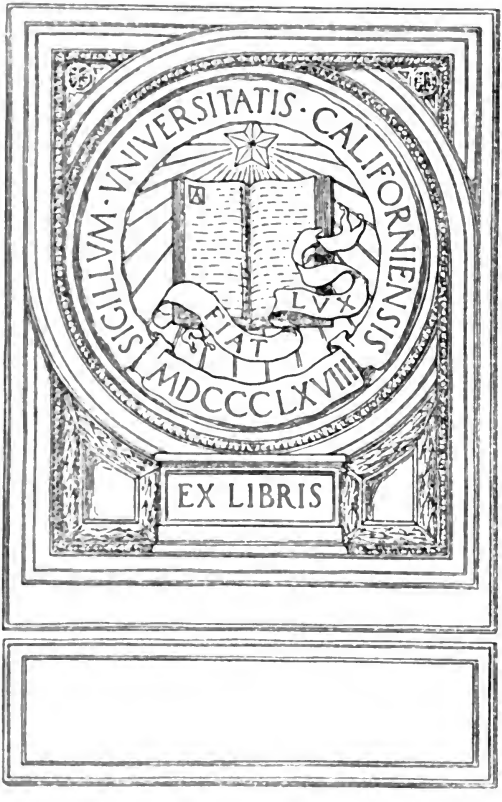
Dangers of the Trail

CHARLES E. YOUNG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DANGERS OF THE TRAIL—1865

DANGERS OF THE TRAIL

IN 1865

A Narrative of Actual Events

By CHARLES E. YOUNG

GENEVA, N. Y.
1912

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PREFACE

I present this narrative of actual events on a trip across the plains to Denver, Colorado, in 1865 and of life in the Far West in the later sixties.

An interesting and valuable feature is a map of the country, made in 1865, by Henry Bowles of Boston, showing the old Platte River and Smoky Hill Trails of that day before there was a railroad west of the Missouri River.

Everything is told in a plain but truthful manner, and this little volume is submitted to the reader for approval or criticism.

CHAS. E. YOUNG

July, 1912

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CHAPTER I

"YOUNG MAN, GO WEST"

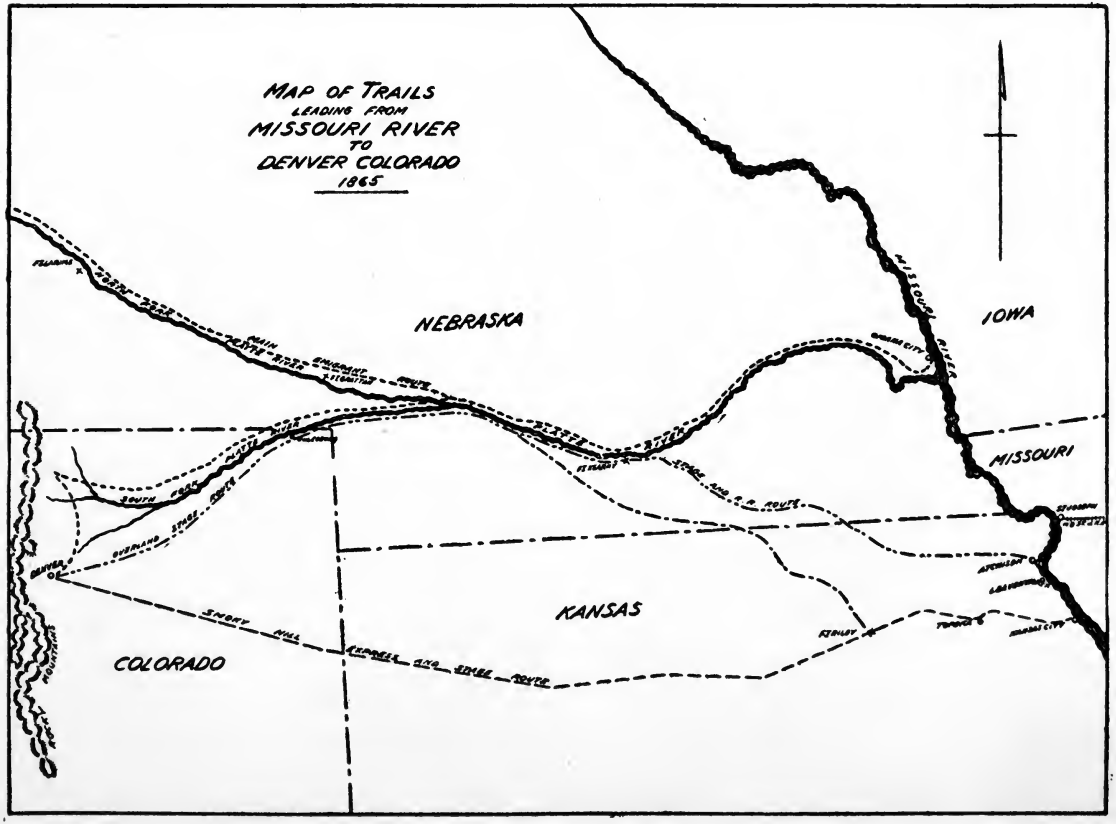
EARLY in 1859 gold was discovered in Colorado, and Horace Greeley, the well known writer and a power throughout the country both before and during the Civil War, made, in the interest of the *New York Tribune*, of which he was editor, an overland trip to Denver by the first stage line run in that day. He started from Leavenworth, Kansas, and with the exception of Mr. Richardson, of the *Boston Journal*, was the only passenger in the coach. The trip was not all that could be desired, for they met with numerous hardships and many narrow escapes, as did hundreds of others who had preceded them over that dangerous trail, many never reaching their destination—having met death at the hands of the cruel Indians of the plains.

During his stay in Denver Mr. Greeley wrote a number of letters to the *New York Tribune*, confirming the finding of gold in the territory and advising immigration. The people in the East were skeptical in regard to its discovery and awaited a written statement from him to this effect.

At the close of the war Mr. Greeley's advice to young men, through the columns of his paper, was to go West and grow up with the country, and it became a byword throughout the State of New York and the Nation, "Young man, go West and grow up with the country."

Could Mr. Greeley have foreseen the number of young lives that were to be sacrificed through his advice, I think he would have hesitated before giving it; yet, it was the most valued utterance of any public man of that day for the settlement of the then Far West.

After reading a number of these letters in the *New York Tribune*, I became very enthusiastic over the opportunities that the West offered for the young man. There was also a loyal friend of mine who became as enthusias-


MAP OF TRAILS
LEADING FROM
MISSOURI RIVER
TO
DENVER COLORADO
1865
NEBRASKA
IOWA
MISSOURI
KANSAS
COLORADO
DENVER
OMAHA CITY
MAIN ROUTE
EMIGRANT ROUTE
SOUTH PLATTE ROUTE
OVERLAND STAGE ROUTE
SMOKY HILL
REPUBLICAN
STAGE ROUTE
ATCHISON
LEAVENWORTH
KANSAS CITY

tic over it as myself. Thus, while we were still so young as to be called boys, we made up our minds to follow Mr. Greeley's advice, and "Go West and grow up with the country."

In making our purchases for the trip we were obliged to make our plans known to an acquaintance, who at once expressed a desire to accompany us. After consultation, we consented and at the appointed time, the fore part of July, 1865, just at the close of the Civil War, we boarded a New York Central train at the depot in Geneva, N. Y., with no thought of the hardships and dangers we would be called upon to meet.

The first night found us at the Falls of Niagara—the most stupendous production of nature that the country was known to possess at that time. Our time was divided between the American and Canadian sides, viewing the grand spectacle at all hours, from the rising to the setting of the sun; and, awed by the marvelous masterpiece of grandeur, we were held as if fascinated by its beauty, until we were forced to leave for the want of food and

to replenish our commissary. When we boarded the cars to be whirled through the then wilds of Lower Canada, we were liberally supplied with the best the country produced.

