

RAWHIDE RAWLINS
STORIES

Charles M. Russell


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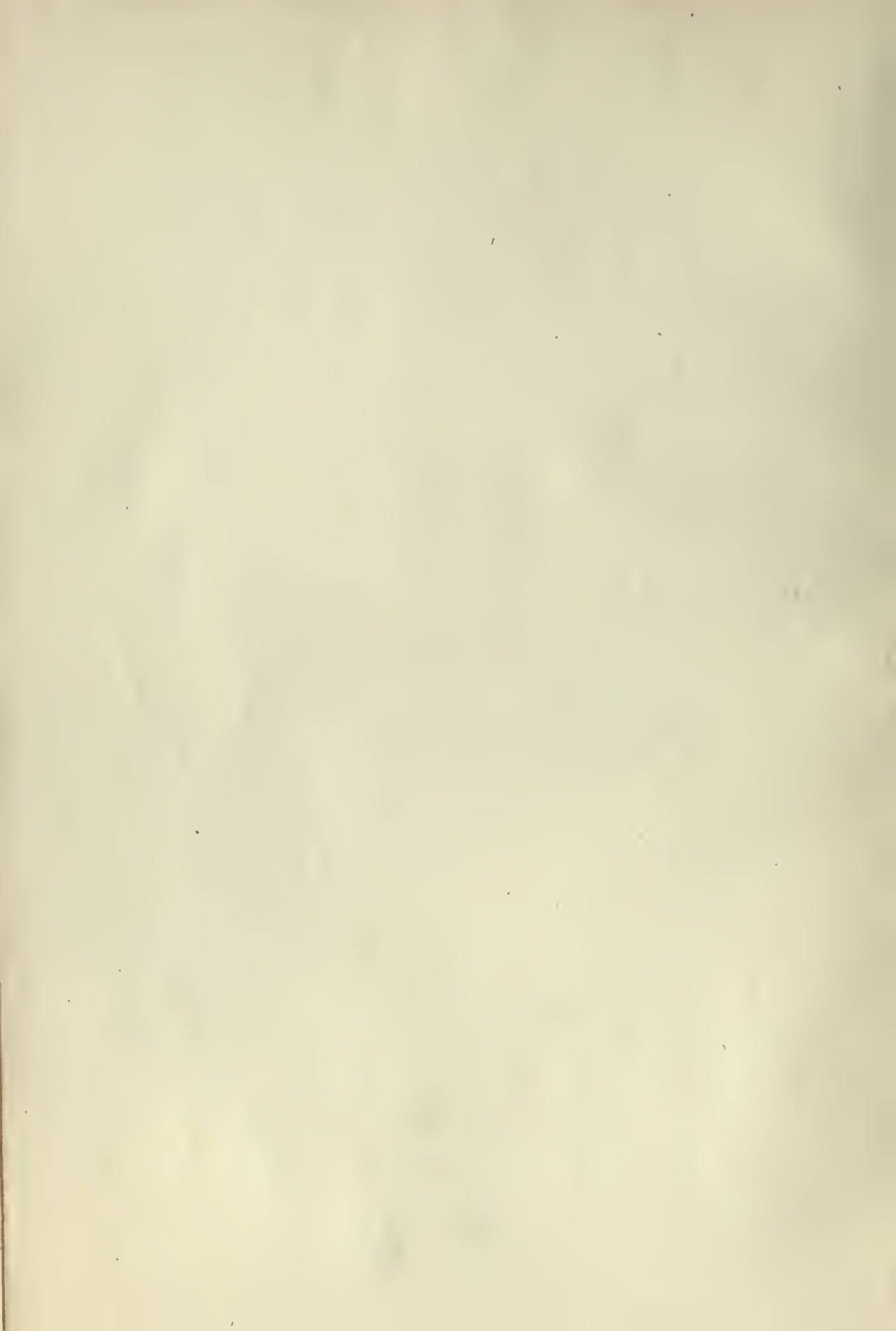
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Rawhide Rawlins Stories



By Charles M. Russell

Rawhide Rawlins Stories

By
C. M. RUSSELL
With Illustrations by the Author

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Ed M Russell



FOREWORD

WHEN I came to Montana, which then was a territory with no railroads, reading matter of any kind was scarce. Where there's nothing to read, men must talk, so when they were gathered at ranches or stage stations, they amused themselves with tales of their own or others' adventures. Many became good storytellers. I have tried to write some of these yarns as nearly as possible as they were told to me.

C. M. RUSSELL,
Great Falls, Montana.

A Ride in a Moving Cemetery

THE conversation among the group at the end of the bar had turned to the subject of sudden death, when Rawhide cuts in. Several times in my life I've been close to the cash in, he says, but about the nearest I ever come to crossin' the big range is a few years ago before I move to Montana. This is down in California, an' there's a friend with me at the time—I ain't givin' his name, but we'll call him Bill Roslin. His father's a Chicago millionaire.

Bill crosses over, and the reason I don't tell his right name is because his folks never know what kind of an end Bill meets. It seems he's out west for his parents' health, they remainin' in the east, an' it appears they never get the facts in the case. They believe today that their lovin' son quit this life in bed, with a preacher hangin' over him an' a doctor takin' the pulse count. The truth is there wasn't no one with him at the finish but me an' a team of hosses, an' the hosses take the long trail with him, leavin' me in the only travelin' cemetery I've ever seen.

The way this incident starts, we are leanin' over the mahogany in a joint in Los Gatos, after a big night together. As we're both hoss lovers, we're givin' this subject a lot of our conversation, and finally Bill suggests that a buggy ride would be a good thing, as we're feelin' the need of some fresh air. We leave this joy parlor arm in arm and visit a friend of mine who owns a livery stable. I tell him what we're after, and he gives us the best he's got—a span of bays bred in the purple, and as good as any roadsters in California.

For fear of losin' any of this joyful feelin' we've accumulated, we're heeled with a quart of corn juice, which we're partakin' of free and reg'lar as we spin along one of them good California roads with our hosses up and comin'. Bill keeps tellin' me how fancy he is with the reins, not forgettin' to criticise my drivin', for he's reached the stage where he's gettin' argumentative. From the line of talk he hands out I've got my doubts as to how much he knows about hoss flesh, but I'm not disputin' him any, for the whole world right now looks so beautiful to me that there's no chance for an argument on any subject from religion or Teddy Roosevelt to the best brand of red eye. I want to sing, and do warble for awhile, but Bill ain't got no musical ear, and he claims the noise I'm makin' is frettin' the team and drivin' all the birds out of the country. From feelin' musical I begin to get sleepy, and the last I remember I'm dozin' off. I recollect Bill reachin' for

the reins, and the next I know I've a vague notion I'm in an airship and can see clear to the Mexican line. I'm wonderin' where I changed cars when the light goes out.



Eyes Opened on a Tombstone.

When I wake up I'm layin' with my feet higher than my head, and my eyes open slowly on a big marble tombstone with the letterin':

OUR LOVED ONE AT REST.
JOINED THE ANGELS
JUNE 30, 1911.

I think to myself, I may be their "loved one," but they're liars when they say I'm at rest. There ain't a place on me that don't ache; even my hair is sore to the touch.

I start figurin' from the date on the stone how long I've been dead, but my brain won't work and I give it up. While I'm wonderin' whether I'll have to make a squarin' talk with Peter, the gateman, I hear the puff of a switch engine somewhere close by.

"Since when," thinks I, "did they get a railroad built through here?" But the thirst I've got makes me think maybe I've took the southern route, and perhaps they're haulin' coal.

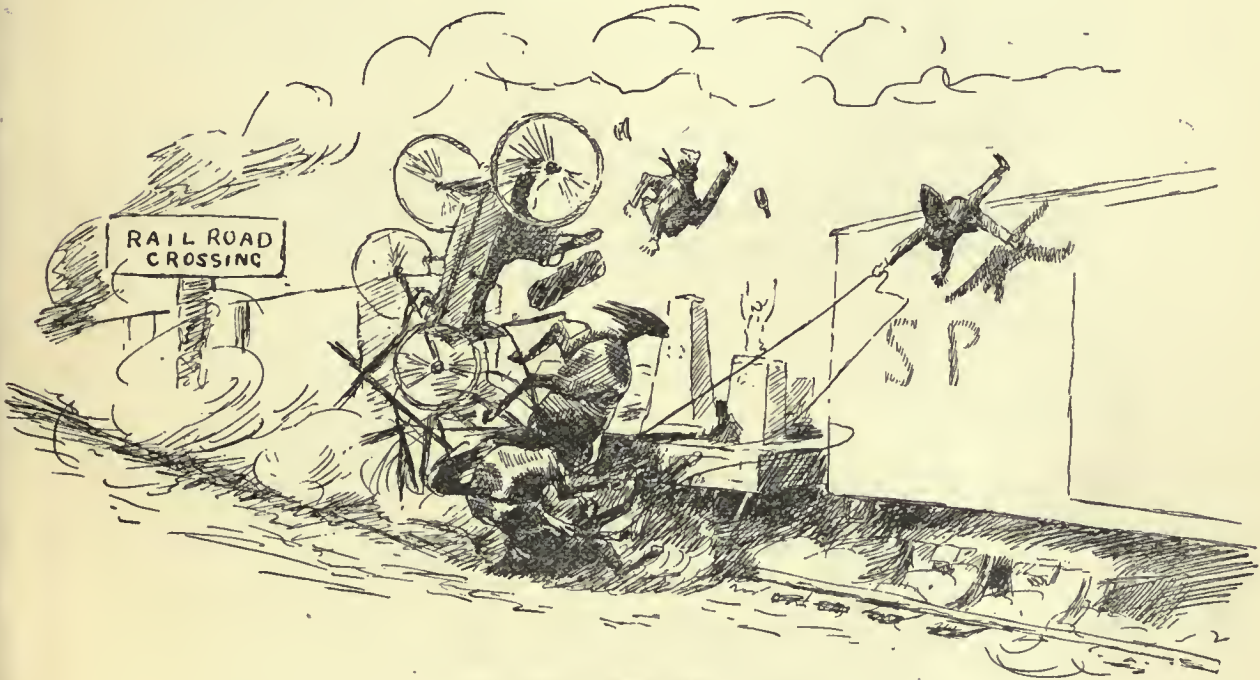
"What the hell you doin' here?" breaks in a voice, and it ain't no angel talkin, so I realize that I'm in the same old world. Lookin' over the tombstone, sizin' me up, is the toughest lookin' brakie I ever see.

"Where am I?" I inquire without movin'.

He gives me the name of the burg, but it's a camp I never heard of.

"If you'll lead me to a thirst parlor," I says, "I'll buy somethin' and you're in on it."

"You're on, Bo," says he.



He Tried to Cut a Freight in Two.

Then, sittin' up and lookin' around, I discover I'm on a flat car loaded to the rims with tombstones, and I'm layin' in front of the biggest one in the lot. Although it nearly kills me to move, I scramble to the ground, and the brakie pilots me to a little joint across the tracks. There's nobody in there but the bartender and the flies, and this toddy mixer is busy readin' a newspaper. Throwin' my silver on the bar, I tell him to get in. It's pretty bad booze, but it helps bring me back to life. The bartender's sociable, and after I buy a couple of rounds for the three of us, pickin' up the paper again, he says, "quite a killin' across the state."

"What killin'?" says I.

"Some feller runs a team into a freight that's slidin' down a grade about three hundred miles south of here," says the barkeep. "Smashes himself and the team into chunks."

"I'll bet that's Bill Roslin," I says. "Seems to me I was buggy-

ridin' with him some time this year. Judgin' from where I find myself this mornin' I was with him at the cash in."

"What do you think of that?" the brakie asks the bartender, tappin' his forehead.

"Turn over, you're layin' on your back," says the bartender. "That smash-up happens a day's ride from here. Wait a minute, though," he goes on. "It does say here that there's a feller with him that they can't locate."

"Well, that's me," says I.

I find out later that Roslin tries to cut a freight in two with this team, killin' himself and both hosses. That's when I land among these grave ornaments and take a ride in a movin' cemetery.

There's More Than One David

I NEVER knowed much about the Good Book, says Rawhide, but there's one story I've always remembered since childhood that I heer'd at Sunday school. That's the one where this sheepherder, David, hurls a rock at Goliath an' wins the fight easy. But when I growed up I kind o' doubted this yarn till it's proved to me by the real thing that size nor weepens don't always win a battle.

One time, years ago, I'm winterin' in a little burg. I ain't mentionin' no names, as some of the parties still live, an' havin' families it might cause the offspring to underestimate the old man.

In this camp there's a man that's got a history back of him that's sure scary. He's wearin' several notches on his gun an' has this little burg buffaloed. This gentleman's big all ways. He stands six feet four an' he'll weigh two hundred an' fifty easy. As for looks, his features is wolfish an' his brain cavity wouldn't make a drinkin' cup for a canary bird. Knowin' he's got everybody bluffed, his feelin's is mighty easy hurt, an' most of the folks keep him soothed by buyin' drinks for him. One day a stranger forgets to buy him a drink, an' the big man bends a gun over his head.

There's a reformed preacher in this town, runnin' a stud poker game. This feller is Bible-wise and hangs the name "Goliath" on the big man, but when he calls him that to his face the giant gets wolfy. Misunderstandin' the name, he thinks the stud dealer's callin' him a liar. The gambler, bein' a quick thinker, is mighty fast squarin' it up an' tells him the Bible story, barrin' the finish, but whispurin' to me on the side, says he wishes David would drop in.

