crane's Neck was a mountain twist in the road, a mile from camp. If the road could be cleared to that point there would be fair hauling for five miles in the range to another

stretch that had been filled in places with from ten to twenty feet of snow, while one spot was covered by a slide from a mountain to a depth of forty feet and for a considerable distance along the trail.

For three hours plans were discussed, and it was finally determined to go to work with shovels and picks, but not until after Christmas. Our caravan included a blacksmith's forge, also a regular wrecking outfit, and in a short time big wooden shovels were made from blocks of pine with handles stoutly attached with iron bands.

The cook was a youth of twenty and had all the enthusiasm of the adventurer. He had spent a year on a whaler and knew what it meant to drift in the ice north of Point Barrow. This present situation, he said, was a picnic; so was the one in the Arctic. It couldn't be so bad that he wished to be snuggled away in a feather bed somewhere east of the Missouri River. That would be too ordinary.

"If I could sit down to a table at the best hotel in the land," he said, "I'd prefer to eat the dinner that I'm going to cook for you fellows tomorrow."

Williams sneered. "Yes," he said, "we put old Tex (a long-horn bull) out of his starving misery and the boys have found his liver to be O. K. Maybe you can give us a liver pie."

"I'll do better than that," said the boy; "I'll not only give you a beef stew, but a pud-

ding that you can't buy outside of London or Liverpool—a plum duff—and a cake. Old Tex will also be on the menu in several places, for his tenderloin looks good, and there are a few steaks which, when properly treated with a maul on the top of a stump, will be as good as you will get in a 'Frisco water front lodging, and better than any of you fellows have had since we hit the drifts."

I have eaten meals that mother used to cook, I've been famished during a sea voyage, and devoured a Norwegian sailor's pea soup; I've participated in several real banquets in New York; I've dined at Delmonico's and at Sherry's, at Young's in Boston, and I've feasted in a circus cook tent; but my Christmas dinner in the foothills of Wyoming in 1874, under the circumstances I have but faintly described, still is a fond memory and holds the record as the best meal I ever ate. It was as follows:

MENU

Marrowbone Soup—"Tex" Water Cress
Beef Stew—"Tex"
Hamburg Steak—"Tex"
Planked Porterhouse Steak—"Tex"
Tenderloin Steak—"Tex" Roast Beef—"Tex"
Corn Bread Wheat Bread
English Plum Pudding—Hard and Soft Sauce
Raisins Cake Coffee Tea
(No butter or milk) (Lots of salt and pepper)

The corn bread was made from meal milled by the cook from shelled corn in the cargo. The "plums" were raisins, of which the cook had a few pounds. He used wheat flour,

baking powder and grease saved from the final ration of the bacon which gave out a week before Christmas. The hard sauce was made with sugar and grease and a flavoring extract. The soft or liquid sauce contained a "remedy" requisitioned from a homeopathic quantity found in the wagon-boss' medicine chest—a few spoonfuls of brandy. The watercress was found two miles away at a spring. The boys called it "pepper grass." There it was fresh and green, protected by spring water which never freezes, and in some places it was peeping out from the edge of the snow at the brookside.

And now about whisky. There were sixty men in this camp, and in one of the big wagons were three barrels of whisky, but it belonged to the post trader at Fort Fetterman, and it was a tradition not even broken on this exceptional passage from Medicine Bow on the U. P. to Fort Fetterman on the North Platte that a consignment of hard liquor was as safe in a bull train as it would be anywhere on earth, and that it would reach its destination untouched. Few men drank intoxicants on these trips. It was a crime to be found with whisky, punishable by banishment from camp, and that might have meant death. But at both ends of the journey—that's another story.

The plainsman and mountaineer, the bullwhacker and the stage-driver, when chilled, drank water. Whisky caused him to perspire,

and that was bad. He did not often use it when on duty.

One of the peculiar things about this Christmas dinner is the fact that there were no mountain grouse, no sage hen, no antelope, deer, nor elk for the menu. The truth is the storm drove everything of the kind in another direction—the direction in which we were slowly moving—and some time later, when we emerged upon the other side of the range with our ox-power so greatly reduced that we made less than a mile of progress a day, the herds of elk stampeded a dozen times past our camps, and the "fool grouse" sat a dozen in a group upon the pine boughs in the mountains and refused to move, allowing us to kill them, if so disposed, one at a time; but we did it only once, just to prove that it could be done. (Colonel Roosevelt, please note!)

It took us a couple of weeks to shovel our way out, and while the sun shone in the middle of the day hardly a flake of the snow melted. The air was at times biting cold, but invigorating, and every man, including the boss and the cook and even the night herder, fell to the work with a will that finally meant victory. In places we operated in the drifts as you see the excavators in a city cellar or subway operate, digging down to the surface and then benching as the open-ground miners or cellar excavators do, the men below tossing the blocks of snow up to the bench above and they in turn passing it to the top of the drift.

Once or twice, in narrow passages, it was necessary to build several benches. In one place we began to tunnel, but the plan was given up, for our wagons, the regulation prairie schooners, would require a passage big enough for a railroad furniture car to pass through.

After the high plateau was reached—the land that represented the watershed of the Platte Valley—it was clear sailing, and while food—wild game—was plentiful, and we ate lots of it, the memory of our Christmas dinner remained to remind us after all that in the midst of greatest hardships and suffering we often find something to be thankful for, something to bring us to our senses when we grumble or complain of our ill-luck or misfortunes.

Had I been as appreciative when I partook of this mountain dinner as I am today for the blessings of Divine Providence, I would have been able to say, in relating this story, that we properly gave thanks to Him who is responsible for all our blessings and who chasteneth us for our wickedness; but I was not properly appreciative, neither were my rough but honest companions. Therefore, I take this opportunity to say grace more than forty years late:

Thank God for that snowbound Christmas dinner.

The Fate of One-Eyed Ed

CHAPTER VII.

The Fate of One-Eyed Ed.

FROM the cross-tree of a telegraph pole hung the body of a man when the 9:30 Union Pacific Overland Express stopped for a "slow" order across a bridge that a band of Comanche Indians had tried to burn.

A Massachusetts woman enroute to 'Frisco stuck her head out of a car window and exclaimed, "How awfully terrible!"

Yes, it was.

Ed Preston was a one-eyed man. I don't know how he lost the other one, but I do know that he was a dead shot with the one eye that he slanted along the barrel of his pistol or buffalo rifle, the latter a sawed-off Springfield and the first mentioned an old-time army Remington.

Preston's marksmanship cost him his life. They hung Preston, the boys did, because he killed a man just for the meanness of it, or, as one of them said, because he was spoiling for trouble.

One day as we were camped on the north bank of the North Platte near the eastern line of Wyoming, Preston, full of liquor, lurched up to a bunch of bullwhackers and asked if anyone present thought he was a "dead shot."

Of course, all hands admitted that his reputation was unquestioned.

"But you never saw me shoot," he said, "so what the —— do you know about it?" Then he pulled his gun and backed off, saying, as he pointed to a heap of discarded tomato cans:

"Hey, you Charley, heave one o' them cans in the air—hurry up."