Upon the fifth day we rolled into Chicago, the cosmopolitan city of the West. Two days later we reached Quincy, Ill., where we made connection with the old Hannibal & St. Joe Railroad which was to take us through Missouri to Atchison, Kansas. Missouri, after the war, was not an ideal state for a law abiding citizen, much less for inexperienced youths of our age, and we quickly realized that fact. Many stations had their quota of what was termed the Missouri bushwhacker, or, more plainly speaking, outlaws, who, during the war and for some time after, pillaged the state and surrounding country, leaving in their wake death and destruction. They had belonged to neither side at war, but were a set of villians banded together to plunder, burn, ravage and murder young and old alike; as wicked a set of villians as the world has ever known. At many stations they would nearly fill the car, making it very unpleasant for the

passengers. Their language and insults caused every one to be guarded in conversation. The condition of the road, however, often gave us relief, as we were obliged to alight and walk, at times, when arriving at a point where ties or rails had to be replaced. Its entire length showed the carnage and destruction of war, making travel slow and dangerous as well as uncomfortable. On reaching the state of bleeding Kansas and the then village of Atchison we were about used up. We at once called at the Ben Holliday Stage Office and inquired the price of a ticket to Denver, but finding it to be beyond our means, we decided to go by ox conveyance.

COMMANCHE BILL

We were not long in finding what, in those days, was called a tavern, located in the outskirts of the town. Having been chosen spokesman, I stepped up to the rough board counter and registered. We were soon confronted by the toughest individual we had yet seen. I pleasantly bade him good morning but received no immediate recognition,

save a wild stare from two horrible, bloodshot eyes. I quickly came to the conclusion that we were up against the real Western article, nor was I mistaken. He didn't keep up waiting long, for he soon roared out an oath and wanted to know where we were from. After telling him as near as I possibly could, under the circumstances, he again became silent. His look and brace of revolvers were not reassuring, to say the least. He soon came out of his trance and did not keep us long in suspense, for his next act was to pull out both of his life-takers, and, not in very choice language, introduce himself as Commanche Bill from Arkansas, emphasizing the Arkansas by letting the contents of both of his instruments of death pierce the ceiling of his story and a half shack. I have wondered many times since that I am alive. We had been told by a fellow passenger that Atchison was a little short of Hades, and we were fast realizing that our informer was not far out of the way; yet, it was a haven in comparison to other places at which we were yet to arrive. Commanche William, or whatever his right name might

have been, was a different person after his forceful introduction.

He began to question me. He asked me if we had any money.

"Yes."

"Any friends?"

"Certainly."

"Well, then you had better get straight back to them, for if you remain in these parts long, they will be unable to recognize you. Where are you fellows headed for, anyway?"

"Denver, Colorado."

"By stage?"

"No, sir. By ox or mule conveyance."

"You are too light weight. No freighter will hire you."

"They will or we'll walk."

"You will not walk far for the Indians along the Platte are ugly. By the way, do you pards ever take anything?"

Not wishing to offend such a character, I gave my companions the wink and we followed him into the bar-room with the full determination of making a friend of him. After all had done the sociable act—of course gentlemen

only drink for sociability sake—I took him to one side purposely to draw him into a little private chat, and it was not long before his self-conceit had the better of him. He ordered grub—as all meals were called in the West in those days—for four, stating he was in need of a bite himself. Before the meal had been finished, I became convinced that the old fellow had a tender spot in his makeup, like all tough outlaws, and, if one had tact enough to discover it, he might have great influence over him; otherwise, we would be obliged to sleep with both eyes open and each with his right hand on the butt of his revolver.

THE AMERICAN INDIAN

The following day was passed in taking in the town and Indian Reservation, which was but a short distance from the place. There we came, for the first time, face to face with the American Indian, the sole owner of this vast and fertile continent before the paleface landed to dispute his right of ownership. Foot by foot they had been driven from East, North and South, until at that time they were

nearly all west of the great Missouri River, or River of Mud, as the Indians called it. At the suggestion of our landlord, we took with us an interpreter, a few trinkets, and something to moisten the old chief's lips. Upon our arrival we were duly presented to the chief, who invited us to sit on the ground upon fur robes made from the pelts of different animals, including the antelope and the buffalo, or American bison, the monarch of the plains, and each one of us in turn took a pull at the pipe of peace. We then made a tour of their lodges. When we returned, the chief called his squaws to whom we presented our gifts, which pleased them greatly. To the old chief I handed a bottle of Atchison's best. As he grasped it, a smile stole over his ugly face, and with a healthy grunt and a broad grin, he handed me back the empty bottle. Indians love liquor better than they do their squaws. In return he gave me a buffalo robe which later became of great service. After taking another pull at the pipe of peace, we thanked him and took our departure, having no desire to be

present when Atchison's invigorator commenced to invigorate his Indian brain.

The impression made by that visit to a supposedly friendly tribe, who at that time had a peace treaty with the government, was not one of confidence. The noble red men, as they were called by the Eastern philanthropist, were as treacherous to the whites as an ocean squall to the navigator. No pen or picture has or can fully describe the cruelty of their nature.

It was dusk when we reached our tavern, and we found it filled with a lawless band of degenerates, as repulsive as any that ever invested Western plains or canyons of the Rockies. We were at once surrounded and by a display of their shooting irons, forced to join in their beastly carnival. It was not for long, however, for a sign from the landlord brought me to his side. He whispered, "When I let my guns loose you fellows pike for the loft." There were no stairs. No sooner had he pulled his life-takers than all the others followed his example. Bullets flew in every direction. Clouds of smoke filled the room,

but we had ducked and scaled the ladder to the loft and safety. Sleep was out of the question until the early hours of the morning, for the night was made hideous by blasphemous language, howls of pain and the ring of revolvers. The first call for grub found us ready and much in need of a nerve quieter, which the old sinner laughingly supplied; but no word from him of the night's bloody work. Taking me to one side, he said, "Take no offence, but repeat nothing you hear or see in these parts, and strictly mind your own business and a fellow like you will get into no trouble." I thanked him and followed his advice to the letter during my entire Western life.

THE FIRST CAMP

After that night's experience, we decided to pay our bill and become acclimated to camp life. We had taken with us a tent, blankets and three toy pistols, the latter entirely useless in that country, which proved how ignorant we were of Western ways. We were not long in finding a suitable camping spot a mile from

the town and the same distance from the many corrals of the great Western freighters and pilgrims, as the immigrants were called. For miles we could see those immense, white covered prairie schooners in corral formation. Hundreds of oxen and mules were quietly grazing under the watchful eyes of their herders in saddle. It was certainly a novel sight to the tenderfoot.

We soon had our tent up and leaving one of our number in charge the other two went to town for the necessary camp utensils and grub. Immediately on our return supper was prepared and the novelty enjoyed. After a three days' rest I started out to make the rounds of the corrals in search of a driver's berth. All freighters had a wagon boss and an assistant who rightfully had the reputation of being tyrants when on the trail, using tact and discretion when in camp. A revolver settled all disputes. On approaching them they treated me as well as their rough natures would permit; but I did not take kindly to any of them. They all told me that I was undersized, and too young to stand the dangers and hardships

of a trip. I returned to camp much disappointed but not discouraged.

The following morning we proceeded to the large warehouses on the river front, where all Western freighters were to be found. In those days all emigrants and oxen and mule trains with freight going to the far Western Territories would start from either Council Bluffs, Iowa, Leavenworth, Kansas, Atchison or St. Joe, Missouri; Atchison being the nearest point, a large majority embarked from there. The freight was brought up the Missouri River in flat-bottom steam-boats, propelled by a large wheel at the stern, and unloaded on the bank of the river. The perishable goods were placed in the large warehouses but the unperishable were covered with tarpaulin and left where unloaded. They were then transferred to large white covered prairie schooners and shipped to their different points of destination in trains of from twenty-five to one hundred wagons. The rate for freighting depended on the condition of the Indians and ran from ten

cents per pound up to enormous charges in some cases.