Goliath has things his own way all winter, when Christmas comes along. There's fellers from line camps an' all the cow and hoss ranches in the country rides in to celebrate. Most of 'em knowin' Goliath's back record an' lookin' for pleasure, not trouble, are careful about startin' arguments. They're all gamblin' an' buyin' drinks. Nobody's barred, so its pretty soft for the big feller. The whisky they're sellin' ain't a peaceful fluid at the best, an' with his hide full of fightin' booze, he's touchy as a teased snake. He makes a tenderfoot or two dance, but he can't get no excuse to make no killin's.

Among these range people there's a lonesome sheepherder an' his dog. He's an undersized proposition, takes plenty of whisky but says nothin'. He loves music an' does his entertainin' with a mouth harp,

but most of the time he's sleepin' off in a corner with the best friend he's got layin' at his feet.

These people are all mighty enthusiastic celebratin' this saintly day, an' of course there's several fights pulled, but none of 'em's finished with worse than a black eye or broken nose. One gentleman, a gun packer, reaches for his weepoon once, but Goliar's standin' close to his meat. He gets his own barker first an' combs this puncher's hair. Of course this finishes the fight with the spillin' of some blood, but there's no powder burnt.

'Long about noon this little shepherd dozes off into a nap over in a corner. All this drunken hollerin' an' talkin' don't disturb his slumbers, but it seems to work on his dog's nerves, an' when the collie can't stand it no longer, he slips out, lookin' for some of his own kind that's sober. He's soon gettin' along fine with a bunch of his species, an' is sure enjoyin' himself when Goliar, who's roamin' from one joint to another, sets eyes on him. It's pickin's for this low-minded giant, an' it ain't long before he's got this poor dog turned loose with a can hangin' to him.



The Shepherd Hurls a Boulder at "Goliar."

The first charge the collie makes is in among the hosses that's tied to the rack, leavin' nothin' much on the pole but broken bridle reins an' hackamore ropes, an' quite a few of the celebrators are afoot. Then Mr. Dog starts for his friend an' partner, an' when he tears into this saloon, the noise he's makin' wakens the little shepherd. The dog winds up whinin' on his master's knee.

This shepherd's face, that has always been smilin' an' happy, looks mighty war-like now, an' it wouldn't be healthy for the canner to be close to him. Seems like he's sober in a minute. While he's untyin' the can from his dog, the owner of this booze joint, who's a dog lover himself, steps over an' slippin' a forty-five into the sheepherder's hand, whispers: "That's Goliar's work; go get him, Shep."

But the sheepherder, who's cryin' now, shakes his head, an' refuses the weepson, sayin' he don't need no gun to clean up that big louse. Then he leaves without even askin' for a drink, his dog slinkin' close to his heels. He's quite a way up the street when Goliar spies him an' hollers: "Go 'round 'em, Shep! Have you got all the black ones?" Pullin' his gun, the giant starts liftin' the dirt around the shepherd's feet.

But the herder ain't gun-shy an' don't even side-step till one of the bullets graze the dog, who whines an' crowds his master's legs. Whirlin' 'round, the gentle shepherd reaches down, picks up a good-sized boulder an' hurls it at Goliar, catchin' him on the point of the chin. Goliar straightens up an' falls his length, an' before he can recover the herder has tore the gun loose from the giant's clutches and is workin' him over with the barrel.

Some one wants to stop him, but the same feller that offers him the gun tells the crowd to stand back an' let Shep finish. The stud dealer, who's watched the play from the start, says: "Goliar got his—that's sure enough David. The same as cards, history repeats—I'd 've played Goliar with a copper."

This Goliar is gathered up an' sent by the next stage to the hospital where he's nursed back to life. His nose is broke; the same with his right jaw, an' one of his ears has to be sewed on.

I ain't seen Goliar for years, but the last time I met him he's wearin' scars that's a map of the battle he had with David.

Highwood Hank Quits

WHEN I first knowed Highwood Hank he's a cowpuncher and is pretty handy among brones, says Rawhide. In them days he's ridin' for the P, and anybody that savvies that iron knows they never owned a hoss that wasn't a snake. A man had to be a rider to work for 'em. If a hoss thief found a P hoss in his bunch at daybreak, it's a cinch he'd turn him loose. P hosses was notorious.

Kid Russell tells me he rode one summer for Ben Phillips, who owned that brand. He claimed he didn't take on no flesh that year. When he quit his fingernails was all wore off an' there wasn't a hoss in his string that had any mane from his ears to his withers. There was spur tracks all over his saddle. He couldn't ever eat supper thinkin' of the hoss he had to fork the next mornin', and he never made no try at breakfast. His hands is so shaky all that spring that he has to get a friend to roll his cigarettes, an' if he'd worked a whole season his fingers would be wore down to the knuckles. As it is it takes a solid year to get the crooks out of his hands from havin' 'em clamped 'round the saddle horn.

As I said before, Hank's a rider, but like all others, old Daddy Time has hung it on him. It seems these days like his backbone has growed together in places an' it don't take to the swing of a pitchin' bronc. Hank's married now, and he's a granddad. He still owns a ranch and rides, but they ain't the long circles he used to make.

A couple of years ago Hank runs in a bunch of bronzos. They're rollin' fat an' pretty snuffy. He drops his rope on to one, an' the the minute his loop tightens, Mr. Bronc swings 'round, comin' at Hank with his ears up, whistlin' like a bull elk. In the old days this would a-been music to Hank's ears. It takes him back to the P string.

Mrs. Hank's lookin' through the corral fence an' begs Hubby not to crawl this one. He tells her not to worry.

"All you got to do it sit back an' watch me scratch his shoulders." he says. "You won't have to pay no railroad fare to Miles City to see bronc ridin'," he tells her. "This is goin' to be home talent."

"He'll throw you," says she.

"Yes he will," says Hank, as he cinches his hull on.

This bronc's got his near ear dropped down an' about half of his eye shows white. He's humped till you could throw a dog under the

saddle skirts behind, Hank's whistlin' "Turkey in the Straw" to keep his sand up, an' his wife notices there's a tremble in his hand as he reaches for the horn.

The minute the bronc feels weight on the near stirrup he starts



"Yes, You Did!"

for the clouds, an' the second time he comes down Hank ain't with him. He's sittin' on the ground with two hands full of corral dust.

"I told you so," says Wifie.

"Yes you did," says Hank. "You're a fine partner, sittin' there like you're deaf and dumb. Any time I ever rode a bronc before there's always been somebody around to yell: 'Stay with him—hang an'

rattle.' You didn't give me any encouragement. Just lookin' at you scared me loose."

"All right," says Mrs. Hank, "I'll try to do better next time."

But the next one is a shorter ride than the first. His better half yells: "Stay with him," but it's just as Hank hits the ground.

"I hollered that time," says she.

"Yes you did," says Hank. "Why didn't you wait till New Years?"

Hank hates to do it, but he has to own up that his bronc ridin' days is over.

Tommy Simpson's Cow

IN the old days the sight of a cow follered by more than one calf is apt to cause comment among cowpeople, says Rawhide. But times have changed an' it looks like new improvements has come in the stock business along with dry farmin' an' prohibition. Not all these modern ideas is hatched up on this side of the water, though. Tommy Simpson's prize cow proves that.



Tommy Simpson's Cow.

The other day I'm ridin' on Box Elder creek, when I'm surprised to see a cow that's got five calves follerin' her, all wearin' Tommy Simpson's brand. Tommy's an old-timer in the cattle business, so I figger he'll have some interestin' explanation to make of this miracle. I'm still ponderin' over it when I ride into the town of Fife, which Tommy has named after the village in Scotland that he's run out of as a youth for poachin'. Enterin' the store there, who do I see but the owner of the cow an' five calves. I presently remark that's sure some cow of his.

Tommy, with both jowls loaded with Climax, as usual, is speechless, until he opens the stove door an' nearly puts the fire out. Then, gettin' his breath, he explains that the cow has been sent to him from the Highlands of Scotland by his grandfather. The animal, he says, comes to this country in charge of a cousin of Tommy.

It appears that Tommy's cousin, with thrift that's characteristic of the family, drives a sharp bargain with the captain of the sailin' ship in which he engages passage from Strachlachan, which is not far from Ballochantry, somewhere north of the Firth of Gallway. Tommy's cousin agrees to furnish milk and cream to the ship's crew an' twenty-three passengers if they'll let him an' the cow travel on a pass. This suits the captain. On the way over the cow is milked evenin' an' mornin' by Tommy's cousin an' the members of the larboard watch. How Tommy's cousin an' the cow beat their way from New York to Montana, I never hear.

Accordin' to Tommy, cows of this breed ain't uncommon in the Scotch Highlands. They're built somewhat along the lines of the lady pig. Tommy says it's an interestin' sight, after the cow gets to his ranch, for the neighbors to watch Tommy and several hired men milk the Scotch cow. The milk from the off side supplies the Fife creamery with butter fat, while that from the near side of the cow nourishes her half-dozen calves.

Tommy tells me that in Scotland, where these cows eat the nutritious heather, the center bag gives pure cream; the rear one, buttermilk, an' the forward one skim milk, so they don't need no separator.



Milking Time.

How Pat Discovered the Geyser

COLUMBUS discovers America. A feller called Ponce de Leon claims he discovered Florida. Jim Bridger finds the Great Salt Lake, but it's Pat Geyser, as he's knowed by old timers, that locates the geyser on Geyser creek, near the town that gets its name from it. Pat Geyser ain't this gent's right name, but I ain't tippin' nobody's hand, observes Rawhide.

Pat tells that one day in the early '80s he's out lookin' for cows, an' the chances are good that any he takes an interest in belong to somebody else. Pat's good hearted an' he hates to see calves wanderin' around wearin' no brand. They look so homeless that he's always willin' to stake 'em to a brand with his own iron.

Pat's hoss is dry when he rides on to this creek an' notices a muddy pool, but as there ain't no geysers in Ireland, Pat don't savvy, he says. His hoss ain't no more'n dropped his head to drink than this here geyser busts loose, takin' Pat an' the hoss along with it. There's steam, soddy water an' a mixture of all the health resorts in this stew that's boiled over, an' Pat claims the force of it lifts his hoss from his iron shoes.

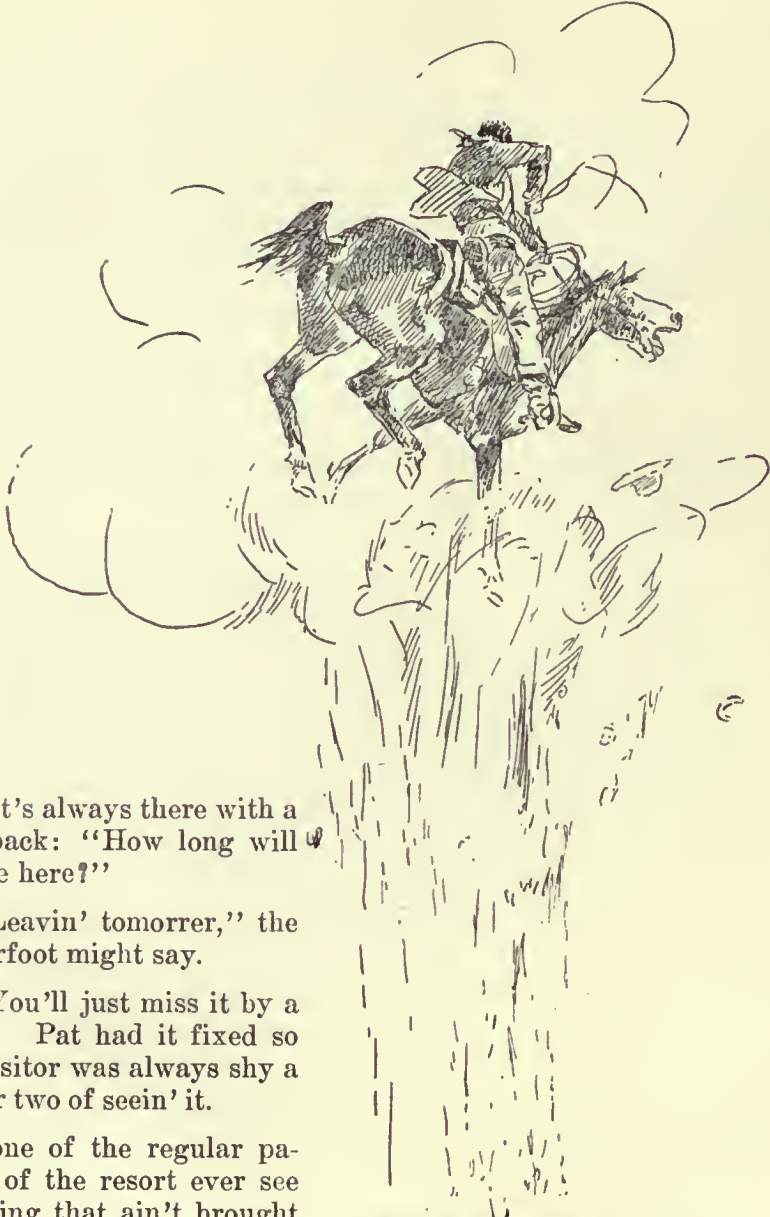
Pat tells that he don't know how far skyward he goes, but him an' the hoss passes an eagle on the way back.

Now I'm goin' to say here that I've seen this geyser myself, many a time, but me nor no one else, barrin' Pat, ever see it do anything more vicious than a keg of sour dough would. It just kind of bubbles once in a while.

Havin' heard of the Yallerstone Park, an' thinkin' he's found another one, Pat starts a few days after buildin' a health resort, follerin' the plans of the Mammoth hotel, but bein' built of cottonwood logs, dry weather shrinks her a lot. I remember bein' there once, and after a few drinks of Pat Geyser's favor-ite, the measurements swells till this shack looks like the Brown Palace in Denver.

For the first few years Pat don't draw a strong trade, as humans are scatterin' and the only sickness in the country is scab, the sheepmen havin' dippin' tanks for that. But in time it grows into quite a resort and rest cure for shepherds. These herders don't take much to the geyser water, barrin' the little Pat throws in as a "chaser."