Observing his apparent quarrelsome attitude, Charley Snow, a youthful member of the outfit, obeyed without protest. Snow had been assigned by Martin, the wagon-boss, to help the cook and the cook had made him responsible for the proper boiling of a pot of beans. Snow left the beans and threw a can as far away from himself as he could, and before it hit the ground it was perforated by a bullet.

"Now throw one straight up in the air," commanded Preston, and Snow obeyed. Preston put two shots into that "on the wing." Snow attempted to resume his duties at the mess fire, but Preston's shooting had drawn a dozen or more of the men of the outfit to the scene, and he was in the humor to show off; therefore as Snow was the youngest and possibly the most inoffensive man in the party, Preston decided to eliminate the bean question by ordering Snow, with a flourish of his gun, to remove the beans from the fire. This done, he continued:

"Now you throw the cans and be lively about it."

Snow did as ordered. One, two, three, ten

cans went into the air. Preston missed none. Finally the boy threw, at Preston's command, two at a time and both were plugged before they came down. Then as Snow picked up another one Preston shot it out of his hand, and he tried to quit and return to the bean kettle, whereupon Preston bored a hole through Snow's sombrero without cutting off a hair or bruising his scalp, although it was plain to see that while Snow was no fresh tenderfoot from the effete East, but a seasoned young bullwhacker and plainsman, he was more than uneasy. The boy said afterward that while he had a whole lot of confidence in Preston's marksmanship he knew he had drunk at least a pint of whisky—the worst of the squirrel variety at that—for had he not taken the last swig out of a flask, thrown it almost at Snow and sent its splinters in every direction by a shot from his Remington? Sober, said Snow, Preston would not have been so bad, but drunk—he objected to further participation in the William Tell business and he entered his protest. When he discovered that the chambers of Preston's revolver were temporarily empty, Snow quietly took a rifle from its leather fastenings on the side of a prairie schooner. His move looked ominous to his tormentor.

Preston was a coward, as were all of that class of killers in those days. He was an engineer of a bull team of seven yokes and a good man at his business, but a bully, a brag-

gart and a coward, whose victims usually were known to be peaceful and who were unarmed or unprepared to defend themselves. He was not the heroic figure of the almost forgotten wild west—the brave and big-hearted fellow who fought sometimes for his rights or what he considered his rights. Preston was just a plain murderer, who had taken a place among rough but honest frontiersmen, chased from an orderly community somewhere in God's country—then east of the Missouri, now anywhere from the Atlantic to the Pacific—because of some dark crime he had committed, no doubt.

All day long we had been fording the North Platte at this point—Sidney crossing—a distance of at least a half a mile, including a small island of sand and a few bushes. It was the last trainload of provisions for the season we were taking north to the government's beneficiaries — the Ogalala Sioux and the Cheyennes. We had seventy teams, each of seven yokes, and two wagons, and as the Platte is a swift-running stream at this point and there is quicksand between the south shore and the island, it was necessary to "jack up" on blocks some of our loads on the wagons and double and treble teams, sometimes using as many as twenty-five yokes of oxen on one wagon and a half dozen men, belly deep in the mush ice, punching the bulls. The water was in places up to the tops of the

wheels. It was a sun-up to sun-down job from corral to corral.

Someone had whisky, but it was not apparent until late in the afternoon, when the target shooting incidents began. The boys were a sober lot—the good, honest kind, and not a desperado among them, barring One-Eyed Ed. Others there were, sure enough, who might be considered hardly fit for even the most humble society, for they looked like pirates — all of them — hair long, clothes weather-beaten and rough, faces unshaven and grizzled, and language or topics of conversation not what would be called cultured by any means. Yet there was in this outfit a predominance of good, honest hearts, most of them measuring life from a standard never understood if ever known in "God's Country." These sailors of prairie schooners, these pioneer transportation men of the virile, virgin West, knew little law or order or justice, as we know them; they frequently violated what is known as the law, but they didn't know it. They had but one degree of murder. It wasn't murder for them to fight and kill with pistols. It was the custom. Murder was something else. It was to kill a man who was not "heeled" or when his back was turned, or to mount another man's horse and ride away. This was murder in the first degree—the same as if the owner of the horse had been shot to death while asleep. In those days some things were as necessary, as indispensable as life—a

horse, a saddle, a pair of blankets, a gun and ammunition and a butcher knife—perhaps a small bag of salt. The last, however, would be termed a luxury, although nearly every man in those days had a little salt stored away in a weather-proof pocket or saddle bag for the sage hen, antelope, deer, or buffalo beef he might have for dinner or breakfast.

But let me tell you how Preston spent the rest of his day. It was early in the afternoon when he perforated Snow's sombrero, but it was sundown when he shot and killed Tom Sash, the boss herder, a splendid Texan, who had charge of an Indian contract beef herd which had come up the trail from the Lone Star state to the Platte Valley guided by a half dozen range men in charge of Sash, and were being grazed along the Platte bottoms previous to being doled out as per agreement with Uncle Sam to the clouted redskins at the White River Agency at Red Cloud.

All during the previous summer, as the wagon trains passed to and from Sidney and the northern forts and agencies, Sash had told the wagon bosses not to go hungry for lack of veal. "We are anxious to fatten these cattle," he would say, "and you are welcome to a calf or two any time you want it." Sash was all right and the bullwhackers couldn't sing his praises loud enough.

It was at the close of Snow's engagement with Preston that the wagon boss told Preston to try his hand on some Indian veal. So

Preston disappeared down the river, returning at suppertime with the admission that he had not only veal but "yearling steak." And he had some of it with him.

The beans had been boiled and eaten, the tin dishes and cups, pots and kettles and iron ovens dumped into the mess wagon, and two crews of men were at work jacking up wagons and greasing axle skeins, when the space at the north mouth of the corral was suddenly filled by as fine a horseman as ever galloped over the plains. It was Sash, dressed in the costume of the real cowboy of the long-horn cattle day—sombrero, chaps, Rowell spurs, a Mexican lariat properly adjusted over the horn of his elaborate double-cinched cutting-out saddle—everything was perfection. He was astride a fine big black American horse—not a regulation cow pony—a shiny, deep bay charger with a white left ankle half way to the knee from the fetlock, and a spot of white the size of a hand on the face.

He came on a gallop and stopped so short at the corral mouth that, had he not known his business, he would have been thrown over the chains. But that was the style of riding. Plunge ahead to the object or point desired—then stop short. He waved his hat to Martin, our wagon boss, to come to the corral chains.

"Someone from your outfit," shouted Sash, "has been out in one of our herds and shot a half dozen yearlings and two three-year-old

steers. Aren't you satisfied with veal? Say, old man, who did this mean trick?"

The acts of a coward are preceded by a queer train of thought, the kingpin of which is fear. Preston knew his disreputable work of butchering among the herd of cattle had been discovered. He knew that Sash, a Texan, was a man of action, and that Sash was fortified with the right on his side, and if justice were meted out it would be some kind of punishment. The revolver in his holster was close to his hand and fear—cowardly fear—overpowered his weak mind.