SECURING PASSAGE

After making application to several of the freighters and receiving the same reply as from the wagon bosses, we went a short distance down the river to the last of the warehouses. On our approach we discovered a genuine bullwhacker—as all ox drivers were called in that day—in conversation with a short, stout-built fellow with red hair and whiskers to match. The moment he became disengaged I inquired if he was a freighter. He said that he was and that he wanted more men. His name was Whitehead, just the opposite to the color of his hair, and as I stepped up to him I wondered what kind of a disposition the combination made—whitehead, redhead. I at once made application for a position for the three of us. In rather a disagreeable voice, he asked me if I could drive. I replied that I could.

"Can you handle a gun and revolver?"

"Certainly."

"How many trips have you made?"

"None."

"Then how the devil do you know you can drive?"

"For the simple reason I am more than anxious to learn, and so are my friends." Then I made a clean breast of the position we were in and urged him to give us a chance.

"Well," he said, "You seem to be a determined little cuss; are the rest of the same timber?"

I told him they were of the same wood but not of the same tree.

After thinking the matter over, he said, "I'll tell you what I will do. I will hire the big fellow for driver at one hundred and twenty-five dollars per month, and the little fellow for night herder at one hundred dollars a month, and yourself for cook for one mess of twenty-five men and for driver in case of sickness or death, at one hundred and twenty-five dollars a month."

We then gave him our names, and, in return, he gave us a note to Mr. Perry, his wagon boss. We at once started for his corral,

two miles distant, where we found the gentleman. He asked where our traps were. We told him, and also assured him that we would report for duty the following morning.

When we reached our camp we were completely tired out, but passed the remainder of the day in celebrating our success, and feeling assured that if we escaped the scalping knife of the Indians, we would reach Denver in due time, and, when paid off have a nice sum in dollars.

The following morning we had an early breakfast, broke camp, and reported at the corral where each was presented with two revolvers and a repeating carbine. I was then taken over to the mess wagon which was liberally supplied with bacon (in the rough), flour, beans, cargum (or sour molasses), coffee, salt, pepper, baking-powder and dried apples; the latter we were allowed three times a week for dessert. There was also a skillet for baking bread, which resembled a covered spider without a handle.

When the assistant cook, with whom I was favored, had started the fire and sufficient

coals had accumulated, he would rake them out and place the skillet on them. As soon as the dough was prepared, a chunk was cut off and put in the skillet, the lid placed and covered with coals; in fifteen minutes we would have as nice a looking loaf of bread as one could wish to see, browned to a tempting color. When eaten warm, it was very palatable, but when cold, only bullwhackers could digest it. An old-fashioned iron kettle in which to stew the beans and boil the dried apples, or vice versa, coffee pots, frying pans, tin plates, cups, iron knives and forks, spoons and a combination dish and bread-pan made up the remainder of the cooking and eating utensils.

EXPERIENCES AMONG THE BUSHWHACKERS

It seemed that my assistant was exempt from bringing water, which often had to be carried in kegs for two miles, so he fried the meat and washed the dishes. I soon caught on to the cooking, and doing my best to please everyone, soon became aware of the fact that I had many friends among

the toughest individuals on earth, the professional bullwhackers, who, according to their own minds, were very important personages. Their good qualities were few, and consisted of being a sure shot, and expert at lariat and whip-throwing. They would bet a tenderfoot a small sum that they could at a distance of twelve feet, abstract a small piece from his trousers without disturbing the flesh. They could do this trick nine times out of ten. The whips consisted of a hickory stalk two feet long, a lash twelve feet in length with buck or antelope skin snapper nine inches in length. The stalk was held in the left hand, the lash coiled with the right hand and index finger of the left. It was then whirled several times around the head, letting it shoot straight out and bringing it back with a quick jerk. It would strike wherever aimed, raising a deadhead ox nearly off its hind quarters and cutting through the hide and into the flesh. When thrown into space, it would make a report nearly as loud as a revolver. A lariat is a fifty foot line with a running noose

at one end and made from the hide of various animals. It is coiled up and carried on the pommel of the saddle. When used for capturing animals or large game, it is whirled several times around the head when the horse is on a dead run and fired at the head of the victim. A professional can place the loop nearly every time.

During the third day of corral life, the steers arrived, and the hard work, mixed with much fun, commenced. A corral is about the shape of an egg, closed by the wagons at one end, and left open to admit the cattle at the other, then closed by chains.

MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION

Our wheelers and leaders were docile, old freighters, the others were long-horned, wild Texas steers. All of the freighters had their oxen branded for identification, using the first letter of his last name for the purpose. The brand was made from iron and was about four inches in height, attached to a rod three feet in length. A rope was placed over the horns of the animal and his head

was drawn tight to the hub of a heavy laden prairie schooner. A bullwhacker, tightly grasping the tail of the beast, would twist him to attention. The man with the branding implement heated to a white heat would quickly jab the ox on the hind quarter, burning through hair and hide and into the flesh. Then, after applying a solution of salt and water, he was left to recover as best he could. The brand would remain in evidence more than a year unless the steer was captured by cattle thieves, who possessed a secret for growing the hair again in six months. When the branding was completed, each man was given twelve steers to break to yoke, and it was three long weeks before we were in shape to proceed on our long Western tramp. The cattle were driven in each morning at break of day, the same time as when on trail. Each man with a yoke on his left shoulder and a bow in his right hand would go groping about in almost total darkness to select his twelve steers. When they were all found he would yoke them and hitch them to the wagons; the wheelers

to the tongue, the leaders in front and the balance to section chains. For days we were obliged to lariat the wildest of them and draw their heads to the hubs of the heavily laden wagons, before being able to adjust the yoke, many times receiving a gentle reminder from the hind hoof of one of the critters to be more careful. I went into the fray with the full determination of learning the profession of driver and at the tenth day I had broken in a team of extras.

ON THE SICK LIST

I was then taken sick and for two long weeks kept my bed of earth under the mess wagon, with no mother or doctor, and two thousand miles from home. You may be able to imagine my feelings, but I doubt it. At the end of the second week Mr. Perry came and told me they would make a start the next afternoon and, in his judgment, he thought it unwise to think of making the trip in my present condition. I knew my condition was serious, but I would rather have died on the road, among those outlaws,

than to have been left in Atchison among entire strangers. They were all very kind and did what they could for me, but were powerless to check my fast failing strength. I had wasted to less than one hundred pounds in weight and was too weak to even lift an arm.

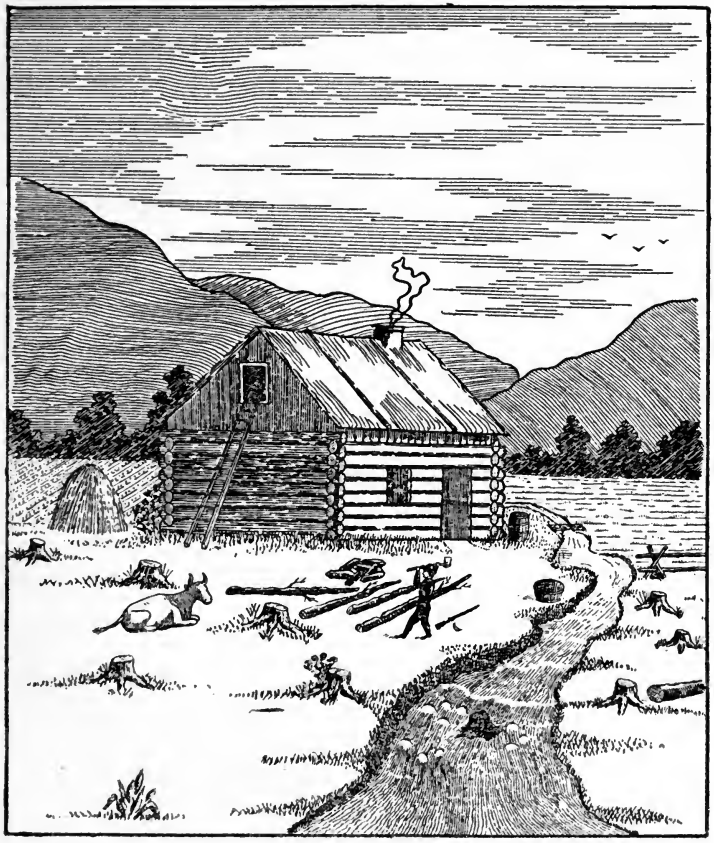
I pleaded with Mr. Perry for some time and finally overcame his objections. "Well," he said, "Charlie, I will fix a bed in my wagon and you can bunk with me." I objected, for I did not wish to discommode him in the least and told him a good bed could be fixed in the mess wagon. "As you will," he said, and had the boys get some straw which together with the Buffalo robe made a very comfortable bed when not on the move.