Tenderfeet stoppin' with Pat would often ask: "When does this geyser turn loose?"



The Geyser Busts Loose

Pat's always there with a comeback: "How long will you be here?"

"Leavin' tomorrer," the tenderfoot might say.

"You'll just miss it by a day." Pat had it fixed so the visitor was always shy a day or two of seein' it.

None of the regular patrons of the resort ever see anything that ain't brought on by liquor, but by usin' enough of the rest cure medicine the bartender passed out there, a man could see northern lights at noon time, rainbows at night an' total eclipses of the sun any time—to say nothin' of geysers of all sizes.

Pat was strong for the social end of life, an' he used to pull card parties for freighters to break the monotony of their trips. At these

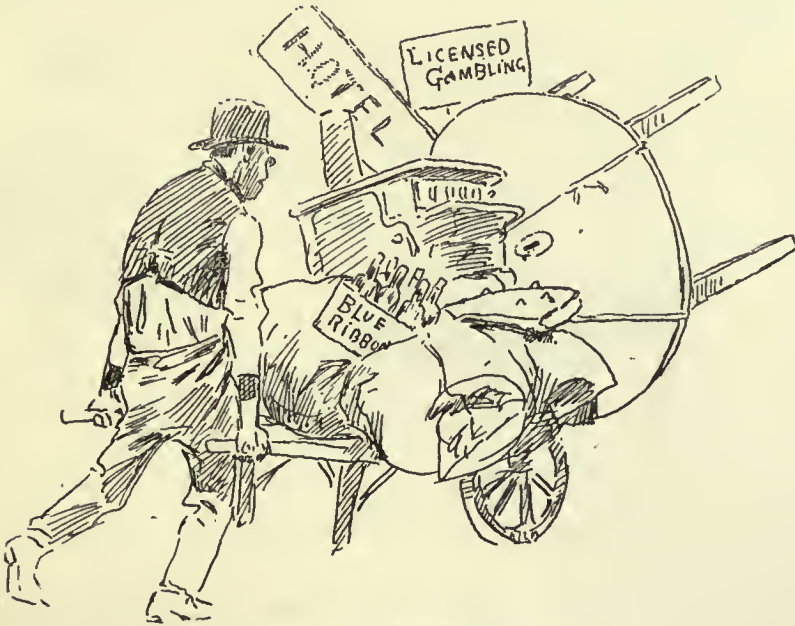
no skinner was allowed to bet any more than he had. Some knockers said Pat knew both sides of the cards, but if he ever dealt off the bottom it's when nobody's lookin'.

One afternoon when Pat's asleep the railroad sneaks in an' moves the town. The minute Pat opens his eyes he's onto their hole card, and gettin' the wheel barrow, he moves his hotel over to the new location an' has his dinin' room open for supper.

When automobiles get popular, Pat, who's always progressive an' up-to-date, buys one. The day after it's delivered, Pat asks a friend to ride over to Stanford with him. They started, an' after passin' what looks like Stanford as far as he could tell at the 80-mile gait they're goin', an' seein' they're nearin' Judith Gap, the friends asks: "What's your hurry, Pat?"

"I'm in no hurry," Pat yelled, "but I'm damned if I know how to stop the thing. We'll have to let it run down."

The car bein' young, it has the ways of a bronc, an' Pat almost died at the wheel with his hands numb an' locked in the spokes. The friend gives him nourishment that keeps life in him, an' 18 hours later they wind up on Greybull river in Wyoming.

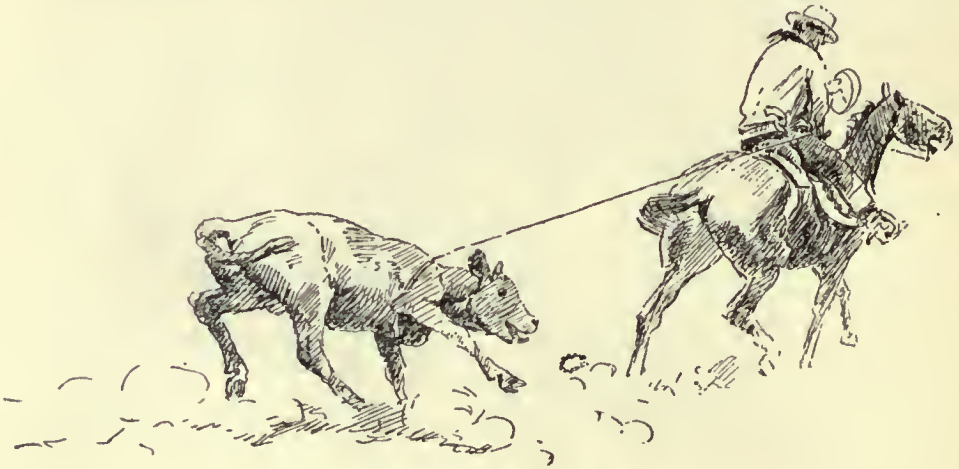


Moves His Hotel.

How Louse Creek Was Named

AIN'T you ever heard how Louse Creek got its name? inquires Rawhide. Well, I ain't no historian, but I happen to savvy this incident. The feller that christens it ain't like a lot of old timers that consider it an honor to have streams an' towns named after 'em. His first name's Pete, and he still lives in the Judith, but I ain't goin' no further exceptin' to say he's a large, dark-complected feller, he's mighty friendly with Pat O'Hara and his hangout is the town of Geysers.

When I knowed him first he's a cowpuncher. From looks you'd say he didn't have nothin' under his hat but hair, but what he knows about cows is a gift. Right now he's got a nice little bunch rangin' in the foothills. There's a lot of talk about the way he gets his start—you can believe it or not, suit yourself—but I think it's his winnin' way among cows. He could come damn near talkin' a cow out of her calf. Some say they've seen calves follerin' his saddle hoss across the prairie. One old cowman says he's seen that, alright, but lookin' through glasses, there's a rope between the calf and Pete's saddle horn.

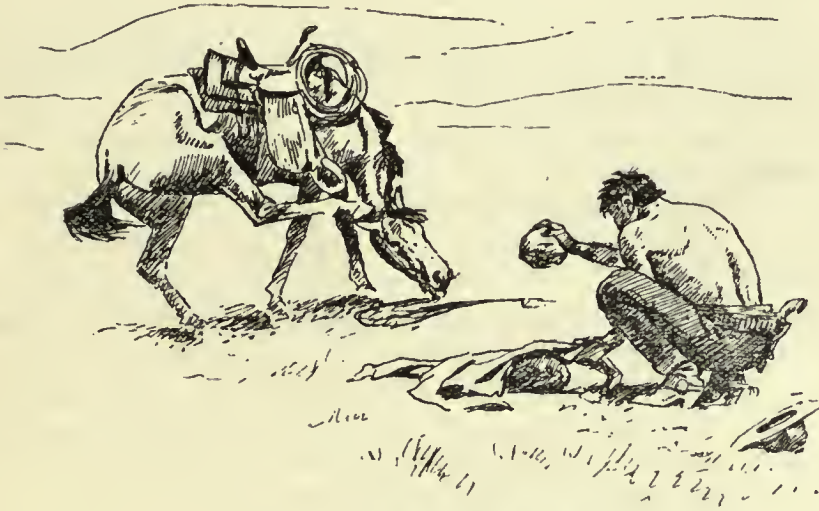


Pete Had a Winning Way With Cattle

But goin' back to the namin' of Louse Creek, it's one spring round-up, back in the early '80s. We're out on circle, an' me an' Pete's ridin' together. Mine's a center-fire saddle, and I drop back to straighten the blanket an' set it. I ain't but a few minutes behind him, but the

next I see of Pete is on the bank of this creek, which didn't have no name then. He's off his hoss an' has stripped his shirt off. With one boulder on the ground an' another about the same size in his hand, he's poundin' the seams of the shirt. He's so busy he don't hear me when I ride up, and he's cussin' and swearin' to himself. I hear him mutter, "I'm damned if this don't get some of the big ones!"

Well, from this day on, this stream is known as Louse Creek.



——! I'll Get the Big Ones Anyway!

Some Liars of the Old West

SPEAKIN' of liars, says Rawhide, the old west could put in its claim for more of 'em than any other land under the sun. The mountains and plains seemed to stimulate man's imagination. A man in the states might have been a liar in a small way, but when he comes west he soon takes lessons from the prairies, where ranges a hundred miles away seem within touchin' distance, streams run uphill and nature appears to lie some herself.

These men weren't vicious liars. It was love of romance, lack of reading matter and the wish to be entertainin' that makes 'em stretch facts and invent yarns. Jack McGowan, a well known old timer now livin' in Great Falls, tells of a man known as Lyin' Jack, who was famous from Mexico to the Arctic.

McGowan says one of Jack's favorite tales is of an elk he once killed that measured 15 feet spread between the antlers. He used to tell that he kept these horns in the loft of his cabin.

"One time I hadn't seen Jack for years," said McGowan, "when he shows up in Benton. The crowd's all glad to see Jack, an' after a round or two of drinks, asks him to tell them a yarn.

"'No, boys,' says Jack, 'I'm through. For years I've been tellin' these lies—told 'em so often I got to believin' 'em myself. That story of mine about the elk with the 15-foot horns is what cured me. I told about that elk so often that I knowed the place I killed it. One night I lit a candle and crawled up in the loft to view the horns—an' I'm damned if they was there.'"

.

Once up in Yogo, Bill Cameron pointed out Old Man Babcock an' another old-timer, Patrick, sayin', "there's three of the biggest liars in the world."

"Who's the third?" inquired a bystander.

"Patrick's one an' old Bab's the other two," says Cameron.

This Babcock one night is telling about getting jumped by 50 hostile Sioux, a war party, that's giving him a close run. The bullets an' arrows are tearin' the dirt all around, when he hits the mouth of a deep canyon. He thinks he's safe, but after ridin' up it a way, discovers it's a box gulch, with walls straight up from 600 to 1,000 feet.

His only get-away's where he come in an' the Indians are already whip-pin' their ponies into it.

Right here old Bab rares back in his chair, closes his eyes an' starts fondlin' his whiskers. This seems to be the end of the story, when one of the listeners asks:

“What happened then?”

Old Bab, with his eyes still closed, takin' a fresh chew, whispered: “They killed me, be God!”

* * * * *

The upper Missouri river steamboats, they used to say, would run on a light dew, an' certainly they used to get by where there was mighty little water. X. Beidler an' his friend, Major Reed, are traveling by boat to Fort Benton. One night they drink more than they should. X. is awakened in the morning by the cries of Reed. On entering his stateroom, X. finds Reed begging for water, as he's dying of thirst.

X. steps to the bedside, and takin' his friend's hand, says: “I'm sorry, Major, I can't do anything for you. That damned pilot got drunk, too, last night, and we're eight miles up a dry coulee!”

* * * * *

“Some say rattlers ain't pizen,” said Buckskin Williams, an old freighter, “but I know different. I'm pullin' out of Milk river one day with 14, when I notice my line hoss swing out an' every hoss on the near side crowds the chain. My near wheel hoss, that I'm ridin', rares up an' straddles the tongue. It's then I see what the trouble is—a big rattler has struck, misses my hoss an' hits the tongue. The tongue starts to swell up. I have to chop it off to save the wagon, an' I'm damn quick doin' it, too!”

* * * * *

“Cap” Nelse, a well known old timer around Benton in the early days, tells of coming south from Edmonton with a string of half-breed carts. They were traveling through big herds of buffalo. It was spring and there were many calves. They had no trouble with the full-grown buffalo, Cap said, but were forced to stop often to take the calves from between the spokes of the cart-wheels!

* * * * *

A traveling man in White Sulphur Springs makes a bet of drinks for the town with Coates, a saloon keeper, that Coates can't find a man that will hold up his hand and take his oath that he has seen 100,000 buffalo at one sight. When the bet's decided, it's agreed to ring the triangle at the hotel, which will call the town to their drinks.

Many old-timers said they had seen that many buffalo, but refused



They Killed Me!

W. T. Fuss

to swear to it, and it looked like Coates would lose his bet until Milt Crowthers showed up. Then a smile of confidence spread over Coates' face, as he introduces Crowthers to the drummer.

"Mr. Crowthers," said the traveling man, "how many antelope have you seen at one time?"

Crowthers straightens up and looks wise, like he's turning back over the pages of the past. "Two hundred thousand," says he.

"How many elk?" asks the traveling man.

"Somethin' over a million," replies Crowthers.

"Mr. Crowthers, how many buffalo will you hold up your hand and swear you have seen at one sight?"

Crowthers holds up his hand. "As near as I can figure," says he, "about three million billion."

This is where Coates starts for the triangle, but the traveling man halts him, saying, "Where were you when you saw these buffalo, Mr. Crowthers?"

"I was a boy travelin' with a wagon train," replies Crowthers. "We was south of the Platte when we was forced to corral our wagons to keep our stock from bein' stampeded by buffalo. For five days an' nights 50 men kep' their guns hot killin' buffalo to keep 'em off the wagons. The sixth day the herd spread, givin' us time to yoke up an' cross the Platte, an' it's a damn good thing we did."

"Why?" asks the traveling man.

"Well," says Crowthers, "we no more than hit the high country north of the Platte, than lookin' back, here comes the main herd!"

Mormon Zack, Fighter

I SEE Mormon Zack's in the hospital with a bad front foot. This bein' crippled ain't nothin' strange for the Mormon, said Rawhide Rawlins, as he pulled the "makin's" out of his coat pocket and started rollin' one.