Martin had no time to reply, and the first indication that the coward was to act upon the impulse that would move him was the cry from a bullwhacker:

"Don't shoot—don't."

Sash, who was looking straight over his horse's head, turned at hearing this just in time to receive a bullet in the hollow spot under his left ear. It passed clean through his head. Both arms flew into the air, his horse sprang forward, and Sash laid upon the ground flat on his back, with arms spread out from his body—dead. His face was ashen white, eyes and mouth closed, both fists clinched.

It was young Snow who tied the black charger to a wagon wheel, replacing the bridle with a halter. The horse whinnied, pawed the dirt, and for a time spun around as far as the halter strap would allow, and looked at his prostrate master with what seemed to be al-

most human intelligence; in fact, his body was soon in a white lather, necessitating a rub-down and then a blanket. He trembled like a leaf and snorted and pawed the earth for an hour.

Sash's camp was on the south bank of the Platte. There Preston was delivered by Wagon Boss Martin and a delegation of the bull outfit fellows after he had tried to escape.

That night, together with a negro boy, Snow stood guard over Sash's body to protect it from the coyotes, for they were numerous, close at hand and howled mournfully until break of day.

None touched the body, as it had been determined to follow what was believed to be the law, for this time the outfit was only fifty miles from where at least a pretense of regularity was observed.

A rider was dispatched to Sidney, then a scattered lot of board shanties on the south side of the Union Pacific Railroad track.

The second night there came to the bullwhacker camp two men in a light road wagon. They took the body away.

At the same time a dozen bullwhackers and nearly all the men from the cow camp rode away to the south. Preston, silent as the Sphynx, sat astride a horse, his hands tied behind him. They told him he was going to Sidney to have a trial. He smiled, but said nothing. It was just an effort to appear brave. His life had been one of crime. He

was a pest of the plains, of the trails, of the camps—and he was on the way to the end of a rope. He knew it, and did not plead for mercy or ask for quarter; he did not in the long ride across the sand hills utter a word of regret for what he had done. He was heartless, cruel, brutal, even in the valley of the shadow. And he was silent even as death itself. He showed no fear as we would describe fear.

Entering Sidney the posse and the prisoner took the center one of three coulees that ran down into the town, all three meeting at the level. It was here that One-Eyed Ed met the court that was to try him, together with the populace. The court consisted of fifty horsemen, half of whom rode down the east coulee, the other half down the other, meeting the prisoner and his escort as abruptly as one meets a person sometimes in whirling around the corner of a city block.

One long yi, yi, yi, yi, ye! was the "hear ye" of the plainsman court crier—the signal understood by all the horsemen, and especially those comprising the posse just emerging from the center coulee. As if by magic the escort faded away and the prisoner, bareheaded, long hair waving in the wind, his hands securely tied, sat upright—alone.

Then from the east and west coulees dashed horsemen led by Jim Redding swinging his lariat over and over and over his head until he was in the right spot to spin it out. Pres-

ton's horse stood like a piece of statuary, and to give the man on his back his proper meed of credit let it be recorded that he had the appearance of a man bravely facing death, for he sat erect and made no effort to dismount, which he might have done, for he had not been fastened to the saddle, as that would have made impossible the program mapped out to the minutest detail.

When Redding spun his lariat for Preston's head—after he had ridden past him two or three times while the horsemen lined up like a company of cavalry and looked on—it landed around his shoulders. Redding planted a spur into his cow pony, there was a jump and Preston's body shot up and away from his mount and to the ground.

Track-Layers Fought Redskins

Track-Layers Fought Redskins—Chapter VIII.

CHAPTER VIII.

Track-Layers Fought Redskins.

WHEN the Union Pacific Railroad was being built the Indians were wild and hostile. The appearance of the locomotive was unwelcome. Surveyors, track-layers, bridge-builders and others if not properly guarded by details of United States troops were attacked from ambush and often killed.

It was indeed an adventurous calling to be a railroader in those days, no matter in what capacity; for if it wasn't Indians it was something else that made it so in the then wilderness. Towns were built in a day along the South Platte River and the populations were first made up largely by the scum of the earth, consisting of criminals of all kinds from all quarters of the globe, either engaged in gambling, highway robbery or running saloons that were the toughest ever known in America.

Dance halls and dives followed the work of railroad building from Omaha to Ogden, and if the earth could speak it would tell a story of murder that would make one shudder. Hundreds of men were shot either in brawls or by robbers and their bodies buried in unmarked graves.

At Julesburg alone, the story was told, after

the temporary terminus was moved on west 100 miles, there were 417 graves in one side-hill, and among the lot not one grave in the so-called cemetery was filled by a man who died a natural death. This may be an exaggeration—perhaps it is—but it was not an uncommon thing for a man to be shot and killed in a brawl while a dance was in progress without for a moment stopping the festivities.

But the "noble" Indian, so often represented in heroic portraits—and always called a "brave" by writers who never saw an Indian of that period—was not there, at least not numerously. He was a sneaking sniper, hiding behind a sand hill or concealed in a clump of bushes in a creek or river bottom, with a good chance to get away if attacked. He seldom came out into the open to fight even a lone surveying party, but waited for the cover of night, hid behind a rock and took a pot shot and then rode his horse at top speed to a safe distance. He was a miserable coward, and dirty. Perhaps the next day he would come meekly into some camp where there were several hundred men, begging for sugar or bacon. Artists have painted him in all his glory in sight of his enemy discharging his arrows or his gun. Don't believe it. He didn't do it more than a half dozen times, and when he outnumbered the white from 50 or 100 to 1. It is too bad, I know, to destroy such beautiful

fiction; but it is necessary in order to keep these chronicles straight.

However, it is the truth that a crew engaged in track-laying in the vicinity of North Platte was one day almost overwhelmed by a band of Comanches that came up from the south following a herd of buffalo across the Republican River. There were less than fifty men in the gang, including a locomotive engineer, fireman, conductor, foreman and tracklayers, among the rest two Chinese cooks. The Indians had come upon the crew unexpectedly, for the buffalo herd, in passing near at hand, kicked up such a cloud of dust that the crew was unseen until it was too late for the Comanches to retreat without a fight.

The buffaloes rushed on past the right-of-way of the road, and when the Indians followed the first they knew of the locomotive was when the engineer sounded his whistle to bring the scattered crew to the shelter afforded by a train of flat cars and the engine. The country all about was flat. The Indians scattered in a circle and at a distance of perhaps 500 yards began to shoot. The crew was well supplied with guns and ammunition and the battle lasted for half an hour, resulting in the death of one Indian and the wounding of not one white man. Still it had all the elements of a movie show, and would have made a fine reel. In another hour track-laying proceeded as usual.