A THUNDER STORM

The next day they picked me up and put me in the second or reserve mess wagon. Shortly after that the start was made. We had covered less than two miles when all of a sudden I heard the rumbling of distant thunder. Very soon rain began to patter

on the canvas covering of my wagon. Then Heaven's artillery broke loose and the water came down in torrents. Never in my young life had I witnessed such a storm. It seemed as if thunder, lightning and clouds had descended to earth and were mad with anger. The racket was deafening. Between the angered claps could be heard the cursing of those Missouri bushwhackers, who, in their oaths, defied the Almighty to do his worst and hurled unspeakable insults at the memory of the mothers who gave them birth. I knew they were trying hard to make corral; whether they could do it, rested entirely with the wagon boss.

The cattle were crazed with fright and the moment they were loose, would certainly stampede. The oxen were finally unyoked and such a snorting and bellowing, it would be impossible to describe. As the racket died away in their mad race, my thoughts turned to my chum, who I knew was with them, and would be trampled beyond recognition by their death-dealing hoofs, if he had not gained his proper position in the rear.



LOG CABIN IN KANSAS

THE LOG CABIN

At that juncture the front flaps of my wagon were parted and at a flash I recognized two of the men, who bore me across the way to the "Old Log Cabin" on the extreme edge of the then Western civilization. As they laid me down I swooned from sheer exhaustion and fright. Before I had become fully conscious I heard that gruff old wagon boss telling the good woman of the cabin to spare nothing for my comfort. She felt of my pulse, asked me a few questions and assured him that she would soon have me on my feet. He bade "God bless me," and passed out into the dark and stormy night. The good woman poked up the fire and placed an old-fashioned, iron tea-kettle in position to do its duty. At that juncture a young miss about my own age came from somewhere, as if by magic, and was told by the good mother to prepare a chicken, that she might make broth for the sick young man, pointing to where I lay. For two hours that good mother worked over me, now and then giving me draughts of

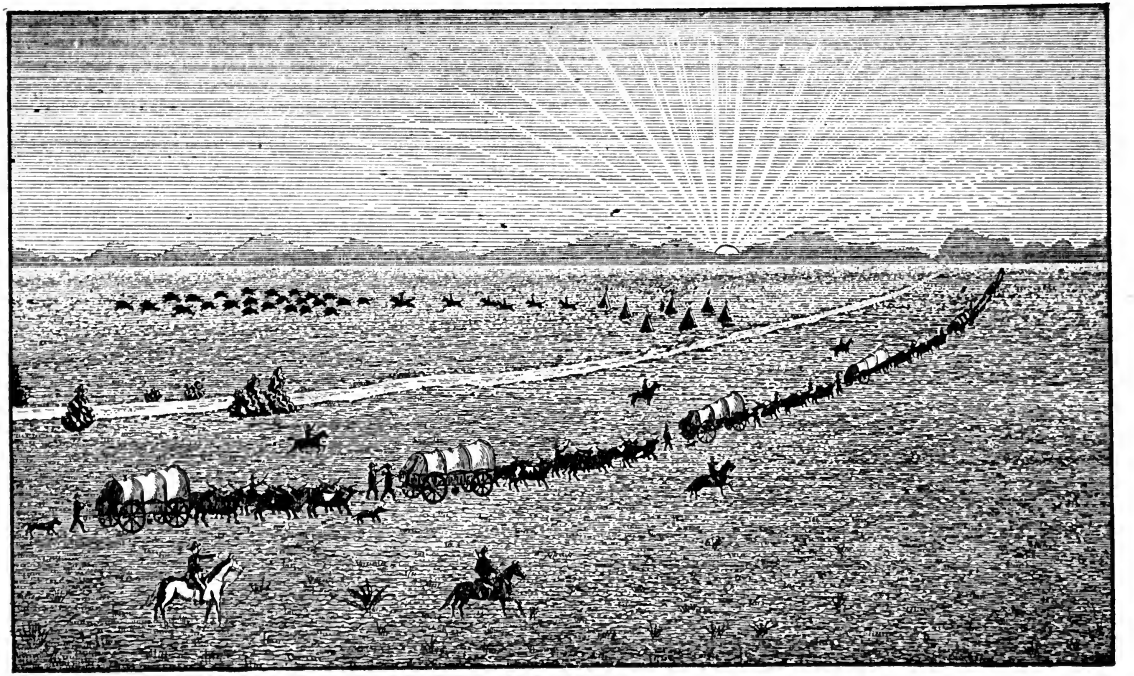
hot herb tea, while the daughter deftly prepared nature's wild bird of the prairie, occasionally shooting darts of sympathy from her jet black eyes. When the bird had been cooked, the meat and bones were removed leaving only the broth which was seasoned to a nicety and given me in small quantities and at short intervals until early morning, when I passed into dreamland with the mother keeping vigil as though I were her own son. When I awoke I felt refreshed and comfortable, and found her still at my side, doing for me that which only a mother can.

At daybreak I heard footsteps above; presently the father and son came in. The daughter was called and breakfast was prepared. They told me that our cattle had stampeded and it might be days before they were found. After a three days search my chum and the cattle were overtaken miles from camp, but none the worse for their fearful experience. The moment he arrived he came to see me. I was sitting up for the first time, wrapped in Indian blankets, but

very weak. I assured him that I would certainly get well, emphasizing the fact, however, that had we not run into that fearful storm, making my present haven of care possible, I could never have recovered, and believed that the prayers of a loving mother at home had been answered.

A CATTLE STAMPEDE

He then related his experience with those storm-maddened cattle. The first clap of thunder awoke him, and when the rain began he knew he was in for a bad night, and had taken every precaution to supply himself with all things needful. His description of the storm and mad race to keep up with those wild animals, crazed with fright, was enough to congeal the blood of a well man, and in my condition it nearly unnerved me. But I was delighted to know that he was safe, for we were like brothers. His safe arrival, together with the motherly care I had received and was receiving, put me rapidly on the gain. Not a morning passed that the daughter did not shoulder her trusty rifle



THE MARCH OF DESTINY

and go out in search of some refreshment for me, always returning with a number of chickens of the prairie. She was a sure shot, as were the entire family, for they were all born and brought up on the border, moving farther West as the country became settled. From the father I learned the treachery of the Indians, their mode of warfare and different methods of attack; in fact, I had the devilish traits of the noble red men—as history called them—down to a nicety.

When the daughter's day's work was done, she would read to me and relate stories of her life, which reminded me of the "Wild Rose" in all its purity and strength.

The fifth day after the cattle were found the train broke corral and proceeded on its long Western tramp. Before leaving, Mr. Perry made arrangements with the old borderman for me to overtake them as soon as I was able.

The fourth day after the train had left, I made up my mind that I would start the next morning at sunrise and so informed my Western friends, whom, I felt, had saved

my life. The old borderman expressed regret at my leaving and informed me that both he and his son would accompany me to camp. I thanked him and assured him that I felt a mother could not have done more for her own son than his wife had for me—they had all shown me every consideration possible—and that I should always remember them, which I have. At this juncture the mother spoke up gently, but firmly, and addressing her husband, said, "If you have no objection, daughter will accompany Mr. Young. She is a sure shot, a good horsewoman, and the horses are fleet of foot. We have not heard of any Indians in the neighborhood for some time, and besides she wants to go and the ride will do her good."

He replied, "My good woman, you cannot tell where the Indians are, they may be miles away today, but here this very night."

"That is true," she said, "but the stage driver told me that he had not seen a redskin since crossing the Nebraska line."