If I knowed the story of every scar he's got I could hand the people a history that would make a lot of the scraps the kaiser lost look like a prayer meetin'. My knowledge of history's a little hazy, but knowin' Zack came from Norway and judgin' from his actions, he's a come-back of some of them old fightin' Norsemen. You might lick him, but you can't keep him licked and he fights as well underneath as he does on top.

The first time I see Zack I'm a kid, helpin' throw up a log shack on the Judith river. There's a feller rides up with an Injun hoss under him. He's sittin' in an old-fashioned low-horn saddle with "dog-house" stirrups. In dress he's wearin' the garments of a breed—moccasins and beaded buckskin leggin's that come to the knees. In his ca'tridge belt is a skinnin' knife an' across the front of him lays a Winchester in a fringed an' beaded skin gun cover. One of the men that's with me tells me that's Mormon Zack.

That'll soon be 40 years ago. At that time there's still a lot of Injun trade in the country, an' that's the Mormon's business. The first time I knowed of Zack gettin' warlike is a little while after this at Reed's Fort, a tradin' post near where Lewistown stands today. It's run by Reed and Bowles.

There's about 200 lodges of Piegans come to the post for trade. Bowles don't happen to be there, as he's gone to Benton to get whisky. While he's off gettin' this wet goods, Zack an' his partner comes along and make a trade, an' when Bowles arrives there ain't as much as a skunk skin left among them Piegans. They're traded down to a breech-clout.

This don't make Bowles pleasant to get along with an' he starts fillin' up on this trade whisky. This is the booze that made the jack-rabbit spit in a wolf's eye.

As I said before, Bowles fills up an' starts tellin' Zack how much he thinks of him, an' the talk Zack comes back with ain't very genteel. Zack's standin' pretty close, for all the time they're talkin' he's on to Bowles' hole-card. He knows this hog-leg that's hangin' on Bowles'

hip ain't no watch-charm, so to avoid any misunderstanding, Zack hands Bowles one on the chin, knockin' him from under his hat. He's near bein' too late, for Bowles has already reached for his barker an' just when Zack's reachin' his jaw she speaks out loud, the ball nearly tearin' Zack's hind leg off at the hip.

Bowles don't come to till next day, an' then he wants to know which hoss kicked him. Zack's worse off as there ain't no doctor nearer than Benton. Of course, there's a medicine man in the Piegan camp, but Zack ain't Injun enough to believe that this red doctor can beat a tom-tom an' sing his leg together, so he forks a hoss an' pulls for the steamboat town. This little incident don't seem to take none of the fight out of Zack, an' he wins an' loses a few battles down there while he's healin' up.

It's a few years later Zack comes near crossin' the raunge when he mixes with a fighter in Benton. The battle's Zack's from the start till the other fellow cheats by drawin' a knife, an' slippin' it into Zack's flank he walks clean 'round him, leavin' Zack with nothin' holdin him up but his backbone. His friends help him gather up the loose ends, and gettin' a doctor with a sackin' needle, he's soon patched up again.

Another time Zack fights a feller all day. Of course they stop for drinks an' feed. There really ain't no hard feelins'; they're just tryin' to find out which is the best man. They'd a-been fightin' yet but their eyes swelled shut at last an' they couldn't find one another.

There was one town Zack was doubtful of, an' that was Bull Hook. In them days this burg held the pennant for fighters.

Zack had been cookin' on the Teton roundup, an' when they break up that fall he jumps a train headed east. He's got quite a bankroll and a friend stakes him to a quart that ain't grape juice. He's figurin' on winterin' in some of the towns along the road, so when the train stops at this town of Bull Hook, or Havre as they call it now, he steps off to get the air an' size up the citizens.

As I was sayin', this town in the old days was the home of most of the fighters of the northwest. Zack picks out the biggest, hardest one in sight, an' walkin' up friendly like, hands him one in the jaw with every pound he's got. With this the ball opens, but it don't last long, an' Zack's hit him everywhere when the big feller hollers "enough."

Then the stranger wants to know what it's all about and asks Zack to introduce himself an' explain, just out of curiosity, what's his reason for tearin' into him. Zack tells him there's no hard feelin's an' it ain't no old grudge he's workin' off, but he kind of figured on winterin' in

Bull Hook, an' hearin' they're all fighters there, he thinks this is the best way of introducin' himself.

"I picked the biggest one among you," says the Mormon. "If I'd a' lose, I was goin' on to Chinook, but seein' I win, I'll winter with you." An' he did.

Although Zack's a natural scrapper, like many of his kind he has plenty of good traits, is good-hearted, an' I never knowed him to jump on a weakling. It was always a man who claimed to be a fighter, too. Zack belonged to his time an' it was his kind and not the reformers that made Montana. These last came with the tumble weed.



Zack Picks Out the Biggest, Hardest-lookin' Citizen He Can See and Swings on His Jaw With Every Pound He's Got.

Johnny Sees the Big Show

I SEE where an old-time roundup cook, a friend of mine—though I don't want you to think his cookin' ever tied any friendship knot between us—crosses the big pond to take a look at the trenches, said Rawhide Rawlins.

Johnny's as far as I'll go with his name. This range chef always was better talkin' than he was cookin' an' when I meet him the other day he tells me that on his trip over he gets kidney sores wearin' a life preserver, an' he's so sick he's afraid the Dutchmen won't sink the boat. One day he's hangin' with his head over the rail. Most people think it's a sailor's union suit hung out to dry, but a Red Cross nurse recognizes it as human, and puttin' her arm 'round him in a motherly way, says, "Are you sick?"

"Hell, no," says Johnny. "I'm doin' this for fun."

"Have all the fun you want," she comes back at him. "These big waves is full of jokes." Johnny tries to smile, but his countenance resembles a good job by the undertaker.

When the boat lands it takes four stewards to unload Johnny. The customs bull looks him over, an' noticin' a swellin' around his middle, thinks he's grabbed a smuggler, but strippin' him finds he's still wearin' the life preserver.



Took Four Stewards to Unload Johnny

He walks around Liverpool till the town quits rockin'; then takes a train to London, he tells me, on one of them little English cars they lock you in. Johnny feels like a steer goin' to Chicago; the bull bars is up. They don't let him out to feed, but this don't bother him none as his boat ride has taken all ideas of eatin' out of his thoughts.

In this box with him is a red-faced Englishman, wearin' a single eyeglass an' looking about as intelligent as a Merino ram at the state fair. He's lookin' in one place all the time, an' after about four hours it gets on Johnny's nerves. Thinkin' he'll start a talk, Johnny remarks on the beautiful scenery that might be there if the fog would lift. This don't break the stare of the beef eater. Johnny tries him again: "Does this train stop at a line camp like London, or does she go right through to Chinook?" he inquires.

The Britisher don't pay no more attention to Johnny than if he was part of the upholsterin'. Johnny, thinkin' maybe he's a dummy, tries sign talk, but he loses again.

By the time he gets to London, he's wolf hungry. He drops into a fced shop, an' seein' meat pie on the layout, tells the waiter he'll play that. He takes one bite, an' findin' this pie cold as a well digger's feet, he pushes back his chair. "I lose," says he to the waiter, "an' though I ain't no welcher, I've been cold-decked."

This biscuit slave asks what's his trouble. When Johnny makes him savvy he likes this dish hot, the waiter looks seasick at the idea of a hot meat pie. Johnny afterwards learns that King Alfred the Great burnt his cakes, but liked his meat pie cold, an' what was good enough for Al a couple of thousand years ago is all right for an Englishman.

The next day Johnny takes in Westminster Abbey, an' after lookin' 'round at tombstones that's piled so plentyful he's walkin' on 'em, he gets kind of hostile because he don't see none of his people represented. He tells the guide his name, says his ancestors was English and wants to know why his folks is barred.

The guide, bein' history-wise, is there with an answer, an' tells Johnny without stutterin' that in them days they didn't bury no highwaymen, but left 'em hangin' in their chains, feed for the ravens.

Johnny wanders through the Tower of London next an' sees a lot of them old clothes that the blacksmith built. He notices one old iron hat that's bigger'n all the rest an' wearin' more scars an' dents.

"Who wears that one?" he asks the guide.

“Sir James Burnham, a famous warrior of the tenth century,” the guide tells him.

Johnny takes off his hat an' bows like he's pullin' a silent prayer.

“What's the cause of this reverence?” the guide inquires.

“Hush,” says Johnny. “That iron lid belonged to a forefather of an old friend of mine of that name. He's knowed from Deadwood to the Pacific as Piano Jim. Jim, like his ancestor, was warlike. That dented hardware hat has a smooth surface compared to the war scars on Piano Jim's head. If Jim had owned that lid he'd a win more battles.”

Then Johnny leaves the beef eaters' camp for the land of the frog eaters. He's as shy about takin' water again as a cat, but there ain't no ford. It's a groundhog case—he's got to take the boat.

This trip ain't so long, but it's just as shaky as the big creek, an' when he lands the health officers nearly turn him back. Judgin' by his looks he's a German spy with a load of yaller fever hangin' on him, but he squares himself with a few words of French he learned on Big Springs creek from Louis Baptiste. This Louis's one of nature's noblemen. He's got all the refinements of a Sioux Indian on his mother's side, an' his dad's a French whisky trader. The language he uses is a mixture of the same stew. These Frenchmen know there's some French in what Johnny's sayin', but from the way he speaks it they think he's been gassed in the trenches.

When Johnny's near enough the fightin' line to smell smoke, it seems home-like. It reminds him of Landusky on a quiet day. When they tell him of the horrors of the trenches—the vermin an' rats—it don't scare him none, although Johnny tells the French officer he never had no rats.

Johnny tells me he sees two kings on this trip. The only kind of kings he's ever had anything to do with before is when he's playin' stud poker an' it's his deal. Then sometimes he's fast enough to get one off the bottom.

One of these kings excuses himself for not shakin' hands, but he's doin' his own washin' an' has both front legs in the suds to his shoulders. It seems hes lost his' job wearin' a crown.

The other one he meets asks him in to feed. This king is plumb tickled when Johnny tells him he's from Montana, an' says he ranged over that same territory one summer while on a trip to educate himself. When Johnny tells his majesty that the lid's on there now, the king chokes an' big tears come to his blinkers. It's quite a few minutes before he can speak without bustin' into sobs. When he gets back to himself again he inquires in a tremblin' voice, “How's Fifteen-two

and that refined gentleman, French Charlie?" There's another bust of sorrow when Johnny tells him Fifteen's herdin' hogs for Sid Willis on the Teton, an' French Charlie's cookin' for a Flathead chief on the Pend d'Oreilles. Catchin' the king while his heart's soft, Johnny touches him for a cigarette.



Johnny Lunches With the King

Johnny says he wonders what it is the king's feedin' him, but seein' it's war times, he's too much of a gentleman to ask any questions. He says it reminds him of a feed he had once with Little Bear in the Cree camp. Of course then he knowed what the victuals was because he missed one of the dogs.

Speakin' about old days in Montana, the king says the best named man he met out there was Kickin' George. "I played one afternoon with the Kicker at Pat O'Hara's place at Geyser," he says, "an' he just naturally roared me out of my money. He had me buffaloed, but I've been told since that George ain't got the sand of a pee-wee."

"I'm almost afraid to ask," says the king, "but have they closed Shorty Young's place at Havre? One of the pleasantest remembrances I've got during my career is an afternoon an' evenin' at Shorty's place. The music was soft an' dreamy as the breezes whispered through the willows on Bull Hook creek. My country is noted for its cooks, but our mixers of beverages is dirty deuces compared with Shorty Young—he's the ace," an' the king heaves a sigh.

Johnny never gets to tell me the rest of his trip, as when he gets this far he's got to catch a train for Browning, where he's going to make a talk to his old friends, the Piegans.

When Mix Went to School

SCHOOL days, school days, dear old Golden Rule days—that's the song I've heer'd 'em sing, says Rawhide Rawlins, an' it may be all right now, but there was nothin' dear about school days when I got my learnin'. As near as I can remember them he-school marms we had was made of the same material as a bronco buster. Any way the one I went to in Missouri had every kid whip-broke. He'd call a name an' pick up a hickory, an' the owner of the name would come tremblin' to the desk.

Charlie Mix—maybe some of you knowed him—that used to run the stage station at Stanford, tells me about his school days, an' it sure sounds natural. As near as I can remember, he's foaled back in the hills in New York state. There's a bunch of long, ganglin' kids in this neck of the woods that's mostly the offspring of old-time lumber jacks that's drifted down in that country, an' nobody has to tell you that this breed will fight a buzz-saw an' give it three turns the start.

These old grangers bring in all kinds of teachers for this school, but none of 'em can stay the week out. The last one the kids trim is pretty game an' is over average as a rough an' tumble fighter, but his age is agin him. He's tall an' heavy in the shoulders like a work bull, and' he wears long moss on his chin which he's sure proud of, but it turns out it don't help him none to win a battle. Two or three of these Reubens would be easy for him, but when they start doublin' up on him about ten strong, one or two hangin' in his whiskers, another couple ham-stringin' him and the rest swingin' on him with slates, it makes him dizzy. Eye-gougin' an' bitin' ain't barred either, an' this wisdom-bringer has got the same chance of winnin' as a grasshopper that hops into an anthill. He comes to the school in a spring buggy with a high-strung span of roadsters, but he leaves in a light spring wagon, layin' on a goosehair bedtick, with several old ladies bathin' his wounds. The team is a quiet pair of plow animals, an' the driver is told to move along slow an' avoid all bumps.

It looks like a life vacation to the boys, but the old folks think different. They don't 'low to have their lovin' offspring grow up into no ignorant heathen. So one night these old maws an' paws pull a kind of medicine smoke, an' two of the oldest braves is detailed to go to the big camp, work the herd an' cut out a corral boss for these kids. They go down to New York City, an' after perusin' aroun' they locate a prize fighter that's out of work. They question him, an' find-

in' he can read an' write an' knows the multiplication table, they hire him.