Outside of a few clashes of this kind the

U. P. went its glorious way without open battle with so-called redskins. Indians look good in pictures, and they are picturesque—in pictures and paintings; but when you were near them in those days you found them nearly always good-for-nothing, insect-infested, diseased, hungry and cowardly, with less nerve than a regular tramp.

When the U. P. was building it should be remembered the Indians had been seeing the pioneer going across the plains with wagons for many years. The pony express rider, the bullwhacker and the California and Utah emigrant had been his almost daily companion; therefore he had learned to be circumspect. Those hardy people had shot straight and to kill, and by the time track-laying began the Indian was about as cautious as a mountain sheep. He knew the range of the white man's gun, the fleetness of his big American horse, and he governed himself accordingly, devoting all his time, when doing anything at all, to impede the progress of railroad building, to pure and unadulterated murder from ambush.

"Bill" Hickok, City Marshal

CHAPTER IX.

"Bill" Hickok, City Marshal.

"WILD BILL" HICKOK, who had been city marshal at Abilene, Kan., blew into Cheyenne in 1874 along with Texas Charley and a few more "bad men." Things were booming in the Wyoming metropolis. Gold had been discovered in the Black Hills, and the crowds of fortune-seekers from every point of the compass had begun to flock in. Men were there from South Africa, Brazil, California and Australia, intermingling with the New Englander, the Middle Westerners, the cowboys and bullwhackers and others attracted by the reports of fabulous discoveries. Cheyenne was the chief outfitting point for a trip into the hills, although thousands tramped through the sands of the Bad Lands to the new Eldorado via Fort Pierre.

It meant big work for the small police force of Cheyenne, for there were, besides the "killers" of the "Wild Bill" order, garroters and other crooks from near and far to look after. Gambling didn't bother the authorities at all, and such characters as "Canada Bill," the most famous of all the confidence men, were

as a matter of fact, able to ply their trade almost unmolested.

"Canada Bill" had the appearance of a Methodist preacher of that period, wearing a black broadcloth, long-tailed coat, trousers of the same material, a black felt hat, "biled" shirt and black bow tie. He carried an old-fashioned satchel made of oil cloth, a pattern of which is seen nowadays only on the vaudeville stage. "Bill" was certainly an innocent-looking individual—solemn-faced and perfectly harmless—apparently. He spent most of his time on the U. P. passenger trains between Omaha and Cheyenne and is said to have swindled travelers out of an aggregate of $100,000 at three-card monte, a form of swindling in great vogue at that time. Cheyenne was his headquarters and he was almost as well known as any man in the town; but he followed his profession practically undisturbed for several years, and I doubt if he ever spent a day in jail. His victims included some men who prided themselves on their shrewdness.

"Wild Bill" Hickok was perhaps the best known "character" in Cheyenne in the 70's. He, too, was a ministerial-looking person, but was not a confidence operator. He was just a plain gambler, and not a very good one, but he managed to escape the halter every time he put a notch in his gun. "Bill" killed no one in Cheyenne; in fact, his days there were quiet and prosy. His killings were all done in Kansas at the time the K. P. was being built from

the Missouri to Denver. When in Cheyenne he was on his last legs—had begun, as they say nowadays, to slow up. Nevertheless, he was feared by a great many, owing to his reputation, although among certain classes it was generally understood that he had lost his nerve. This was demonstrated while the Black Hills excitement was at its height. "Bill" was more than six feet tall, straight and thin. He carried two big revolvers in his belt and they protruded sometimes from the side of his long broadcloth coat. He also carried a bowie knife. But for all this and his reputation, he weakened one night when an undersized little California *buccaro* challenged him to walk into the street and fight a duel at twenty paces. "Bill" laid down, saying his eyes had gone back on him and that his shooting days were over.

Shortly after this incident the Cheyenne authorities decided to rid the town of a few of the worst criminals, so they tacked a notice on telegraph poles containing a list of a dozen or more names of men, headed by "Wild Bill," giving them twenty-four hours' time to get out of town. When "Bill" saw the notice he smiled, and with his bowie knife cut the notice into ribbons, and he stayed until he got ready to leave some months later. He went to Custer City, then to Deadwood, where he met his death at the hands of an avenger, who shot him in the back as he sat in a poker game. His murderer claimed "Bill" had killed his

brother in Kansas and said he had followed him for two years, waiting for a chance to kill him. "Bill" had a rule of life that he violated the night he died, and that was never to sit with his back to a door or window. On the fatal night he sat with his back to a half-open door into which the avenger crept.

"Wild Bill" was a "road agent" (a highwayman) long before the Black Hills stampede and frequently entertained a crowd with descriptions of the raids he and his pals made upon the Mormon emigrants when they were enroute from Nauvoo, Ill., to Salt Lake. According to his own stories he was a heartless brute. Many deeds, however, that have been laid at his door, and others that he bragged about, were never committed. It has been estimated that he murdered all the way from fifteen to thirty men, but most of these were killed while he was marshal.

One story that used to be told in Cheyenne, but which was not authenticated, was that on one occasion at Abilene he entered a restaurant for breakfast and ordered ham and eggs "turned over." The waiter returned with the eggs fried on one side and "Bill" angrily said:

"I told you to have them eggs turned over!"

Whereupon the waiter playfully gave the dish a flip and turned them over. This so angered "Bill" that he shot the waiter dead, and then finished his meal, the poor waiter's body lying at his feet.

There was so much garroting of men who

came to Cheyenne to join the rush into the hills that some of the wiser ones slipped outside the town at night and slept on the prairie, while others, armed to the teeth, either walked the streets or formed companies with guards for protection. It was a condition of affairs that gave the authorities more than they could handle at the start. However, after the first few months of excitement Cheyenne began to be good, and soon the civilization and order of older communities was apparent on every hand.

The railroad shortened the distance between the frontier and "God's Country," and before one could realize it Cheyenne was as orderly and well behaved as Worcester, Mass. So it is today. "Wild Bill," "Texas Jack," "Canada Bill" and the thieves and gamblers, with their guns and daggers, are forgotten; and if some of them could come back and tramp the streets again they would be as great curiosities as they would be on Broadway. New York, or State street, Chicago—and they would land in jail or get out of town unless they walked a chalk-mark.

Cheyenne has long been in "God's country," although at the time discussed it was a long way over the line.

When Cheyenne Was Young

CHAPTER X.

When Cheyenne Was Young.

LET us suppose this is the year 1872, and that we are taking a trip across the continent on the first railroad from the Missouri river to the Golden Gate. We have passed through western Nebraska and its uninhabited hills and plains and we are entering Cheyenne, on a vast plain, yet situated at the foot of a range of the Rocky Mountains known as the lower Black Hills. We are in sight of Long's and other Colorado peaks of the Rockies and while apparently on a wide prairie for several hours we have nevertheless been climbing a steep grade all the way from Sidney, the last division point.

Cheyenne is (in '72, remember) a city of boards, logs and canvas, but is beginning to shake off the very first things of a "camp," and is entering the brick age, with good prospects of acquiring fame as a substantial city.