"That may be," he replied, "still they may have been in the bluffs, or sand hills watching

their opportunity to surprise one of the many small trains of pilgrims, thinking to overpower them, run off their cattle and massacre all."

"Yes, that is all true, but I'll wager they could not catch our girl."

After thinking silently for a few moments, he said, "Well, if you wish, she may go; but if anything happens to our little one, you alone will be blamed."

That settled it. We talked long after father and brother had bade us good night. Mother and daughter finally retired; but, as for myself, I was nervous and restless, sleeping little, thinking of home and loved ones; not, however, forgetting the little "Wild Rose" that was separated from me only by a curtain partition.

The following morning we were up at break of day, and at just 5:30 on a lovely August morning the horses were brought to the door and both quickly mounted. Her riding habit of buckskin, trimmed with colored beads, was the most becoming costume I had ever seen on her during my stay, and

for the first time I wished that I were not going, but it was for a moment only.

WITH THE WAGON TRAIN AGAIN

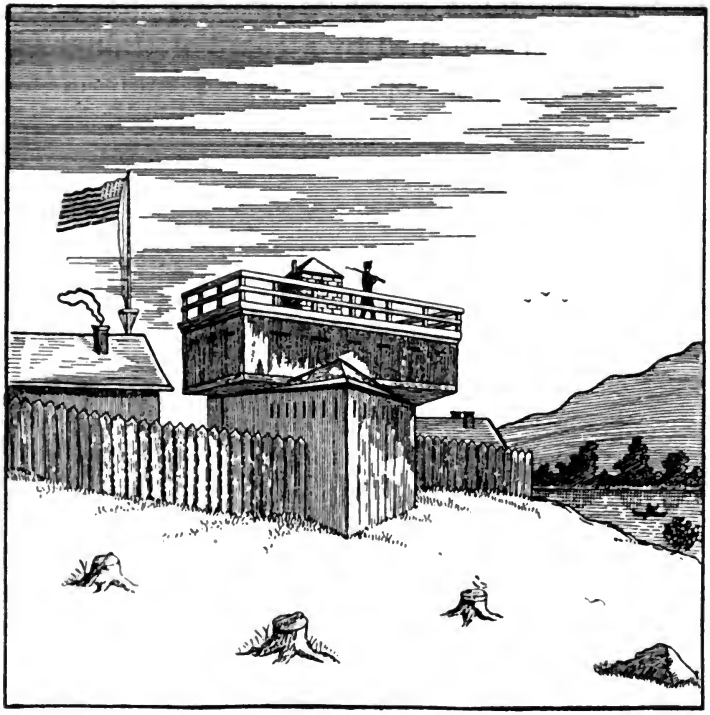
My destination was Denver, and nothing could change my plans except death in the natural way, or being cut down by those treacherous plains roamers. After a pleasant ride which lasted till noon, we came in sight of the corral. When within a quarter of a mile of it, she informed me she was going no farther. Both quickly dismounted. Our conversation would not interest you. Suffice to say, the parting was painful to both. I bade her good-bye and she was off like a flash. I walked slowly into camp, now and then turning to watch the fast retreating figure of as brave a prairie child as nature ever produced. The men appeared glad to see me; the gruff old wagon boss more so than any of the others, for he would not let me turn my hand to any kind of work until I was able. Then I did my best to repay him for his many kindnesses.

At 2 o'clock that afternoon the train broke corral, and for the first time I realized the slowness of our progress, and the long trip before us. Under the most favorable circumstances we could not make over ten miles a day and more often at the beginning three, five and seven.

Our bed was mother earth, a rubber blanket and buffalo robe the mattress, two pairs of blankets the covering, Heaven's canopy the roof; the stars our silent sentinels. The days were warm, the nights cool. We would go into camp at sundown. The cattle were unyoked and driven to water. After grub the night herder and one of the drivers would take them in charge, and if there were no Indians following, would drive them to a good grazing spot over the bluffs.

We passed through Kansas, after crossing the Little and Big Blue rivers, and part of Nebraska without seeing another log cabin or woods. Every fifteen or twenty miles there was a stage station of the Ben Holiday coach line, which ran between Atchison, Kansas, and Sacramento, California. At

every station would be a relay of six horses, and by driving night and day would make one hundred miles every twenty-four hours. They were accompanied by a guard of United States soldiers on top of coaches and on horseback.



FORT CARNEY, NEBRASKA, 1859

CHAPTER II

ARRIVAL AT FORT CARNEY

ARRIVING at Fort Carney we struck the Platte River trail leading to Denver. We were compelled by United States army officers to halt and await the arrival of a train of fifty armed men before being allowed to proceed. In a few hours the required number came up, together with three wagon loads of pilgrims. No train was permitted to pass a Government fort without one hundred well-armed men; but once beyond the fort, they would become separated and therein lay the danger.

A captain was appointed by the commander of the fort to take charge. Here we struck the plains proper, or the great American desert, as it was often called, the home of the desperate Indians, degraded half-breeds, and the squaw man—white men with Indian wives—who were at that time

either French or Spanish; also the fearless hunters and trappers with nerves of steel, outdoing the bravest Indian in daring and the toughest grizzly in endurance. It is a matter of record that these men of iron were capable and some did amputate their own limbs. A knife sharpened as keen as a razor's edge would cut the flesh; another hacked into a saw would separate the bones and sensitive marrow; while an iron heated to white heat seared up the arteries and the trick was done. There was no anesthetic in those days.

There were also the cattle and mule thieves who lived in the bluffs, miles from the trail of white men, a tough lot of desperadoes, believing in the adage "Dead men tell no tales."

There were the ranchmen at intervals of twenty, fifty and a hundred miles, who sold to the pilgrims supplies, such as canned goods, playing cards, whiskey of the vilest type, and traded worn-out cattle, doctored to look well for a few days and then give out, thus cheating freighters and pilgrims alike.

These adobe ranches were built of sod cut in lengths of from two to four feet, four inches in thickness and eighteen inches in width and laid grass side down. The side walls were laid either single or double, six feet in height, with the end walls tapering upward. A long pole was then placed from peak to peak and shorter poles from side walls to ridge pole. Four inches of grass covered the poles and the same depth of earth completed the structure making the best fortifications ever devised; no bullet was able to penetrate their sides nor could fire burn them. The poles used for building these adobe ranches were in most cases hauled two hundred miles and in some cases three hundred miles.

WILD ANIMALS OF THE WEST

On a graceful slope roamed immense herds of buffalo, bands of elk, thousands of antelope, herds of black- and white-tail deer and the large gray wolf. Coyotes about the size of a shepherd dog would assemble on the high bluffs or invade the camp and make night

hideous by their continuous and almost perfect imitation of a human baby's cry, making sleep impossible. The prairie dog, the fierce rattlesnake, and the beautiful little white burrowing-owl, occupied the same hole in the ground, making a queer family combination. Contrary to the belief of all dwellers and travelers of the plains in that day, Colonel Roosevelt claims it is not a fact that the three mentioned animals occupied the same quarters together, and that the story is a myth.

The little prairie dogs had their villages the same as the Indians. I have frequently seen a prairie dog come out and return into the same hole in the ground. I have also seen a beautiful little white owl silently perched at the side of the same hole and finally enter it, and a few moments later a fierce rattlesnake would crawl into the same hole. Whether it was the snake's permanent abode and it went in for a much needed rest, or whether it was an enemy to the others and the snake went in for a game supper of prairie dog puppies and owl squabs, depart-

ing by another route, I am unable to say, as I never took the trouble to investigate one of the holes to confirm the fact. If I had, I would in all probability still be digging. However, in this case, I am inclined to give Colonel Roosevelt the benefit of the doubt for the reason that if nature had not created an enemy to check their increase, the prairie dog would now over-run the country, as they multiply faster than any known animal, and are very destructive to the farm. The Government, through its agents, have destroyed thousands every year in the West by distributing poisoned grain. Last, but not least, of the life of the plains was the Pole Cat. Conscious of his own ability to protect himself, he would often invade the camps at night, making the life of the sleeper miserable.