Next morning, Mix tells me, he shows up an' the boys are all there itchin' to tear into him. But Mix says there's sometin' about this teacher's looks that makes him superstitious. Of course he don't say nothin'—not wantin' to show yaller—but somehow he's got a hunch that somethin's goin' to happen.



Whiskers Didn't Help Him

This gent's head is smaller than's usual in humans. There don't seem to be much space above his eyes, an' his smile, which is meant to be pleasant, is scary. There's a low place where his nose ought to be an' he could look through a keyhole with both eyes at once. His neck's enough larger than his head so that he could back out of his shirt without unbuttoning his collar. From here down he's built all ways for scrappin', an' when he's standin' at rest his front feet hang about even with his knees. All this Mix takes in at a glance.

When the school room quiets down the new teacher pulls a nice

little talk. "Boys," says he, "I ain't huntin' for trouble, but its been whispered around that this bunch is fighty, an' I'm here to tell you as a gentleman that if there's any battle pulled, you boys is goin' to take second money."

The last word ain't left his mouth till one of the big kids blats at him.

"Come here," says he, kind of pleasant, to the kid that did it. The kid starts, but the whole bunch is with him.

The teacher don't mōve nor turn a hair, but he kind of shuffles his feet like he's rubbin' the rosin. The first kid that reaches him he side steps an' puts him to sleep with a left hook. The next one he shoots up under a desk with an upper-cut, and the kid lays there snorin'. They begin goin' down so fast Mix can't count 'em, but the last he remembers he sees the big dipper an' the north star, an' a comet cuts a hole through the moon. When he comes to, it looks like the battle of Bull Run, an' teacher is bendin' over, pourin' water on him from a bucket. He can hear what few girl scholars there is outside cryin'.

When he gets through bringin' his scholars back to life, he tells the boys to get their song books an' line up.

"Now," says he, "turn to page 40 an' we will sing that beautiful little song:

"'Every Monday mornin' we are glad to go to school,
For we love our lovin' teacher an' obey his kindly rule.'"

"He makes us sing that every mornin'," says Mix, "an' we was sure broke gentle."



We Love Our Lovin' Teacher.



Pete Lands Runnin'.

When Pete Sets a Speed Mark

SIZIN' Pete Van up from looks, says Rawhide, you'd never pick him for speed, an' I, myself, never see Pete make a quick move without a hoss under him. If Pete's entered in a foot race most folks would play him with a copper, but Bill Skelton claims Pete's the swiftest animal he ever see, barrin' nothin'. At that Bill says he never saw Pete show speed but once, an' that's back in about '78.

They're in the Musselshell country, an' one mornin' they're out after meat. They ain't traveled far till they sight dust. In them days this means Injuns or buffalo. This makes 'em cautious, 'cause they ain't anxious to bump into no red brothers with a bunch of stolen hosses. When Injuns are traveling with this kind of goods it ain't safe to detain 'em, an' Pete an' Bill both are too genteel to horn in where they ain't welcome, specially if it's a big party. Of course, if it's a small bunch they'd be pleased to relieve them by the help of their rifles.

They start cayotin' around the hills till they sight long strings of brown grass-eaters. This herd ain't disturbed none—just travelin'. This means meat an' plenty of it, so gettin' the wind right, they approach.

The country's rough, an' by holdin' the coulees they're within a hundred yards before they're noticed. It's an old bull that tips their hand; this old boy kinks his tail and jumps stiff-legged. This starts the whole bunch runnin', but it ain't a minute till Pete and Bill's among 'em.

Pete singles out a cow an' Bill does the same. Pete's so busy emptyin' his Henry into this cow that he forgets all about his saddle. He's ridin' an old-fashioned center-fire. His hoss is young an' shad-bellied, an' with a loose cinch the saddle's workin' back. The first thing Pete knows he's ridin' the cayuse's rump. This hoss ain't broke to ride double an' objects to anybody sittin' on the hind seat, so he sinks his head and unloads Pete right in front of a cow.

Bill, who's downed his meat, looks up just in time to see Pete land, and he 'lights runnin'. Bill says the cow only once scratches the grease on Pete's pants. From then on it's Pete's race. It look's like the cow was standin' still.

Anybody that knows anything about buffaloes knows that cows can run. Pete don't only beat the cow, but runs by his own hoss, which by this time is leavin' the country.

"Pete's so scared," says Bill, "that I damn near run my own hoss down tryin' to turn him back."

Bill's Shelby Hotel

THEY tell me, says Rawhide, that Bill's goin' to build a fine hotel for tourists up on Flathead Lake, not far from where his ranch is. I stayed with him a time or two when he's runnin' that big hotel in Great Falls, an' he sure savvies makin' folks comfortable.

You wouldn't ever figger that Bill would be runnin' one of these fine modern hotels if you'd knowed him when I first run onto him twenty-five years ago. It's hard to recognize Bill in them good clothes, with a white collar an' a diamond as big as a Mexican bean in his tie if you wasn't told it was the same man.

Bill was born near Des Moines, Iowa, and as a boy was knowed as the champion lightweight corn shucker of Hog Bristle county. But when he gets to manhood he takes a dislike to work, an' after hoardin' his wages of three dollars a month for eight years, he just naturally steps underneath a freight train one mornin' with his bankroll an' takes a seat on the rods. He gives one lingerin' look at the old homestead and tells the brakeman he can turn her loose.

Bill finds a pleasant travelin' companion in a noted tourist, Brake-beam Ben, who kindly divides his conversation an' whatever little things he has on him. Some of these last makes lively company for Bill, who finds travelin' pleasant an' makes lots of stops at points of interest along the line. He gets acquainted with several men who wear stars an' brass buttons. They all take a kindly interest in Bill, an' after insistin' on his spendin' a few days with them, show him the railroad tracks out of town and wish him a pleasant journey.

A year or so later Bill arrives in McCartyville, a town that in them days was about as quiet an' peaceful as Russia is today. McCartyville consists of a graveyard an' one or two ghost cabins now, but then it's a construction camp for the Great Northern, an' there ain't a tougher one on earth, even in them times. The most prosperous business men in McCartyville was the undertakers. They kept two shifts at work all the time, an' every mornin' they'd call at the hotel an' saloons to carry out the victims of the night before. No one asked no questions.

When Bill steps off the train there he has an Iowa thirst, an' he's just as welcome as his remainin' two dollars an' a half, which is good for just ten drinks. To this prohibition-raised boy this is a real novelty, for where he comes from, no one drinks without hidin' in the cellar. Bill tells me that the lives of a lot of his friends there is just one long

game of hide-and-seek. In them days an Iowan could drink more in one swaller than the average westerner can in three hours, so Bill's called on frequent by the barkeep to slow up, as they can only make just so much liquor every twenty-four hours.



Bill's Chef.

It's here Bill gets his trainin' in hotel-runnin' from washin' dishes to dealin' biscuits through the smoke that hangs heavy around the dinin' room. At the end of three days he's told by the marshal to climb the hill an' back-track as far as he likes. Bill said that they didn't like no peaceful disposed citizens there, but I never hear no one else accuse him of this weakness he claims.

A few days later he lands in Shelby, where the citizens are surprised and delighted to see him separate himself from the rods. He's covered with dust an' resembles part of the runnin' gear. In this way he was able to hide out from the brakies. When he asks for a room with a bath, it's too much for the clerk, who has a nervous temperament an' has spent the previous evenin' drinkin' Shelby coca-cola, an' he shoots Bill's hat off. This drink I mention was popular among the Shelbyites of that day. It's a mixture of alkali water, alcohol, tobacco juice an' a dash of strychnine—the last to keep the heart goin'.

This outburst of the clerk don't scare Bill none, as he's been permanently cured of gunshyness at McCartyville. As the clerk lowers his gun, Bill warps a couplin' pin just under where the gent's hat rests. The hat's ruined, but the clerk comes to three days later to find Bill's got his job. This is where Bill breaks into the hotel business. A week later in a game of stud poker he wins the hotel. I never believe the story whispered around by some of the citizens that it's a cold deck that did it.

Bill's chef's one of the most rapid cooks known in the west. He hangs up a bet of a hundred dollars that with the use of a can-opener, he can feed more cowpunchers an' sheepherders than any other cook west of the Mississippi. There's never no complaint about the meat,

either, for this cook's as good with a gun as he is with a can-opener. In fact, no one ever claims he ain't a good cook after takin' one look at him.

Shelby's changed a lot since them days. In the old times the residents there include a lot of humorists who have a habit of stoppin' trains an' entertainin' the passengers. Most of these last is from the east, an' they seemed to be serious-minded, with little fun in their make-up. The Shelby folks get so jokey with one theatrical troupe that stops there that many of these actors will turn pale today at the mention of the place. At last Jim Hill gets on the fight an' threatens to build around by way of Gold Butte an' cut out Shelby, preferrin' to climb the Sweet-grass hills to runnin' his trains through this jolly bunch.

This hotel of Bill's was one of the few places I've seen that's got flies both winter an' summer. During the cold months they come from all over the northwest to winter with Bill, an' hive in the kitchen an' dinin' room. Bill claims they're intelligent insects, as they'll spend several hours a day in warm weather frolickin' around the hog pens, but when he rings the triangle for meals they start in a cloud for the dinin' room. For a home-like, congenial place for a fly to live, you couldn't beat Bill's hotel.

Bill's run several hotels since this, an' as he's kept on goin' up in the business, this new one he's goin' to tackle on the lake will probably top 'em all, but it's doubtful if he'll be able to furnish as much excitement for his guests as the old place at Shelby used to provide for the boarders.



Shelby Humorists Entertain Passengers

A Reformed Cowpuncher at Miles City

I DIDN'T go to the stockmen's meet at Miles, myself, says Rawhide, but Teddy Blue tells me about it, an' as the strongest thing he used as a joy bringer is a maple nut sunday mixed by a lady bartender, I guess his sight is pretty clear.

Teddy has attended a lot of these gatherings in years gone by, but always before those rock bass eyes of his was dimmed by cow-swallows of Miles City home-made liquid fire, so he's mostly numb an' unconscious of what's goin' on after the first few hours.

This time Teddy's a little nervous an' keeps his hat brim pretty well down over his eyes for the first few hours he's there, as he's not sure whether he'll be recognized by the man who was sheriff at Miles some years back an' wanted Teddy to take room an' board with him for a few months for shootin' up a canary bird in a place where Teddy an' a few of his friends are pullin' a concert. Ted claims this canary insulted him several times before he gets ringy by breakin' in with his ditty while Ted's singin' The Texas Ranger.

When Teddy leaves town that time his hoss wonders at the hurry they're in, an' when they reach the high ground Ted looks back and sees there's still a string of dust in Milestown that ain't had time to settle since his hoss's feet tore it loose. He plays in luck, for the sheriff, knowin' Ted's from Texas, goes south, while Ted's headin' for the north pole. He's just toppin' the hill out of Miles when he runs down a jackrabbit that gets in his way. Teddy says he never thought a canary bird would have so many friends.

So he feels easier at this meeting when he finds the sheriff an' all the canary's friends have either cashed in or left the country.

Although Montana's gone dry, this special train from the north loaded with cowmen and flockminders, don't seem to feel the drouth none, and Miles City itself acts cheerful under the affliction. Teddy, though he ain't drinkin' nothin' these days, admits to me on the quiet that just the little he inhales from his heavy-breathin' friends has him singin' The Dyin' Cowboy. He figures the ginger ale and root beer they're throwin' into 'em must have got to workin' in the bottles a little, judgin' from the cheerful effect it has.

There's another train from Helena, the headquarters for the law-makers, that's filled with a bunch that acts as care-free as if they'd forgot there's such a thing as an attorney-general in their camp. They overlooked bringin' any root beer with them, so they had to fall back

on stuff they was used to. Teddy looked into one of the Helena cars, he says, and what he sees through the smoke reminds him of Butte in the days of licensed gamblin'. He's told they're only playin' a few harmless games like Old Maid, so he figures they just have the chips lyin' around to make them feel at home. He says he can see one banker has plumb forgot how to play cards, for he notices him slip an ace off the bottom. Ted says the friendly and trustful feelin' among this Helena crowd is fine to see. One time during daylight they pass through a tunnel, an' strikin' a match, Teddy sees every man at the table he's watchin' leanin' forward all spread out over his chips. They was undoubtedly afraid they might jolt into another train and spill the chips around, an' of course it would be a job pickin' 'em up off the floor.

There's one sport in the Fergus county bunch that was raised on the range, that for size and weight would take the prize at the state fair



Runs Down a Jackrabbit

in the bull show, but he ain't wearin' any ribbons when Teddy looks at him.

Another gent from the upper Sun River country, also born on the range an' raised in the saddle, ain't no baby in build. He's had a hoss under him so long that his legs is kind of warped, an' when he sits in one of the chairs they have these days in front of the root beer bars, he straddles it instead of sittin' like a human. This feller, like Teddy, ain't usin' nothin' stronger than the law allows now, but in old days he was no stranger to corn juice or any of the other beverages that brought cheer and pleasure to the life of a cowpuncher. At the stock meetin's he used to attend, all the speakin' he listened to was done in front of a bar.

One of the oldest cow owners in the bunch, whose front name's Bill and who in years past was known all over Montana, does most of his ridin' in an automobile these days. Bill's in the bankin' business now an' you might think he's cold-blooded, but I know different. To sick folks he's almost motherly. One time in the Lake Basin country Bill's trailin' the F beef south, an' he's on ahead lookin' for water when he runs onto a shepherd that's lyin' on the prairie, havin' spasms. The shepherd tells this good Samaritan that he's swallowed strychnine.