But there are some hundreds of things here that are strange to the eyes of an Eastern man. For example, in all his life he has never seen a man, outside a military encampment, with a revolver strapped in a holster to a belt around his waist. Perhaps he has never seen a faro game in his life, and chuck-a-luck is as

mysterious to him as the lingo of the broad-hatted men who recommend it to the fortune-seeker instead of a gold mine or honest toil of any kind. He has never seen, much less heard of, a hurdy-gurdy where the men and the scarlet women "waltz to the bar" to the tune of the "Arkansaw Traveler."

He used to see his Uncle Cyrus plow with a slow-plodding team of oxen among the cobble stones of a Vermont farm; but this is the first time in his life that he ever saw seven yokes of oxen hitched together in front of two big wagons and every team pacing a gait that would bring praise from the judge's stand at a county fair.

He starts down the main street and he sees "The Gold Room" in big letters on a big wooden building. "This is where they keep it," he muses, and he goes in. It is where they sell it—"forty-rod," "squirrel" and the rest. But that is not all we see in the "Gold Room," run by Jack Allen. We also see a woman called Madam Moustache dealing the game of "twenty-one," at which "Wild Bill" Hickok, Texas Jack and a lot more celebrities are "sitting in." Then in another corner is a faro game. Men here are so eager to get their money on the cards that some of them are standing on the back rungs of chairs and reaching over sitting players to put stacks of golden twenties on the table, either "calling the turn" or betting that the nine-spot or some other card

will win or lose as the dealer slips the pasteboards out of his silver box.

It is night, of course, and after a while, when the gambling begins to drag, the tables are shoved a little closer to the wall and the big floor is given up to dancing, even though through it all—dancing and gambling—a stage performance is going on. Some painted female person of uncertain age, but positive reputation, is either shouting personalities at characters in the crowd or bellowing and butchering a popular song in a male voice. Smoke is thick and not fragrant to the nostrils of the new-comer—the tenderfoot. The "Gold Room" roof is also occupied—that is, the inside part of it—with boxes crowded with men and women, the women being known as "beer jerkers." In the early hours of morning it is difficult to find a sober man or woman.

The same thing is going on in "McDaniels' Variety," opposite Tim Dyer's Tin Restaurant. McDaniels, bald-headed and also smooth of voice, is circulating around among his top-booted guests like a pastor among his flock, and you wonder that such a fine-looking, well-spoken man is not in a pulpit instead of a dive.

But this is some of Cheyenne in 1872 to 1875. Go to Cheyenne today—and what do you find? Nothing like this, that's certain. It is doubtful if you will round up more than a handful of men who remember there ever was such a place as Allen's "Gold Room" or the McDaniels' Variety, or even Tim Dyer's Tin

Restaurant—tin because the plates and cups were tin when the big place was first opened. But see Cheyenne today. There isn't a city 200 years old on the Atlantic coast that has more civilization, a finer lot of railroad men, more culture and good order to the square yard.

Cheyenne had a bad reputation, but it soon reformed when the natural resources of Wyoming began to be developed, and today, while we who pioneered it there so many years ago spoke of it as a "desert metropolis," are witnessing every little while either in agricultural or horticultural shows its progress in wheatfield and orchard.

The Lost Indian at Bedtick Creek

CHAPTER XI.

The Lost Indian at Bedtick Creek.

THIS Indian was lost—something that has rarely happened. No Indian could use a compass if he had one, and he wouldn't if he could—not the real Indian of the days of General Custer, Buffalo Bill and a few others. Indian instinct beats any mechanical contrivance man has invented for white sailors, hunters, explorers and lumber cruisers.

But the full-blood of this story was lost and was bleating like a sheep away from its flock, and just as timid and gentle. A lost Indian, and a proud, high cheek-boned, breech-clouted, bronzed specimen, too; six feet tall in his moccasins—hungry, unarmed, footsore, tribeless.

He came into the camp of the wagon train at Bedtick Creek not far from the site of the deserted and famous overland stage station run by Jules Slade, whose life was saved by his wife, who rode 200 miles on a horse from Julesburg to a gold camp in Montana just in time to stop the lynching being conducted by the Vigilantes.

And the day the Lost Indian was found was Christmas, a time when every man—plainsman and mountaineer, far from civilization and living in the open, as well as those toasting their

shins at comfortable firesides in snug homes in "God's country"—has a sense of something mysteriously elevating in his soul.

Everyone in the frost-bitten bunch of overland freighters knew his program for the day was to have no change so far as the bill of fare of bacon, beans and venison was concerned, and everyone thought it was pretty good; but there was to be no Christmas tree or happy children—no church services or anything else—everyone was contented, nevertheless, and surely full of the spirit of the day, though far out of reach of anything that would give the slightest flavor to a proper celebration, even informally.

The breakfast had been disposed of, the tin dishes washed and plans made for a full day's rest for man and beast, for it was also Sunday, and the wagon boss, old Ethrop, while loaded down with revolvers and bowie knifes, was of a religious turn and was known as "The Parson."

Far away to the south, across a rolling plain, was the blue-white outlines of Laramie Peak. A long way this side, according to the eagle-eye of Farley, driver of the lead team, something was winding a crooked course toward camp. It was a mere dark object reflected against the snow-covered surface, but when viewed through a field glass was plainly discernible—it was a man, all agreed; but with

the glass in Farley's hands it was a buck Indian.

So the boys watched and waited for an hour, and finally the Lost Indian was within hailing distance and stopped, circled and began to close in. Farley waved him to come on, and as insurance of friendliness went through the ceremony of placing a rifle in its sling on the side of a prairie schooner. Then the Lost Indian came forward at a trot and landed at the camp-fire.

Between grunts, motions and words on the part of the Lost Indian, and as many from several plainsmen, none of which seemed to be clearer than Hottentot, this was, in simple language, the story told by the Lost Indian at Bedtick Creek:

"Five moons ago, while at White River, where the Great Father has begun to issue rations of beef on the foot to every head of a Sioux tepee, I gave the Mountain Fox seventeen beaver pelts, a bale of buckskins, twelve obsidian arrow points, one lame calico pony, a pipestone peace-pipe, some kinnickinnic and an iron oven, found after the soldiers left a camp at Clear Creek, and eleven bone buttons for the hand of his second oldest daughter. This was all of my fortune, except one saddle pony, a pack pony, one lodge-pole tepee and poles, four buffalo robes, a coil of telegraph wire [stolen from the Overland], several hair-braided halters, a lariat and my private store of scalps, none of which I took myself, but

which had been inherited from my father, a sub-chief known as the Hawk, a brave man whose bones are now dry in an elevated grave near the fast-running creek known to the whites as Ten, but which in Sioux is Wicka-chimminy. This, with my bows and arrows and a Spencer rifle, for which I had no ammunition, with my moccasins, a breech-clout and jerked meat to last one moon, was all I had—not much, but enough—and I was happy with my bride.

"After the sun had risen and set three times Mountain Fox came to my tepee and said I must give him still another horse, two blankets (which I did not have and could not get), and which he said I had promised.