TROUBLE EN ROUTE

After leaving Fort Carney our troubles began. Many of the drivers were as treacherous as the Indians and would bear watching. One of them in our mess was a former bushwhacker, who bore many scars of his former

unsavory life, one of which was the loss of an eye, which did not make him a very desirable acquaintance, much less a companion. He was of an ugly disposition, very seldom speaking to anyone and very few taking the trouble to speak to him. At times he acted as if he had been taking something stronger than coffee, but as we had not camped near any ranch where the poison could be procured, I came to the conclusion that he was a dope fiend. In some mysterious manner we had lost one of our cups, and at each meal for a week it fell to the lot of this particular bushwhacker to get left. He at last broke his long silence, and in anger with oaths, vowed he would not eat another meal without a cup, and would certainly take one from somebody, if obliged to. As soon as the call for grub was heard the next morning, all rushed simultaneously for a cup, and Mr. Bushwhacker got left again. Without ceremony he proceeded to make good his threat, the second cook being his victim.

TROUBLE EN ROUTE

For his trouble he received a stinging blow over his good eye, and was sent sprawling in the alkali dust. Not being in the least dismayed, he rushed for another and received a similar salute on the jaw, doubling him up and bringing him to the earth. By this time both messes joined in forming a ring and called for fair play. Mr. Perry tried hard to stop it, but was finally convinced that it was better policy to let them have it out. How many times the fellow was knocked down, I do not remember, but the last round finished him. We carried him to the shady side of his wagon, covered him with a blanket and resumed our meal. On going into corral, we always took our revolvers off and placed them where they could easily be reached. We had been eating but a short time, when the report of a gun rang out and each man fairly flew for his weapons. Indians seldom made an attack except at early morning, when the oxen were being yoked or when we were going into corral at night. To the surprise of everyone Mr. Bushwhacker had

taken another lease of life and with a revolver in each hand was firing at anyone his disturbed brain suggested. He was quick of action, firing and reloading with rapidity, and soon had the entire camp playing hide and seek between, around and under the wagons to keep out of the range of his guns, which we succeeded in doing, for not a man was hit. Finally, two of the drivers succeeded in getting behind him and overpowered him. His brother bushwhackers were in for lynching him on the spot, but wiser council prevailed, and his disposal was left to Mr. Perry who sentenced him to be escorted back three miles from the corral and left to walk the remaining two miles to Fort Carney alone. He covered less than a mile when he was captured by the Indians. I was obliged then to drive his team. A few evenings later my chum and friend were lounging by the side of my wagon smoking, and otherwise passing the time away, when finally the conversation turned to the departed driver who by that time had undoubtedly been disposed of by the Indians—not

a very pleasant thought—but we consoled ourselves with the fact that no one was to blame but himself. My chum inquired the contents of my prairie schooner, and I replied that I did not know, but would investigate. Suiting the action to the word I crawled in, struck a match, and found a case labeled Hostetters' Bitters. Its ingredients were one drop of Bitters and the remainder, poor liquor. I soon found a case that had been opened, pulled out a bottle and sampled it. The old story came to me about the Irish saloonkeeper and his bartender. I called my chum and asked him if Murphy was good for a drink, he replied, "Has he got it?" "He has?" "He is then!" and we all were. I thought it would be impossible for the secret to be kept, but it was until we were on the last leg to Denver. The entire load consisted of cases of the Bitters. Fights were of frequent occurrence during the remainder of the trip, Mr. Perry being powerless to prevent them.

Arriving at Central City where the Bitters were consigned, the consignee reported to

the freighter that the load just received consisted of one-half Bitters, the remainder Platte river water. Each man had twenty dollars deducted from his pay, and a large number of the drivers, in addition, bore earmarks of its effect.

The country from Fort Carney for four hundred miles up the Platte river valley and back from the high bluffs, that skirted the river on either side, was one vast rolling plain with no vegetation except a coarse luxuriant growth of grass in the valley near the river and beyond the bluffs; in spots that were not bare grew the prickly pear, and a short crisp grass of lightish color and of two varieties—the bunch and buffalo grasses—which were very nutritious, as the cattle thrived and grew fat on them. There was the clear sky and sun by day, with an occasional sandstorm; the moon (when out) and stars by night, but no rain—a vast thirsty desert. On the small islands of the river a few scattered cottonwood trees were to be seen. Their high branches embraced a huge bunch of something that resembled

the nest of an American Eagle, but on close inspection was found to be the corpse of a lone Indian a long time dead. This was the mode of burial of some of the tribes in the early days, using fur robes or blankets for a casket. There was nothing to relieve the monotony in this desert land, except desperate Indians, immense herds of animal life, daily coaches—when not held back or captured by the Indians or mountain highwaymen—returning freight trains, and the following points where there were adobe ranches: Dog Town, Plum Creek, Beaver Creek, Godfrey's, Moore's, Brever's at Old California Crossing and Jack Morrow's at the junction of the north and south Platte, Fort Julesburg, Cotton Wood and the Junction, each one hundred miles apart, and John Corlew's and William Kirby near O'Fallow's Bluffs. It was said of these ranchmen that some were honest and some were not; others were in league with the Indians, and cattle and mule thieves, and, as a rule, a bad lot. They traded supplies to the Indians

for furs of every kind. The winter passed in hunting, trapping, drinking, and gambling.

O'FALLOW'S BLUFFS

O'Fallow's Bluffs was a point where the river ran to the very foot of the bluffs making it necessary for all of the trains to cross, then again strike Platte river trail at Alkali Creek, the waters of which were poisonous to man and beast. The trail over the bluffs was of sand, and those heavily ladened, white covered prairie schooners would often sink to the hubs, requiring from fifty to seventy-five yoke of oxen to haul them across, often being compelled to double the leading yoke as far back as the wheelers, then doubling again, would start them on a trot, and with all in line and pulling together, would land the deeply sunken wheels on solid ground. It took one entire day to again reach river trail, which was hard and smooth. O'Fallow's Bluffs was a point feared by freighters and emigrants alike. At this point many a band of pilgrims met destruction at the

hands of the fiendish redskins of the plains. Directly upon going into camp at night a party of them would ride up, demand coffee, whiskey, or whatever they wanted, and having received it, would massacre the men and children, reserving the women for a fate a thousand fold worse, as they were very seldom rescued by the tardy government, whose agents were supplying the Indians with guns, ammunition and whiskey to carry on their hellish work unmolested. When captured, which was seldom, were they hung as they deserved? No, the chief with a few others, who stood high in the councils of the tribe, were taken by stage to Atchison, Kansas, there transferred to luxuriantly equipped sleeping cars of that day, and whirled on to Washington; and, in war paint and feather and with great pomp, were presented to their great white father (the President) as they called him.

ABUSES OF THE INDIAN DEPARTMENT

They were then taken in charge by Representatives of the Indian department of the Government, that in those days was honeycombed with corruption from foundation to dome; a disgraceful and blood-stained spot in the Nation's history. Day after day and night after night they were shown the sights of that great city. The capitol of a free and growing Republic whose people respected the Constitution their fathers had drafted, signed and fought for. Day after day and night after night they were courted, dined, toasted and wined until they had become sufficiently mellow to be cajoled into signing another peace treaty, and were then given money and loaded down with presents as an inducement to be good. They were then returned to the agency at the Fort, having been taken from there and back by those red-nosed, liquor-bloated Indian Department guardians of the United States Government and were freely supplied with whiskey until they were willing to part with their cattle, furs, and beaded goods at ex-

tremely low figures, in exchange for provisions, guns, ammunition, and liquor at fabulously high prices. Robbed of their money and presents, and in this condition allowed to return to their village, where when they become sober, they would quickly awaken to a realizing sense of how they had been deceived, swindled and robbed.

What could you expect from those copper-colored savages of the soil after such treatment? With no regard for the treaty they had signed, they would resume the war-path. Revenge, swift and terrible, was meted out to the innocent pilgrims and freighters who had left home, comforts and friends. Hundreds sacrificed their lives by horrible tortures in their heroic efforts to settle the West, unconscious that they were making history for their country and the nation, great.