Now, most cowmen them days would have let a wooly herder slip across the divide with the wolf bait in him, but Bill's heart softens, an' the way he quirts his hoss down the hind leg for camp is scary. When he returns at the same gait he's packin' a ten-pound lard can, an' buildin' a chip fire, he warms this hog fat till it runs easy. Then with the help of an iron spoon an' three or four good calf-rastlers to hold him, Bill empties the whole ten pounds into the shepherd. About the time Bill runs out of lard, a stranger rides up an' breaks the news to him that he's treatin' a case of snakes from Billings booze instead of strychnine. The herder recovers, but for six months he sweats straight leaf lard, an' his hide's so slick he can hardly keep his garments on.

There's one gentleman from Great Falls in the party who don't deal in livestock, and whose name spells strong of Irish. This gent is drinkin' coca cola, but judgin' by the expression in his eye, Teddy Blue thinks some jobber has slipped something else into his beverage. He gets so lit up one night in the sleeper that he dreams he's a dry goods store and yells fire, which causes a panic and many of the peaceful sleepers leaped from the upper berths. One heavy man—the gent from the Sun River valley—was lucky enough to fall on his head, so he wasn't injured none.

Joe Scanlan, the Lord Northcliffe of Milestown, seems to be actin' as head of the entertainment committee, an' he must have used up a month's supply of gasoline in two days haulin' friends and strangers to

points of interest, like the Powder River special on the Milwaukee tracks.

One of the attractions that the visitors enjoyed at Miles was Huffman's collection of range pictures at the fine art studio he has built to keep 'em in. Huffman was post photographer at Fort Keogh in the old Indian fightin' days of the '70s and is one of the real old timers in this business in Montana, which his pictures show.

Teddy Blue meets an old friend of his, Jack Hawkins, who he hasn't seen for years. Hawkins is an old Texas ranger, an' he drifts into Montana as a buffalo hunter in the late '70s. He's later sheriff of Custer county. Hawkins has seen some real fightin' when Indians an' outlaws was bad in the early days in Texas. If you want to hear a good story some time, ask Jack about scalpin' a Comanche.

Although Miles has always been a cow town, it's earned the right to be called a city, an' they handled the visitors in the old welcome way of the west.



Straddles It Instead of Sittin' Like a Human

The Story of the Cowpuncher

SPEAKIN' of cowpunchers, says Rawhide, I'm glad to see in the last few years that them that know the business have been writin' about 'em. It begin to look like they'd be wiped out without a history. Up to a few years ago there's mighty little known about cows and cow people. It was sure amusin' to read some of them old stories about cowpunchin'. You'd think a puncher growed horns 'n was haired over.

It put me in mind of the eastern girl that asks her mother: "Ma," says she, "do cowboys eat grass?" "No, dear," says the old lady, "they're part human," 'n I don't know but the old gal had 'em sized up right. If they are human, they're a separate species. I'm talkin' about the old-time ones, before the country's strung with wire 'n nesters had grabbed all the water, 'n a cowpuncher's home was big. It wasn't where he took his hat off, but where he spread his blankets. He ranged from Mexico to the Big Bow river of the north, 'n from where the trees get scarce in the east to the old Pacific. He don't need no iron hoss, but covers his country on one that eats grass 'n wears hair. All the tools he needed was saddle, bridle, quirt, hackamore 'n rawhide riatta or seagrass rope; that covered his hoss.

The puncher himself was rigged, startin' at the top, with a good hat—not one of the floppy kind you see in pictures, with the rim turned up in front. The top-cover he wears holds its shape 'n was made to protect his face from the weather; maybe to hold it on, he wore a buckskin string under the chin or back of the head. Round his neck a big silk handkerchief, tied loose 'n in the drag of a trail herd it was drawn over the face to the eyes, hold-up fashion, to protect the nose 'n throat from dust. In old times, a leather blab or mask was used the same. Coat, vest 'n shirt suits his own taste. Maybe he'd wear California pants, light buckskin in color, with large, brown plaid, sometimes foxed, or what you'd call reinforced with buck or antelope skin. Over these came his chaparejos or leggin's. His feet were covered with good high-heeled boots, finished off with steel spurs of Spanish pattern. His weapon's usually a forty-five Colt's six-gun, which is packed in a belt, swingin' a little below his right hip. Sometimes a Winchester in a scabbard, slung to his saddle under his stirrup-leather, either right or left side, but generally left; stock forward, lock down, as his rope hangs at his saddle-fork on the right.

By all I can find out from old, gray headed punchers, the cow business started in California, 'n the Spaniards were the first to burn



A Center-Fire Fashion Leader

marks on their cattle 'n hosses, 'n use the rope. Then men from the States drifted west to Texas, pickin' up the brandin' iron 'n lass-rope, 'n the business spread north, east 'n west, till the spotted long-horns walked in every trail marked out by their brown cousins—the buffalo.

Texas 'n California, bein' the startin' places, made two species of cowpunchers; those west of the Rockies rangin' north, usin' centerfire or single-cinch saddles, with high fork 'n cantle; packed a sixty or sixty-five foot rawhide rope, 'n swung a big loop. These cow people were generally strong on pretty, usin' plenty of hoss jewelry, silver-mounted spurs, bits 'n conchas; instead of a quirt, used a romal, or quirt braided to the end of the reins. Their saddles were full stamped, with from twenty-four to twenty-eight-inch eagle-bill tapaderos. Their chaparejos were made of fur or hair, either bear, angora goat or hair sealskin. These fellows were sure fancy, 'n called themselves buccaroos, coming from the Spanish word, "Vacquero."

The cowpuncher east of the Rockies originated in Texas and ranged north to the Big Bow. He wasn't so much for pretty; his saddle was low horn, rimfire or double-cinch; sometimes "macheer." Their rope was seldom over forty feet, for being a good deal in a brush country, they were forced to swing a small loop. These men generally tied, instead of taking their dallie-welts, or wrapping their rope around the saddle horn. Their chaparejos were made of heavy bullhide, to protect the leg from brush 'n thorns, with hog-snout tapaderos.

Cowpunchers were mighty particular about their rig, 'n in all the camps you'd find a fashion leader. From a cowpuncher's idea, these fellers was sure good to look at, 'n I tell you right now, there ain't no prettier sight for my eyes than one of those good-lookin', long-backed cowpunchers, sittin' up on a high-forked, full-stamped California saddle with a live hoss between his legs.

Of course a good many of these fancy men were more ornamental than useful, but one of the best cow-hands I ever knew belonged to this class. Down on the Gray Bull, he went under the name of Mason, but most punchers called him Pretty Shadow. This sounds like an Injun name, but it ain't. It comes from a habit some punchers has of ridin' along, lookin' at their shadows. Lookin' glasses are scarce in cow outfits, so the only chance for these pretty boys to admire themselves is on bright, sunshiny days. Mason's one of these kind that doesn't get much pleasure out of life in cloudy weather. His hat was the best; his boots was made to order, with extra long heels. He rode a centerfire, full-stamped saddle, with twenty-eight-inch tapaderos; bearskin anceroes, or saddle pockets; his chaparejos were of the same skin. He packed a sixty-five-foot rawhide. His spurs 'n bit were silver inlaid, the last bein' a Spanish spade. But the gaudiest part of

his regalia was his gun. It's a forty-five Colt's, silverplated 'n chased with gold. Her handle is pearl, with a bull's head carved on.

When the sun hits Mason with all this silver on, he blazes up like some big piece of jewelry. You could see him for miles when he's ridin' high country. Barrin' Mexicans, he's the fanciest cow dog I ever see, 'n don't ever think he don't savvy the cow. He knows what she says to her calf. Of course there wasn't many of his stripe. All punchers liked good rigs, but plainer; 'n as most punchers 're fond of gamblin' 'n spend their spare time at stud poker or monte, so they can't tell what kind of a rig they'll be ridin' the next day. I've seen many a good rig lost over a blanket. It depends how lucky the cards fall what kind of a rig a man's ridin'.

I'm talkin' about old times, when cowmen were in their glory. They lived different, talked different 'n had different ways. No matter where you met him, or how he's rigged, if you'd watch him close he'd do something that would tip his hand. I had a little experience back in '83 that'll show what I'm gettin' at.

I was winterin' in Cheyenne. One night a stranger stakes me to



Rim-Fire or Double Cinch Rig

buck the bank. I got off lucky 'n cash in fifteen hundred dollars. Of course I cut the money in two with my friend, but it leaves me with the biggest roll I ever packed. All this wealth makes Cheyenne look small, 'n I begin longin' for bigger camps, so I drift for Chicago. The minute I hit the burg, I shed my cow garments 'n get into white man's harness. A hard hat, boiled shirt, laced shoes—all the gearin' known to civilized man. When I put on all this rig, I sure look human; that is, I think so. But them shorthorns know me, 'n by the way they trim that roll, it looks like somebody's pinned a card on my back with the words "EASY" in big letters. I ain't been there a week till my roll don't need no string around it, 'n I start thinkin' about home. One evenin' I throw in with the friendliest feller I ever met. It was at the bar of the hotel where I'm camped. I don't just remember how we got acquainted, but after about fifteen drinks we start holdin' hands 'n seein' who could buy the most and fastest. I remember him tellin' the barslave not to take my money, cause I'm his friend. Afterwards, I find out the reason for this goodheartedness; he wants it all 'n hates to see me waste it. Finally, he starts to show me the town 'n says it won't cost me a cent. Maybe he did, but I was unconscious, 'n wasn't in shape to remember. Next day, when I come to, my hair's sore 'n I didn't know the days of the week, month or what year it was.

The first thing I do when I open my eyes is to look at the winders. There's no bars on 'em, 'n I feel easier. I'm in a small room with two bunks. The one opposite me holds a feller that's smokin' a cigarette 'n sizin' me up between whiffs while I'm dressin'. I go through myself but I'm too late. Somebody beat me to it. I'm lacin' my shoes 'n thinkin' hard, when the stranger speaks:

"Neighbor, you're a long way from your range."

"You call the turn," says I, "but how did you read my iron?"

"I didn't see a burn on you," says he, "'n from looks, you'll go as a slick-ear. It's your ways, while I'm layin' here, watchin' you get into your garments. Now, humans dress up 'n punchers dress down. When you raised, the first thing you put on is your hat. Another thing that shows you up is you don't shed your shirt when you bed down. So next comes your vest 'n coat, keepin' your hindquarters covered till you slide into your pants, 'n now you're lacin' your shoes. I notice you done all of it without quittin' the blankets like the ground's cold. I don't know what state or territory you hail from, but you've smelt sagebrush 'n drank alkali. I heap savvy you. You've slept a whole lot with nothin' but sky over your head, 'n there's times when that old roof leaks, but judgin' from appearances, you wouldn't mind a little open air right now."

This feller's my kind, 'n he stakes me with enough to get back to the cow country.

Bronc Twisters

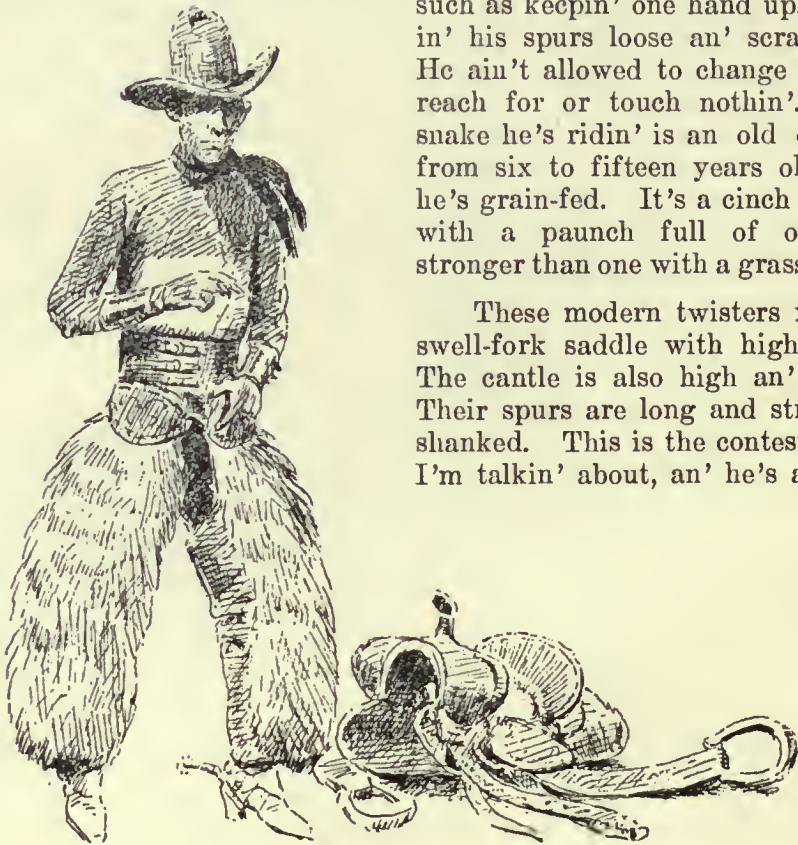
TALKIN' about bronc twisters, says Rawhide, there's some difference between hoss fighters today' an' them I knowed years ago.

I ain't sayin' these up-to-date riders ain't good as they ever was, an' I'd bet there's more of 'em than in the old days. The bronc rider always was and always will be a game glory hunter, gritty as a fish-egg rolled in sand, but the lives they live today an' the rigs they ride are different.

The modern bronc fighter saddles an' steps across the bronc in a narrer chute, or he's got a bunch of hoss handlers earin' the animal down till he saddles an' mounts.

Of course he's got rules to ride under, such as keepin' one hand up, keepin' his spurs loose an' scratchin'. He ain't allowed to change hands, reach for or touch nothin'. The snake he's ridin' is an old outlaw from six to fifteen years old, an' he's grain-fed. It's a cinch a hoss with a paunch full of oats is stronger than one with a grass belly.