"In our Sioux nation we never kill—that is, we do not kill Sioux. No Sioux has yet killed a Sioux, and few Sioux have ever called another of our tribe a liar. I called him a liar. He made a sign of anger and a loud noise of distress. My bride, on his command, left the tepee with him, telling me that under Sioux law, which I knew to be right, that the contract had not been filled until one moon had elapsed and all members of both families had smoked in celebration. What did I do? I rode away in the night toward the tracks where the Iron Horse runs, twenty days away, going and coming, to get from a white man's corral a horse and perhaps the blankets. This was while the grass was still green.

"I found the horse and the blankets and a

gun; also food in cans. But I found in a large bottle what I had heard of, but never tasted before. After the first sun had set I stopped at Dry Canyon, which is never dry, but full of roaring water, and there I drank nearly all from the bottle. What I did then I only remember as a dream, but I saw in my dream my bride and I wept. My pony and the horse I found in the white man's corral at the trail of the Iron Horse, with the blankets and the food in cans, and I—Big Jaw—waded Dry Canyon Creek, which I say was wet, for nearly a day and left no trial. I drank more of the white man's poison and then camped without a fire.

"When the next sun came up I was ill and drank lots of water. Then came six men from the corral at the trail of the Iron Horse, and they bound my hands with small chains, tied me to my pony and took me back to the trail of the Iron Horse, where I was kept in a log house with iron windows until one night it burned, and I was taken out by the white man in charge, who, three moons ago, blindfolded me, put me on a horse and took me to another corral on the trail of the Iron Horse and locked me in a large tepee made of stone, where they fed me well and gave me medicine.

"Then I was, one moon ago, put to work in a forest to chop trees, and I ran away.

"Have you seen my bride—she of the hair

as black as a starless night and teeth as white as the wing of a dove?

"Oh, white man, tell me, have you seen her? I am a lost sheep—the trail is covered to my eyes, with which I have wept almost constantly all the moons I have been away. Have you seen her I seek? I am hungry, not in my stomach, but in my breast and in my head; I must feast or die!"

Then he wept like a child.

"Crazy," said Rawhide Robinson.

"As a loon," added Parker, the night herder.

"Give him a pull at the Parson's bottle in the medicine chest," suggested the Kid, as he gave the fire a stir under a pot of bean soup.

"No," said the Parson, as he rode up on a mule and was told the story—"no liquor, boys. Feed him up and we'll let him trail back with us to Cheyenne and to the asylum. Poor cuss, he loved the squaw and he's clean daffy, but hasn't a bit of Injun left in him."

And so the Lost Indian, with a broken heart, brain tortured, went back to the asylum—a child of the plains who bought his wife, but loved her for all that. For the Sioux, while selling their daughters, never sold them unless there was real evidence of true love.

And while Big Jaw stole to make good his bargain, wasn't his deed an act of old-time knighthood after all?

Moreover, his undoing was not so much because of his own delinquency as it was that

of the white man's invention—whisky—that brought about his downfall.

A thief, yes; a red-skinned, uncivilized wild man of the plains and the mountains. But can we classify him with the civilized white man who commits a crime?

If the Lost Indian did not recover and win his bride in civilization's regulation way, perhaps it is just as well; and let us hope he is an angel in the Happy Hunting Ground.

A She-Bear and Her Cub

CHAPTER XII.

A She-Bear and Her Cub.

BEFORE my feet were thoroughly tough ened—that is to say, when I was still to some extent a tenderfoot—I joined, single-handed, in an undertaking which had more chances for failure than almost anything that can be imagined. It wasn't a trip to the moon, neither was it an attempt to wipe out the then powerful Sioux nation, but it was worse than either of these.

On Wagon-hound creek, one summer day, when our outfit was in camp for several hours, I strolled away from camp alone. It was early summer, probably July, and everything was green and fresh. Three miles from camp I came upon signs of life—the limb of a wild plum tree broken and hanging to the ground. The first impression was that there were prowling Indians in the neighborhood. The grass had also been trampled. The plums were only half ripe, and after gathering a few, I dropped over an embankment into the creek bottom, where I saw a large track in the soft silt; it was almost the shape of a human hand. There was a smaller one of the same character. These I followed, clutching a small "pop-gun" of the Derringer variety. After turning several

curves of the creek I suddenly came upon my quarry—a big she-bear and a cub. The former snorted and made for me, and, sensibly pocketing my revolver, I lifted myself out of the creek bottom by grasping a convenient overhanging root of a tree; but almost simultaneously the she-bear was beside me.

Then began as pretty a race as you ever witnessed. It is a pity none saw it.

Fortunately I had only a few nights before been a silent listener to several campfire yarns of old-timers, one of which contained some advice about a man who finds himself in the predicament I now was in. Before me was a bald hill rising perhaps 200 or 300 feet, covered with sage and other brush. Up I flew. My feet were like wings. But Mrs. Bear, though heavy, was able to keep within ten feet of my heels until I reached the top. Then as I almost felt her warm breath I wheeled and ran down hill. This was tactics I had heard at the camp-fire and it saved me, too, for Mrs. Bear, being set up heavier behind than in front, and having long hind legs and short front ones, was obliged to come down slowly and sidewise at that.

Her cub had stayed at the bottom of the hill, whining, and as I reached him I gave him a kick in the jaw and there was some more zigzagging, fast running and heart palpitation, although I felt somewhat relieved when, look-

ing over my shoulder, I saw Mother Bear licking her cub's face.

Later on I sneaked into camp and tried to keep my secret; but I looked and acted queerly, and finally told the story. In ten minutes five of us were on the way to the site of my encounter, all mounted.

We soon discovered Mrs. Bear and her cub, and the boss insisted that I should have the first shot at her with a Winchester. I took good aim and fired, but saw the dirt fly a rod behind the old lady. It was a bad miss. Then "Sailor Jack" Walton sent a bullet into her heart and the rest of us lariated and captured the baby, which we took to Fort Laramie and gave to an army officer's wife.

A Kick From a Playful Bullock —and a Joke

CHAPTER XIII.

A Kick from a Playful Bullock—and a Joke.

NEAR Horse Creek lived a ranchman of the name of McDonald, a pioneer, and I believe a religious and perfectly sane and honest Scotchman, although I am not sure of his nativity; however, he had all the good qualities of that race. One June morning I joined a bull outfit owned by him and drove a team attached to the naked gears of two wagons into the virgin parks on Laramie Peak, along the streams and upon the sidehills of which grew the straightest aspen and small pine trees in all the territory. No ax had ever desecrated this beautiful forest. The trip was for the purpose of cutting some of these poles and building, while on the mountain, two dozen hay racks upon which was to be hauled to an army post the contract hay cut in the wild meadows. I was still something of a tenderfoot, for I knew nothing of this kind of work, and I soon discovered that I was regarded—much to my chagrin—as only a half-hand. I complained to other drivers when McDonald indicated that he thought me a burden because I had to learn how to use an adz and because I had mishandled my team on a winding new trail we broke in the hills.