With no respect for the United States Government, with no respect for the flag with its cluster of stars and stripes of red, white and blue that fired the heart of every

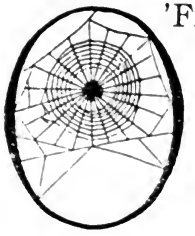
living American soldier to win victory at Valley Forge, which gained our independence, Antietam, and San Juan Hill, saved the nation, reunited the union of states in lasting friendship, lifted the yoke of tyranny from an oppressed people; and, as if with one stroke, swept from the high seas two powerful naval squadrons—the pride of the Spanish nation.

Washington, Lincoln and McKinley were backed by the old glory that electrified every loyal American with patriotism to respond to the call of duty for the love of their country and the "Star Spangled Banner," that at that time fluttered high above the parapet of every Government fort as an emblem of protection to all that were struggling on and on over that vast expanse of unbroken and treeless plain; can you wonder then that the unspeakable crimes and mistakes of the Government of those days still rankle in the breast of every living man and woman that in any way participated in the settlement of the West? If you do, look on the painting of the terrible annihilation of the gallant

Custer and his five companies of the Seventh U. S. Cavalry with the old chief, Sitting Bull, and his band of Sioux Indians on the Big Horn River, June 25, 1876, from which not a man escaped to tell the tale, and you may form some conception of the hardships, suffering, and cruelties inflicted on the early pioneer. It was left for the resourceful Remington to vividly portray life and scenes of those days, perpetuating their memory on canvas and bronze for all time. The name of Frederick Remington should not only go down in history as the greatest living artist of those scenes, but his bust in bronze should be given a place in the Hall of Fame as a tribute to his life and a recognition of his great worth.

CHAPTER III

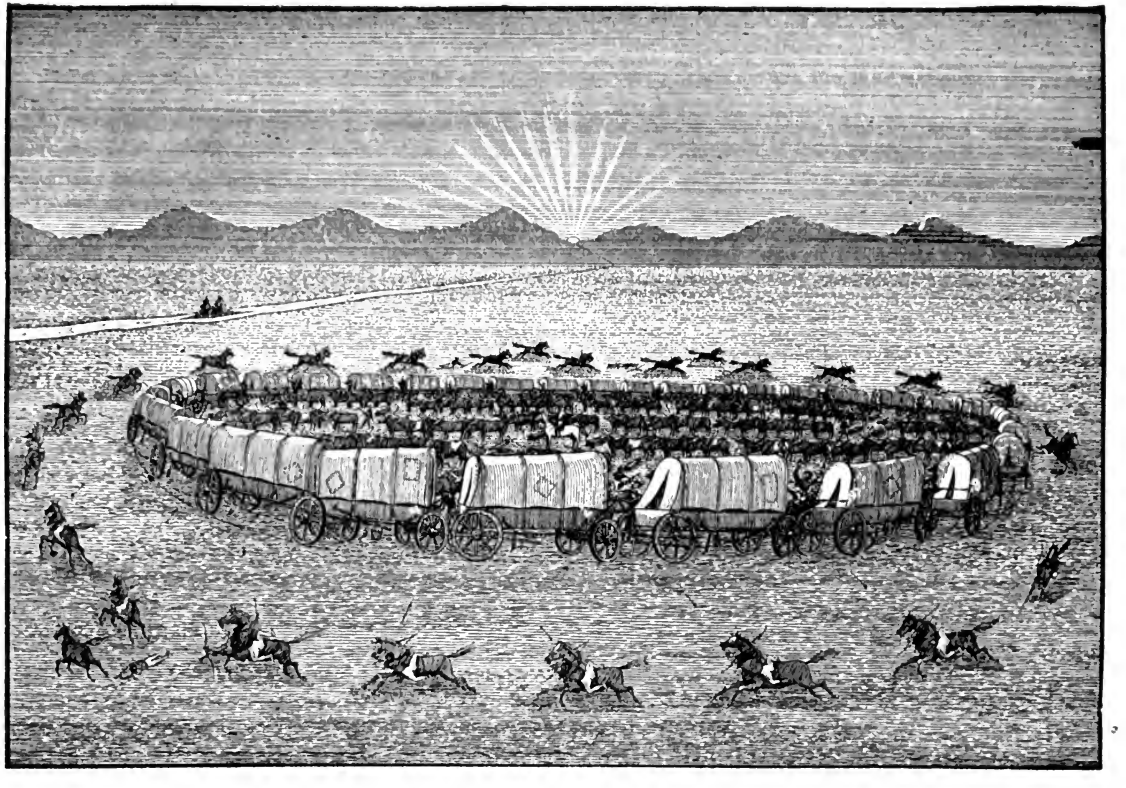
AN ATTACK BY THE INDIANS



'FALLOW'S Bluffs was the most dismal spot on the entire trail. Its high walls of earth and over-hanging, jagged rocks, with openings to the rolling plain beyond, made it an ideal point for the sneaking, cowardly savages to attack the weary pilgrims and freighters. The very atmosphere seemed to produce a feeling of gloom and approaching disaster. The emigrants had been repeatedly instructed by the commander at Fort Carney to corral with one of the trains. Many of the bullwhackers were desperate men, so that the poor pilgrims were in danger from two sources, and very seldom camped near either corral. Our consort was a day's drive in the rear. That evening the emigrants camped about a half mile in advance of our train. It was at this point, when unyoking our oxen

at evening that a large band sneaked over the bluffs for the purpose, as we supposed, of stampeding our cattle. They did not take us unawares, however, for we never turned cattle from corral until the assistant wagon boss surveyed the locality in every direction with a field glass, for the tricky redskin might be over the next sand hill.

Fifty good men could whip five times their number, especially when fortified by those immense white covered prairie schooners in corral formation. On they came in single file, their blood-curdling war whoop enough to weaken the bravest. Closer they came, bedecked in war-paint and feathers, their chief in the lead resembling the devil incarnate with all his aids bent on exterminating as brave a band of freighters as ever crossed the plains. Nearer they came, their ponies on a dead run, the left leg over the back, the right under and interlocking the left, firing from the opposite side of them, ducking their heads, encircling the camp and yelling like demons. Their racket, together with the yelping of their mongrel dogs and



INDIANS ATTACKING CORRAL

the snorting and bellowing of the cattle, made it an unspeakable hell. Every man stood to his gun, and from between the wagons, at the command of the wagon boss, poured forth with lightning rapidity his leaden messengers of death. For about an hour they made it very interesting for us. It was almost impossible to hit one as they kept circling the camp, drawing nearer with each circle made. How many were killed we did not know as they carried them off, but from the number of riderless ponies, a dozen or more must have been dispatched to their happy hunting grounds. During the fight a portion of them bore down on the poor pilgrims' camp, in plain sight, and massacred all, running off their cattle and such of their outfit as they wanted.

SAVAGES IN THEIR GLORY

Mothers with babes at their sides and with uplifted, clasped hands, implored the cruel warriors for mercy, but it was like pouring water on the desert sands. Crazed by thirst for blood and the scalps of the whites, they

knew no mercy. The hatchet-like tomahawk glittering in the evening twilight, held with a vice-like grip in the hand of a cowardly savage, came down at last with such force as to crush through skull and brain, and all was over. We were powerless to render assistance. The scene was heartrending. The depredations of these savages is too revolting to relate, and after completing their hellish work, they sneaked back as they came, keeping up their sickening yell until distance drowned it entirely. Few days passed that they were not seen as evening approached, and after dark we were able to know that they were in the vicinity, watching their opportunity to surprise us at early morning, by signal arrows of fire shot into the heavens to make known their whereabouts to companions. Could these silent bluffs of sand but unfold the butchery and unspeakable outrages inflicted on innocent men, women and children, could the trail through the valley of the Platte, and even more dangerous trail of the Smoky Hill give up its secrets, it would reveal a dark

page in the history of our Government, which was directly responsible for a great deal of it; responsible in so far as sending unscrupulous peace commissioners to the different agencies to make treaties of peace with tribes of Indians, and who kept them just long enough to become liberally supplied with provisions, clothing, guns, ammunition and whiskey, then ravish and murder in the most diabolical manner pilgrims and freighters alike. On both trails many a silent monument of stone was all that remained of their cruel depredations. Such was not the uncommon work of the fiends, known to readers of fiction as the noble red men of the plains. More dastardly cowards never existed. Their struggles against destiny have long since been broken, and the offspring of those cruel warriors are being educated by a gracious government.