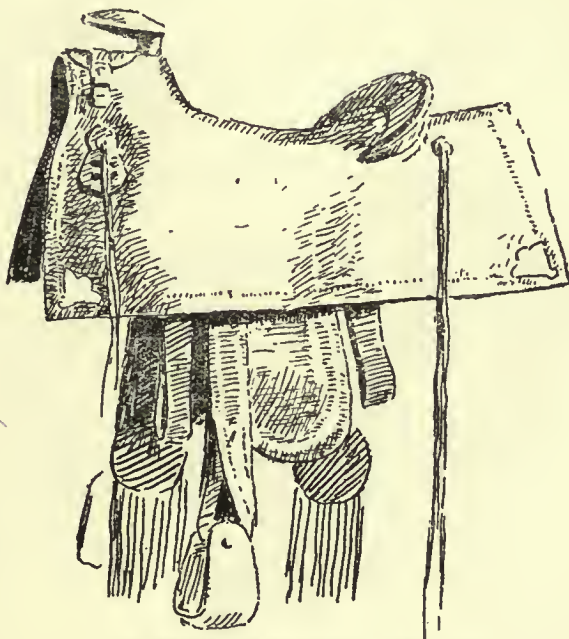
These modern twisters ride a swell-fork saddle with high horn. The cantle is also high an' steep. Their spurs are long and straight-shanked. This is the contest rider I'm talkin' about, an' he's a sure-



A Contest Rider

enough glory rider. When he breaks away from the chute in the middle of a twistin' snake, there's thousands of folks yellin' their heads off, but more'n half of 'em's howlin' for the hoss. There's generally three judges on hosses follerin' him, seein' he don't pull nothin' crooked.

The big half of the folks that take in ridin' contests never rode nothin' but cushions, so if Mister Buster gets unloaded, they say he couldn't ride; if he stays an' scratches his bronc they say the hoss didn't buck. But there's always a few old bowlegs that have went straight up to the end of the bridle reins who heap savvy an' are ready to shake hands with this bronc rider whether he stays or hits the ground. These twisters of today are made of the same leather as the old-time ones. It ain't their fault that the country's fenced an' most of the cows are wearin' bells.



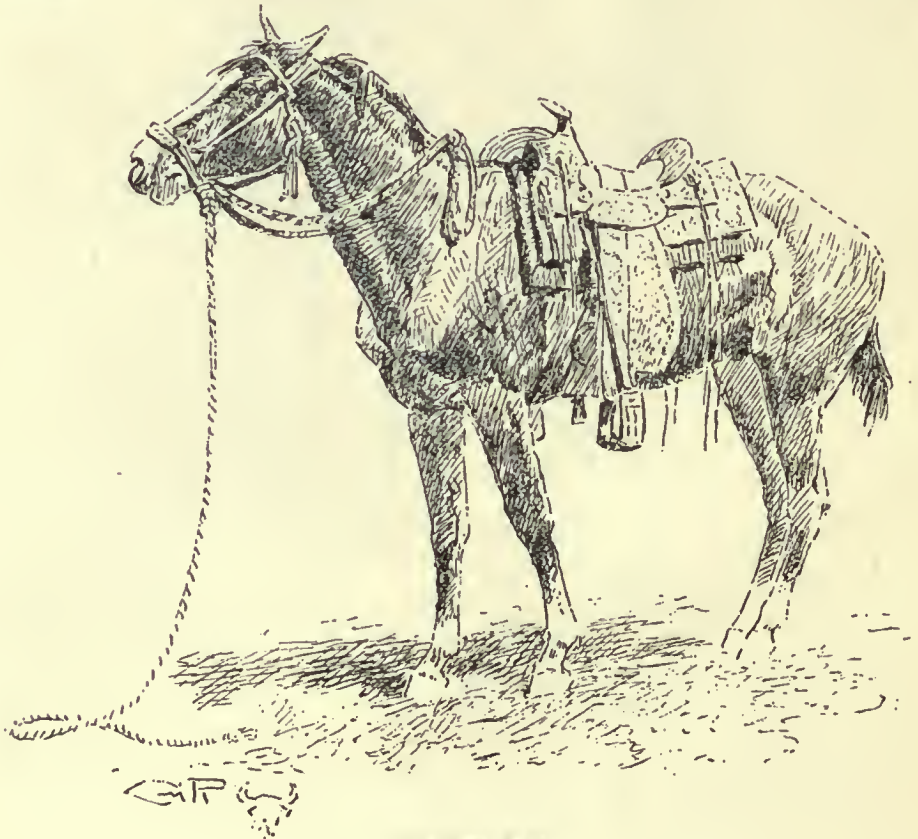
Old Maceer Saddle With Texas Tree

Now the old bronc fighter I knowed lived when there wasn't a wire from the Arctic sea to the Gulf of Mexico, an' that whole stretch was mighty near all his home. This gent lived on either cow or hoss ranges. His saddle was a straight-fork with a cantle that sloped back, an' compared to saddles now, the horn was low. I've seen bronc riders use an old maceer saddle with a Texas tree. It had two cinches an' was called a rim-fire. The horn was low an' flat—so big you couldn't more'n span it with your hand. The maceer, as it was called, was one piece

of leather that fitted over the cantle an' horn, makin' a coverin' for the whole rig. This leather was smooth an' so slick it wasn't easy to stay in.

These old-timers' spurs had crooked shanks that turned down. They all rode an' broke broncs with a hackamore. It wasn't a rope one like they're usin' today, but one made of braided leather an' rawhide. Looped to this was about fifteen or twenty foot of hair rope called a McCarthy. This was wrapped around the lower end of the noseband under the jaws of the hoss, makin' reins an' a tie-rope.

Range hosses them days was wild as buffalo, an' corraling a bunch wasn't always easy. But Mister Bronc Fighter's work really begun after the gate was closed or the bars up, for the first thing was to rope the one he figgered on ridin'. Generally he fore-footed him. This made him fairly safe in front, but a bronc's dangerous at both ends, an' the bronc fighter knows this. He ain't takin' chances, an' after he's got the bronc's front feet snared, he man-handles him till he gets the hackamore on. Then, sometimes usin' a blind, he saddles him an' steps across.



An Old-Time Bronc

Mebbe this bronc's a snake, an' mebbe he's easy, but either way there ain't nobody watchin' but the other broncs. If he rides him outside the corral he might buck through a bunch of range cows, but neither cows nor broncs seem to appreciate good ridin', so there's nobody boostin' for this twister. The old bronc riders didn't only ride a bronc, but they worked him. They'd take a string of rough ones to a roundup an' ride circle, cut cattle or rope off of him.

All these things happended in the good old days long ago, when men like Con Price, Charlie Brewster, Windy Bill Davis, Kid Price, Little Jack Davis, Happy Jack Anderson, Jim Dency, Ed Rhodes, Joe Doles, Charlie Parks, Johnny Van, Bill Shaules and Colonel Johnson were needed on all the cow ranges. These men were all well known when Montana was a cow country. They were all riders that rode smooth fork.

Some of these old riders is friends of mine. Charlie Brewster's one of the best that ever stepped across a hoss, an' many a bad one he's tamed. One time Charlie's ridin' on a roundup. Of course his string's all broncs, an' one mornin' he'll never forget he's got a snakey roan under him an' starts out on circle with six other punchers in the Deep creek country. This stream in places is walled in with rimrock cliffs that run up twenty to sixty feet above the bottom.

They're ridin' along mebbe twenty yards from the edge of one of these rims when Charlie drops his hackamore reins an' builds a cigarette. Most men ridin' a hoss like this roan would be careful, but it's different with Charlie. He don't fear no hoss on earth, an' he ain't askin' no bronc whether he objects to smokin'. While he's rollin' his smoke the roan drops his ear down an' shows the white of his eyes, so it's easy to guess his feelin's is hurt. Charlie strikes a match, but he never lights his cigarette. While he's cuppin' his hands over the match, lettin' the sulphur burn off, somethin'—mebbe the brimfire sniff he gets—wakes the hell in the roan. He kicks the lid off, hides his head an' starts for the rimrock.

Charlie has plenty of time to quit, but does he step off? Don't ever think it. He sinks the steel into the roan's right shoulder and throws his weight on the left rein, but he don't turn him. The roan's goin' high an' scary when he hits the edge of the cliff an' goes over.

There's a feller called Oregon John with Brewster when he takes that long jump. Oregon tells me that when he sees Charlie sink into the landscape he's afraid to look over, but he'd have bet what he's got an' all he could beg, borrow or steal that at the bottom he'll find a scramble of man an' hoss meat.

None of the bunch says nothin', but ridin' up easy, like they're



The Bronc's Lodged in the Top of a Cottonwood

goin' to a funeral, they peek over, an' what do you think they see? There, mebbe ten feet below the rimrock, sits Charlie in the middle of the roan. The bronc's lookin' healthy, but uncomfortable. He's lodged in the top of a big cottonwood. Charlie's still holdin' his cigarette, an' when the boys show up he hollers: "Anybody got a match? The one I struck blowed out."

Oregon says that bronc's sure helpless, for he's wedged in the old tree so he can't more than move an ear. One of the boys goes to camp an' brings an axe, an' they have to fall the tree to get the roan out.

This story may sound fishy to some folks, but it's true. Charlie Brewster's still in Montana, an' I'll bet wherever he is, he's still with hosses. He was a real bronc rider, an' all old-time cow men knew him.

I remember another old-time bronc fighter that could ride any hoss livin' an' work with him. His name's Con Price, an' right now he's with a cow outfit in California. There's a story about him that a lot of old cow men will remember an' laugh about.

Con's out one time with Ed Rosser, huntin' hosses. They're riding the high country, when Rosser pulls up his hoss an' points to a nester's cabin in a little valley below. "There's women in that shack," says he.

"What makes you think so," asks Con.

"I see washin' on the line there a few days ago," says Rosser, "an' all the he-folks we know, when they do any washin', use the creek an' hang their clothes on the willers. But to make my belief a cinch bet, there's garments on that line that ain't worn by no he-people."

"Well, I guess you're right," Con says. "I remember a few weeks ago that nester told me he had a wife an' daughter comin' out from the states."

"Wonder what the gal looks like," says Rosser.

"She's a good looker, judgin' from the photograph the old man shows me," Con answers.

In the days when this happens, women're scarce, an' the few cowpunchers an' old mountain men that lived in this womanless land sure liked to see a white woman an' hear her voice. So Con an' Rosser start figgerin' on some kind of an excuse to visit this ranch. They can't ask for a drink of water, 'cause the hills are full of springs an' they have to cross the creek to get to the cabin.

They're both studyin' when Con gets a plumb new one. The hoss he's ridin's a snuffy old boy. If you thumb him or hang the steel in his shoulder he'll go high. Con's idea is to start him an' then fall off.

They're mebbe fifty yards from the house when Con throws one

of his hooks in the shoulder of the old hoss, hopin' somebody's lookin' from behind a curtain to see the fall he gets. Once is enough. This animal, like many of his kind, considers this an insult, an' sinkin' his head, he starts for the clouds.

About the third jump Con loosens. The hoss, Con tells me later, makes the play realistic. "When he feels me goin'," he says, "he weaves off to one side an' I hit the ground a lot harder than I expected."

Con lays like he's hurt bad. Rosser quits his hoss an' runs to his friend, an' he's got all he can do to get him on his feet.

"You're a sure enough actor," Rosser whispers to Con. "You're as heavy as a dead bear," he says, as he part leads an' part packs him up the hill to the house. "If it was another twenty feet I'd have to cut hand-holds in you."



About the Third Jump Con Loosens

It's a cinch that anybody not on to the play would bet Con's got all his legs broke. A sweat's broke out all over Rosser when he gently lays Con on the step an' knocks at the door.

Con lays there, listenin' for footsteps of the ladies, but they don't come. There's no sign of life, an' the only livin' thing in sight is two hosses—Con's and Rosser's. They're driftin' mighty rapidly homeward. The one Con rode, with the reins still over his neck, is headed like he knows where he's goin'. Rosser's is follerin' close with his head to one side, so he don't step on the reins. Lookin' at these hosses, an' nobody comin, to the door makes Con recover mighty fast, an' his groans turns to cussin'.

In them days, when the country was wide open an' lawless, the houses had no keys, so after knockin' a few more times, they both walk in. Rosser's right; it's a woman's camp. There's curtains on the winders and flowers growin' in a tomato can that's settin' on a table where the sun hits them. From the sign, they read there's two ladies camped here an' they ain't to home. They might have got sympathy from these ladies, but they don't get none from one another. This play of their turns into a hoss joke, an' of course nobody laughs but the hosses.

It's a ten-mile ride to the ranch, an' it means twice that a-foot to these spur-heeled gents, so after prospectin', they locate some bacon, real light bread an' a dried apple pie. Finishin' their feed they wash the dishes an' start on their sorrowful journey.

Con laughs about it now, but Rosser says he never even smiled the day he walked. Rosser says Con had no license to kick. He'd fought hosses all his life and win most of the fights. That day he throws the fight to the hoss. The hoss, bein' crooked as Con, double-crossed him.



Johnny Reforms Landusky

OVER in Lewistown there's a gent livin' that's one of the leadin' citizens. I ain't tippin' his hand by mentionin' no names, but if I'd ever told what I know about him he'd be makin' hair bridles today, said Rawhide. We'll call him Johnny an' let it go at that.

A hoss-wrangler by perfession, he has a natural gift for cookin' an' a keen affection for a Dutch oven, but in them crude days his qualities as a chef ain't appreciated by his rough, uncouth comrades in Yogo gulch, where when I first knowed him he's leadin' a happy care-free life, watchin' the miners strugglin' to wrest gold from the unyieldin' rocks. I remember one finicky proposition in the camp that objects to Johnny's pet rats livin' in the flour sack.