One of the bulls, just before leaving the plain below, had playfully reached me with one of his heavy but unshod hind hoofs and keeled me over into a bed of prickly pears. For hours a kindly bullwhacker helped me pluck the sharp and brittle brads from my back. McDonald took a dislike to me, and naturally I lost any admiration I might have had for him. And here is where I made a fatal mistake. I shouldn't have noticed it; instead I took every opportunity offered to annoy him. One day, while in camp, at the instigation of an older man, I remarked that we were to have a change for supper.

"And what will it be?" queried McDonald.

"Bacon and coffee," I replied.

"But we had that for breakfast," said he.

"I know," said I, "but it was coffee and bacon—now it's bacon and coffee!"

The fact is there was no game in the hills, at least we got none. I knew McDonald wouldn't like the joke, but I never believed it would be taken as a personal affront. He was, as a matter of fact, a bountiful provider, but expected to find plenty of grouse, venison, etc., on the trip and had therefore provided only flour, bacon and coffee.

I met McDonald fifteen years later in the Middle West on a railroad train. He remembered me and hadn't forgotten the wound I inflicted by my alleged wit, for he said:

"Yes, I remember you, and you were a poor stick!"

I sincerely hope the last twenty-five and more years has softened his heart—if he lives—as it has softened mine, for I have only kindly thoughts of him, and even hold no grudge against the bull that reduced my efficiency by the playful caress he gave me with his hoof.

* * * *

If you have ever tried to hoof it up a wild mountain stream running through towering cliffs of shale, without a trail, you can well imagine the task a bull-train outfit would have in working its way through the same maze of trees, rocks and rushing waters, winding from bluff to bluff. But these tasks were common undertakings for the men engaged in the business of freighting. "Corduroy" bridges consisting of gravel and poles had to be built, trees chopped down, fallen and dead trees removed, brush cleared away or used at the fording places.

A pioneer trip of this kind, and a fair example, was one which took our outfit from Cheyenne to the headwaters of the Cache de la Poudre river in what was known as the North Park, some years before Centennial Peak, one of Colorado's principal mountains, was of enough consequence to be christened by the government.

Cheyenne was passing from the camp to the substantial town stage and lumber was needed for building purposes. The North and Mid-

dle Park regions were virgin forests, untouched by the woodman's axe, and the earth and its precious store of gold hardly scratched by prospectors. There were no mines, no ranchmen, nothing but nature undisturbed; lakes of sweet, cold water, groves of white pines and other trees, wild and untenanted except by blacktail deer, bear, cougar and other animals. The Greeley colony, however, had been established many miles to the east in the valley of the Poudre. This was the first great American irrigating project and a few settlers had begun to till the soil.

Beyond Fort Collins and Livermore the country was as new as an unexplored country could be. Trout leaped at play along the narrow but fast-running streams, and if a sportsman had ever cast his lines in these places he must have been a red man or some daring white hunter who preceded the stage of development now under way and who left no record of his doings.

It took several weeks to chop and dig a road through this wilderness and set up in an open space a couple of sawmill outfits we had with us. Then it required a couple of months of chopping, hauling and sawing of logs, and loading of the green and heavy lumber upon our Murphy wagons. The lumber was unloaded in Cheyenne a month later; some of it was quite dry, but in much smaller quantities than would

have been delivered had the owners been willing to wait for it to dry where cut.

But Cheyenne was in a hurry, and the boomers couldn't wait, consequently many of the green joists in the new buildings shrunk and there were several collapses.

The Indian and the Trousers

CHAPTER XIV

The Indian and the Trousers.

WHEN the first clothing was issued to the Sioux and Cheyenne Indians at Red Cloud Agency the scene was better than a circus. If I am not mistaken Carl Schurz was secretary of the interior, and after a conference with some of the big chiefs it was decided to attempt to abolish the breech-clout. The "Great Father" at Washington, represented by members of Congress and some of the Pennsylvania Quakers and others, discovered that Uncle Sam had a warehouse full of discarded or out of date army coats and trousers, and it was decided to give these to certain tribes of Indians as part payment for lands that were needed for white settlement.

The Indians were gathered by hundreds from far and wide the day of issue at Red Cloud, and Agent McGillicuddy addressed them in their own tongue, telling them the light blue trousers and coats were the same kind worn by the brave men who fought heroic battles for their Great Father. His words were received in silence, and after he had finished several chiefs held a pow-wow, after which one of their number presented himself at the delivery window of the big warehouse

and received a coat and a pair of trousers. Several white men helped him to adjust the trousers and coat, and when he was fully rigged he started to walk toward his group of red-skinned and breech-clouted companions.

As though the stage had been set and every player had learned his part, the show began. The up to this time silent Indians jumped into the air and made a demonstration of guying that would be a credit to any baseball crowd that ever sat in the bleachers at the Polo Grounds. They danced and cavorted, they yelled and keeled over, and laughed. The squaws and papooses thought it the greatest joke, and participated in the hilarity. Finally the buck who wore the first suit managed to get it off and resumed his breech-clout.

This first attempt was a failure; but Mr. McGillicuddy was a resourceful man and was implicitly trusted, especially by the leading men of the Sioux nation, and he finally tried another plan which after a year or two succeeded to some extent. He engaged several bucks to help him at the agency warehouse, paying them in extra amounts of sugar, tobacco and bacon, but insisted that while they were on duty they must be dressed in the white man's garb, and finally he had a large number of bucks who were willing to forego the jibes of their friends for the extra allowances.

Sooner or later these Indians began to circu-

late around among others of the tribe in a lordly manner, and in the end it was not necessary to bribe any of them, except the youngsters of Sitting Bull's band, to wear clothing.

At first the Indians insisted in cutting out entirely the seat of the trousers.

When the first beef on the hoof was issued at Red Cloud, a four-year-old steer was allotted twice a month to the head of each tepee in the tribe. It was "cut out" from the herd by a cowboy and turned over to the Indians forming the tepee, or family, to do with as they pleased, and what they pleased to do would not have the approval of a humane society.

Always the animal was as wild as a buffalo, and if he did not immediately start a small stampede on his own account a few blood-curdling yells from the Indians did the business. Selecting the easiest path of escape the frightened steer made a dash, followed by the bucks on their saddleless ponies. Some of the Indians had long spears, all had bows and arrows, and some had guns, ranging in make from an old Spencer rifle to a modern Winchester, although there were few of these. Most of their weapons were bows and arrows and spears. The latter were thrown with great accuracy, and fatal thrusts were never made until the steer had become exhausted. The arrows were also used, perhaps for an hour, as weapons of torture and shot with no other purpose into the fleshy part of the steer than to in-

crease his speed. The Indians could have killed their steer at any time by a shot placed under the shoulder. But the idea was to torture the beast and perhaps encourage him to turn and fight for his life, which he often did when surrounded in a ravine. This was Indian sport, and was indulged in for some time before the Agency authorities required the government's wards to use civilized methods.

Usually when a steer had been chased up hill and down vale for an hour, or until it was worn out, the Indians planned to round up the chase close to their tepee where a final shot with arrow or bullet put an end to the animal's misery. Then the squaws swarmed about the carcass with their skinning knives. The hide, always badly damaged by the spears and arrows, was removed in a workmanlike manner and carefully put away for tanning later on. The flesh of the steer was taken away and the feast began in a few minutes. Much of the meat was dried or "jerked."

There's a Reason; This Is It!
Conclusion

CHAPTER XV

THERE'S A REASON: THIS IS IT!—CONCLUSION.

AND now let me answer questions that have no doubt arisen in the minds of the readers who have waded through these chapters. "Why isn't this record presented in the regulation way—as a novel with a love story running through it;" or, "What is the moral?"

Let me ask such readers to follow me a little farther.

On March 22d, 1873, a description of a certain boy who left his Wisconsin home to buffet with the world on his own responsibility would have read as follows:

Age, 16 years, 6 mos. and 7 days. Weight 109 pounds; black hair, black eyes, smooth, pale face; well dressed; had, after paying for one handbag, a Derringer revolver (pop-gun) and a few knick-knacks, $85.00 in cash (a large sum for a youth of his age in those days).

Carried trip pass from Milwaukee to Council Bluffs, Iowa, via the Chicago & Northwestern Railway, personally given to him by Marvin Hughitt, then superintendent; also letter of introduction from E. J. Cuyler, to S. H. H. Clark, general manager of the Union Pacific Railroad at Omaha, recommending him as a worthy boy looking for a railroad office job, also requesting transportation favors.

This description takes no account of a deep-seated cough, occasional flashes of red in the pale face, and a fear expressed by friends that

he was taking a desperate means of escaping the fate that had overtaken his dear mother but four months previously. It takes no account of his life up to the time of his departure on the long journey, not yet ended; though in the natural order of worldly things, the day is near at hand. I might add that he had been a "call boy" at a big railroad terminal, had advanced to a desk as a way-bill clerk, and when advised to seek a dry climate and there live out-of-doors, was earning a man's wage.

We will pass over briefly an encounter with one of the best men that ever lived—S. H. H. Clark—in his office at Omaha. When asked for a pass to Sherman, Wyoming, he said gruffly:

"Haven't you got any money?"

This was the reply:

"Yes, sir, and I'll pay my fare, too, if you don't want to give me a pass."

"Well," he said, turning to look out of a window, "maybe I'll give you an order for a half-fare ticket," which brought forth this:

"I don't want to be impolite, Mr. Clark, because you are a friend of good friends of mine—Mr. Hughitt and Mr. Cuyler—but I must say you don't know me as well as you might—I'm no half-fare fellow. Goodbye."

And then Mr. Clark laughed, and said he was not in earnest and gave the pass freely and willingly.

There was a nice chat after that between

the pale-faced youth and the big railroader, during which The Boy discovered that Mr. Clark liked his nerve but questioned his physical ability to stand the rough knocks that were coming.

Later, after a season in a division railroad office The Boy, carried away with the spirit of adventure that was everywhere about him, and carrying out a plan he had made to live in the open, went to Cheyenne, signed up with a bull-train, and began the life of out-of-doors. The "train" was loaded and ready to leave Camp Carlin, at Fort Russell, for Fort Laramie on the North Platte, but it was for a while impossible to employ men enough to drive the teams. There had been an outbreak among the Sioux, and things looked dark when The Boy asked for a job driving bulls; and when he was hired by Nate Williams, the Missourian wagon boss, it was almost a joke to Nate, who said afterward that he took one chance in a million when he employed The Boy and took him to camp. Both The Boy and Nate won on the long shot.

A year later The Boy was driving a lead team, looked after the manifests, kept the accounts, and shirked no duty, fair weather or foul.

All this time the pale and flushed cheeks were giving place to bronze, the thin arms and skinny legs were toughening and filling out.

and the cough had disappeared—weight after first year, 155.

Before leaving Camp Carlin on this first trip The Boy had time to write home and receive a reply. He told a relative what he had done, and the reply was a stinging rebuke and almost a final farewell, for the relative said nothing good could possibly result from quitting a job with a railroad paying $100 a month and taking one as a teamster at the same figure—"and you nothing but a sickly boy." But the relative was wrong, although excusable.

And now, after all the evidence is in, we find that the "sickly" youngster is still in the land of the living, past three score years, and with some prospects of another score!

The letter left a sore spot, and The Boy foolishly decided that he was cut off. So he did not write again for nearly two years.

The middle of the second winter found him at Fort Fetterman, living in a dug-out in the embankment of a creek bottom, waiting for the springtime when he could again use his stout lungs in shouting at his bulls, but his strong arms were not idle the while, for he chopped cottonwood, box elder and pine logs for the Fetterman commissary.

In those days there was naught but military law, and the civilians were under more or less surveillance, and it was customary for them to report at given periods to the sergeant who sat in the adjutant's adobe office in the fort.

On one of those occasions The Boy's atten-

tion was directed to a bulletin board upon which was tacked a card carrying the caption in big black types:

"INFORMATION WANTED"

Under this was The Boy's name, a detailed description of him when he left Cheyenne, and the statement that "anyone knowing his whereabouts will confer a favor upon his anxious father and sister and receive a reward if word is sent to Thomas Jefferson, a friend of the family at Sherman, Wyoming Territory," to whom an appeal had been made. It was stated in the notice that he "weighs about 100 pounds, has black hair, black eyes, and is pale and sickly."

At this time The Boy weighed nearly 170, was brown as a berry, had muscles of an athlete, and in no wise resembled the description. He had no difficulty in convincing the sergeant that while the name was similar to his own it evidently was the description of a tenderfoot, and he was no tenderfoot—not then.

If I could pay any greater tribute than this to life in the open I would do it; and if there were a possible love story in this record I would ignore it because, while it might entertain and please some tastes, it would not answer the main purpose of these tales, namely:

To demonstrate that as long as there is life there is hope, especially if the spark of life is properly fanned in a salubrious, glorious and vigorous climate.

"As long as there is life there is hope!" But after all is it not truer to say "As long as there is hope there is life?"

Hope is the centerpiece of the familiar trio—Faith, Hope and Charity—and not the least one of these virtues. It is practical to be hopeful and to order our lives in the spirit of hopefulness; the world will be better for our hopefulness, especially in these depressing times. Moreover, it is a Christian duty to be hopeful.

"Hope," says the Rev. Julian K. Smyth, head of the Swedenborgian church in the United States, "is an affection of the will, and the will is ever in the desire to act; thus hope is not only a lively virtue, but a heroic and even a practical one."

It is a good rule of life never to be discouraged no matter what the misfortune, disappointment or mistake. Life will have been a success to one who lives in hopefulness, for life will have been lived happily through many human failures and errors. Life in the world of the flesh is a battle which, if well fought—if we have faith in the Divine Providence—means a victory over what we call Death, for Death is in truth not the End, but the—

BEGINNING.