Johnny's got such a good opinion of his own cookin' he hangs up a standin' bet that he can outcook any man in Montana, barrin' Dirty Mike, a chef of the Sour Dough school, who's got a sensitive disposition and is impulsive with a gun. One record Johnny points to is a vinegar pie he bakes at Yogo. It seems that while the pie's in the oven, a prospector, Bedrock Jim, with whom he's bachin', puts some giant powder in with the pie to thaw it out. The powder, likely becomin' jealous of the pie, cuts loose and scatters the cabin for miles up and down the gulch. They find one stove lid on Lost Fork, and the pan the pie's in is missin', but there where the cabin once stood is Vinegar, himself, without even a scar.

Bein' discouraged in his light cookin', an' never workin' as long as he can get anything else to do, Johnny begins figgerin' out a soft way of makin' a livin'. His pious disposition inclines him toward missionary work, finally, and he picks out the Little Rockies as the most promisin' district to begin reformin'. He starts a revival there that's a cross between Mormonism an' a Sioux ghost dance, but this brand's too tough for even the citizens of this section.

In them days Landusky is the principal town in the Little Rockies, an' it's a sociable camp, life there bein' far from monotonous. The leadin' industries is saloons an' gamblin' houses, with a fair sprinklin' of dance halls. For noise an' smoke there wasn't nothin' ever seen like it before the big fight in Europe starts. Little lead's wasted, as the shootin's remarkably accurate an' almost anybody serves as a target.

The mayor, Jew Jake, has lost one hind leg in a argument with a sheriff, and he uses a Winchester for a crutch. Funerals in Landusky is held at night under a white flag, so that business ain't interrupted in the daytime.

It's toward this peaceful village that Johnny rides one day on a hoss that he's borrowed from a rancher who isn't in when he calls. Johnny don't know he's near a town till he hears it a few miles away. Spurrin' his hoss along he suddenly busts into sight of the place, which reminds him of a chromo of Gettysburg he once seen. But Johnny's game, an' mutterin' somethin' that might have been a short prayer, he passes through the firin' line, bein' shy only his hat and a cigarette he was smokin' when he arrives.

Either the excitement or somethin' he takes for it puts him into a kind of trance for a few days, an' when he comes to he's laid out on a poker table with his head hangin off. He takes readily to the life of the place, an' picks as his partner Dum Dum Bill, who's got the reputation of bein' a quiet, scholarly man with a lovable character, always



Reminds Him of a Chromo of Gettysburg

shootin' to kill to save unnecessary pain an' sufferin'. Dum Dum's made a hobby of changin' brands on hosses, an' he's done much to discourage gamblin' by makin' it hard, if not impossible, for other players in a game he's sittin' in to win. His end's a sad one. Bein' caught by a war party of Missourians who's had bad luck with their hoss herds, he's strung up to a corral crossbar. As he hasn't got enough weight below his head to break his neck, his end's hastened by tuckin' an anvil into the seat of his pants.



Dum Dum Bill

Johnny, after throwin' in with Dum Dum Bill, does a lot of good as a reformer. It's due to him that the custom of shootin' at unarmed strangers is barred, an' a bounty—a little less than they paid for a wolf—is placed on a number of citizens. As he's in with the reformers, Johnny's name ain't on this list. The bounty claimer has to show both ears of his victims but scalpin' is frowned on as uncivilized.

Johnny's in much demand for preachin' funeral sermons, but sometimes he ain't got much tact. At one buryin' where the deceased's been killed in a gun battle, Johnny takes as his text, "When Fools Go Forth to Fight." The relatives of the corpse get hostile and Johnny has to spend the next three weeks in a stockade he's built around his house for an emergency like this. After a while he's elected mayor, but as he ain't over-good with a forty-five, he don't take the job.

Some forms of killin' was barred in Landusky, an' when Johnny makes a puddin' for a Thanksgivin' dinner that kills three guests and disables several more, he has to make a quick get-away. He beats a posse to the railroad by a dozen jumps and swings under the rods of a freight train that's passin'.

I never took no stock in the rumors that was scattered about Johnny afterward joinin' the Curry gang. The Kid once tells me he'd give five hundred dollars for the name of the man that starts this libel against his hold-up outfit.

The Horse

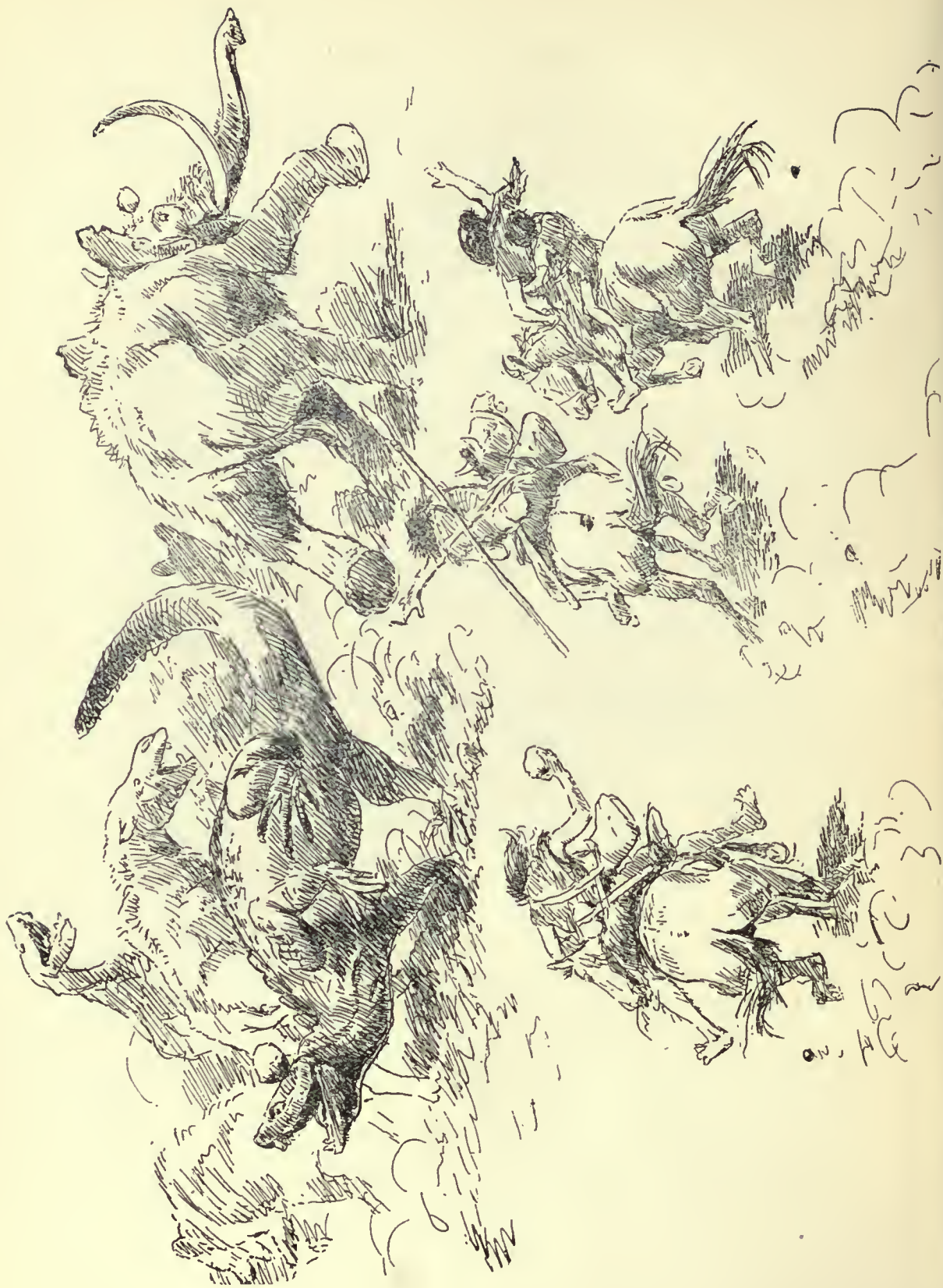
I READ in the papers a while back where there's seventy thousand wild hosses on the ranges of Montana, says Rawhide. They say these animals are a menace to stockmen. Mebbe this is right, but I think it would bother this old state to round up that many tame ones.

A few years ago a hoss was considered kind of handy to have around. He was needed everywhere and used all ways. Up hill or down, mud or dust, he worked. They made no good roads for him. There's not a city in mighty near the whole world he didn't help build. There's a few ice-bound countries where the hoss don't live, and in these same lands it ain't easy for humans to live.

This last war was a machine-made hell, but I doubt if it could have been win without hosses, an' the same kind that some folks say is a menace to men now. There was thousands of branded hosses died with our fighters on the other side. The range hoss was God-made, an' like all of his makin', the best. These hosses cost the man that branded an' claimed 'em nothing. They lived on the grass an' water the Almighty gave 'em.

Many thousand years ago, when folks was all a-foot, lizards, horned toads an' bullfrogs measured from thirty to a hundred feet in length an' stood from forty to sixty hands. Besides these there was tigers and laffin' hyenas that would eat an elephant for breakfast. From what I've read, in the days I'm talkin' about, man wasn't much, an' he sure lived simple. A good, stout cave was his home. He fed mostly on bugs an' snails, an' a grasshopper that happened to 'light anywhere near him or his family was out of luck. Sometimes some real game gent would slip out with his stone tomahawk an' bring back a skunk or two. Then's when they pulled a regular feed, but there wasn't no set date for these feasts, an' they mostly came far apart. With a hyena that weighed seven ton a-laffin' around the door, man loved his home an' Maw never worried about where Paw was.

But one day one of these old home-lovers was sunnin' himself an' layin' for a grasshopper, when he looks down from his ledge to the valley below where all these animals is busy eatin' one another, an' notices one species that don't take no part in this feast, but can out-run an' out-dodge all others. This cave man is progressive an' has learned to think. He sees this animal is small compared to the rest, an' ain't got no horns, tusks or claws, eatin' nothin' but grass. There's other grass-eaters, but they all wear horns that don't look good to Mister Cave Man.



The Family Starts Out Mounted

He remembers when his Maw used to pack him on her back. Bein' a lazy gent he's lookin' for somethin' easy, an' he figgers that if he could get this hornless animal under him, he could ride once more like he did in his childhood. Right then is when man starts thinkin' of somethin' besides eatin'.

Not far from the cave there's a trail where herds of hosses come to water, so one day Mister Man climbs into a tree that hangs over the trail, an' with a grapevine loop he snares one of these animals. But he finds out that though this beast ain't got horns or claws, he's mighty handy with all four feet, and when Paw sneaks home that evenin' he's got hoof marks all over him an' he ain't had a ride yet. Sore as he is, he goes back next day an' tries again. About the sixth day this poor hoss is so starved that Mister Man gets up to him, an' tyin' a strip of bark to his under jaw an' another around his belly, he steps across the hoss. The bronc sinks his head an' goes in the air. Mister Man stays, but he breaks all the rules in a ridin' contest of today. He don't pull leather, but tears all the mane out from ears to withers, an' that bark hand-hold of his is all that keeps the hoss from unloadin' him. A few days later his bronc is plumb gentle. Paw mounts, goes out an' with a stone-headed spear kills a wild cow, an' he comes back to the cave with the hide an' more meat than the folks ever seen before. The family is so pleased with this useful pet that they bring him in the cave nights, an' all get busy pullin' grass for him.

Mister Man finds that with four legs under him instead of two, he can ride rings around them big lizards, an' there ain't any of them claw-wearin', tusk-bearin' critters can overtake him. The old gent snares more hosses, an' it ain't long till the whole family's hoss-back. When this bunch starts out, armed an' mounted, they sure bring home the bacon. Meat—I'd tell a man. This cave looks an' smells like a packin' plant before the pure food law. It's now mankind sheds the leaf garments of old Grandad Adam an' starts wearin' new clothes.

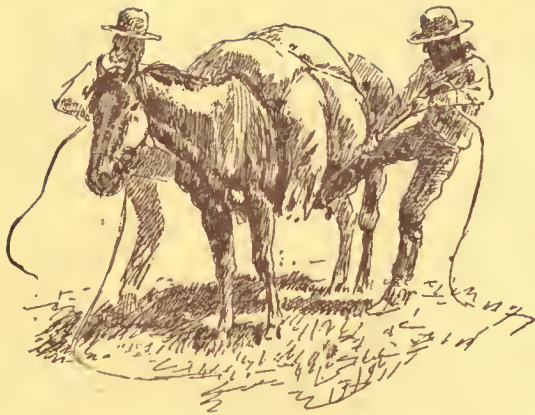
Paw's wearin' a head-an'-tail cowskin; the boys has a yearlin' robe apiece. Maw an' the girls wouldn't be in style at all these days. Mebbe it's modesty—it might be the chill in the weather—but they're sure covered from ears to heels in deer an' elk skins, an' from that day to just lately man never knowed whether his sweetheart was knock-kneed or bow-legged.

Since that old bug-eater snared that first cayuse, his descendents have been climbin', an' the hoss has been with 'em. It was this animal that took 'em from a cave. For thousands of years the hoss an' his long-eared cousins furnished all transportation on land for man an' broke all the ground for their farmin'. He has helped build every railroad in the world. Even now he builds the roads for the automo-

bile that has made him nearly useless, an' I'm here to tell these machine-lovers that it will take a million years for the gas wagon to catch up with the hoss in what he's done for man. Today some of these auto drivers want to kill him off to make fertilizer out of his body. Mebbe I'm sentimental, but I think it's a damned hard finish for one that has been as good a friend to man as the hoss.



Mighty Handy With All Four Feet



Adios