The monotony of that lonesome and tedious tramp was enlivened only by fights among the men, and an occasional lay-over for a day to set the tires of the many wagons, having had no rain to keep them tight during

the entire trip after leaving Atchison, Kansas.

With many encounters and bearing scars received from warring tribes of Indians, we tramped along in moccasin covered feet, now and again throwing our long lashed whips with such force as to awaken the dead-head ox to life and quicker action.

Day after day the same scenery faced us; yet, it was an experience never to be forgotten. We passed Fort Julesburg and Cottonwood with the loss of but three men, arriving late at night after a forced drive at the junction or division of the two trails leading to Denver. The distance to Denver by the "Cut-off" was seventy-five miles; by the river route one hundred miles; but as water was to be found only at long distances on the former, all cattle trains took the river route.

It was early in November, the nights and mornings were cold and frosty, the air exhilarating. We were up the next morning at the usual time, and as the sun rose in all its splendor and warmth, one hundred miles in the far away distance could be seen with

the naked eye, the gigantic range of the Rockies whose lofty snow-capped peaks, sparkling in the morning sun, seemed to soar and pierce the clouds of delicate shades that floated in space about them, attracted, as it were, by a heavenly magnet. It was a sight I had not dreamed of, and one that made an impression on my young mind to last through life.

DENVER AT LAST!

When about ten miles from Denver—so we at least thought, and fearless of danger, my chum and myself obtained permission from Mr. Perry to walk to the city over the rolling ground. We tramped until the sun was well up in the heavens. One would think it but a few miles to those mighty and solemn mountains of rocks, so deceptive was the distance, yet, they were twenty miles beyond the city. At noon we knew we had made ten long miles and were completely tired out. We were on the point of taking a rest when I urged my chum to cross the next knoll, and if the city did not

loom up we would halt. We did so and to our surprise and joy were right in the city of Denver, the "Mecca" of nearly all Western freighters and distributing point for the far Western territories. It seemed to have risen beneath our feet. The grand old range of mountains with their sky-soaring pinnacles and scenic background of grandeur, together with the surrounding landscape, made it the sight of one's life. Our sixteen mile walk and previous seventy days' living on a diet of bacon, beans, and dried apples, certainly placed us in condition for a civilized meal.

We were directed to a first-class restaurant, both in price and quality of food. We were about famished, and to satisfy our hunger seemed impossible. We ate and ate, and probably would have been eating yet, had not the waiter presented us with a ticket demanding a five dollar gold piece from each, when we decided we had better call a halt, if we intended to remain in the city over night.

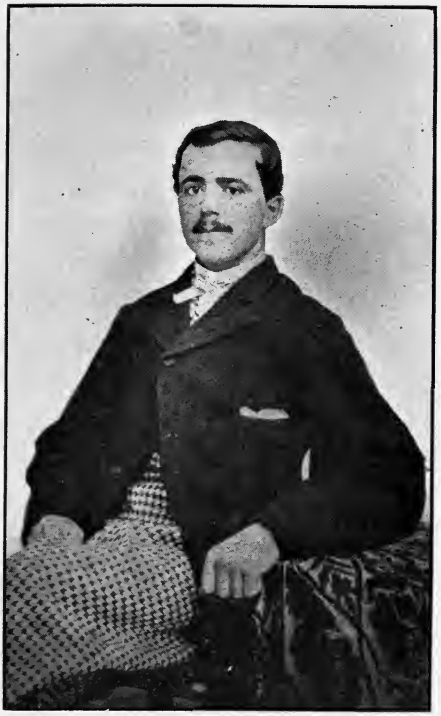
AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE

On walking up the street we stepped into the first hotel we came to, the old "Planters," registered, paid for our supper, lodging and breakfast. When about to leave the hotel, who should walk in but a Genevan by name, Michael C. Pembroke, with his arm in a sling. He had been propelled across the plains by mules, and one of the ugly brutes had broken his right arm with one of his ever active hoofs. I asked Michael why the mule kicked him? He replied, "Charlie, I may look foolish but was not fool enough to go back and ask him." Never approach a Missouri mule from the rear, for there certainly will be trouble if you do. He asked if we had any money.

We replied that we would have when paid off.

He advised us to go direct to the Ben Holiday stage office and buy a ticket for the States as soon as we received our pay, as Colorado was no place for boys.

At his suggestion we started out to do the town, and came very near being done our-



MICHAEL C. PEMBROKE

selves. Colorado at this time was a territory with a Governor appointed by the President. Law, except as executed by a vigilance committee, did not amount to much more than the word. If one wished to depart life in full dress, he could be accommodated by simply calling another a liar or cheat at gambling. If desirous of taking a long rest by being suspended by the neck from a limb of the only tree in Denver at that time, which was on the west side of Cherry Creek, all he had to do was to appropriate to himself an ox, mule, or anything of value, and the vigilance committee would manipulate the rope.

The gambling places, which occupied long halls on the ground floor of tall buildings—nearly always on the business street of the city—kept open until the small hours of morning. There was always a brass band in front, and a string band, or orchestra, in the extreme rear, so if one wished to dance, he could select a partner of most any nationality; dance a set, step up to the bar, pay two bits or twenty-five cents for cigars,

drinks or both and expend his balance on any game known to the profession, which games occupied either side of the long room.

We had been in the place less than fifteen minutes when bang went a revolver and on the instant the room was in total darkness. I mechanically ducked under a table. Where my companions were, I knew not; I began to think that Mike's advice was about correct, and before emerging wished more than once I was back in my home. When the lights were turned on, I discovered my chum occupying a like berth of safety on the opposite side of the room.

Mike had evidently followed his own advice and taken his departure, for he was nowhere to be found. The band struck up a lively tune; the fiddles, a waltz; dancing began, gold and chips commenced to fly, and, if I had not passed through the ordeal, I never would have known anything had happened. The dead were quickly disposed of, the wounded hurried to physicians, and old timers gave it no further thought, as it was of frequent occurrence, and one

soon became hardened. Denver at that time was a hotbed of gambling, with murder and lynch law a secondary pastime. Not being deterred by our experience, we continued our sightseeing, ending up at the only theatre in the city, afterwards called the "Old Languish."

JOINING THE CATTLE TRAIN AGAIN

The following afternoon our train reached town and we joined it during the evening to be ready for an early start for Golden City, the entrance to the mountains leading to Black Hawk and Central City where our freight was consigned. The most hazardous part of our trip was before us, one that to this day makes me shiver when I think of it. The first team entered the canyon at 11 A. M. in a blinding snowstorm. The road for nearly the entire distance was hewn from solid rock out of the side of steep mountains, gradually ascending to a great height, then descending to what seemed a bottomless canyon. We finally arrived at Guy Hill, the most dangerous part of the

route. It took us one entire day to reach its pinnacle, where we camped for the night. The road at the top was cut through solid rock at a height of twenty feet, seven feet in width and led to a steep precipice. It then made a sharp turn to the right and, in a serpent shape drive, continued to the canyon below. At this point it was said to be fifteen hundred feet straight down, and a number of outfits had previously gone over its rocky edge and been hurled to destruction by a slight error of judgment on the part of the driver.

The cold and snow, together with summer clothing, made our suffering indescribable. The following morning I started in the lead of the train with a nine thousand pound boiler, with the rear wheels securely locked, and twenty yoke of oxen to haul it to the edge of the precipice. Then discarding all but the wheelers and leaders, we began the descent. There was not room enough on either side for the driver to walk. He generally rode the off ox, but I took my position on the rear of the wagon tongue

and found it decidedly the safest place in case of an accident. By night all wagons were safely in the canyon below. The road for nearly the entire distance presented the same dangers, taking ten days to reach our destination from Denver, the entire trip occupying eighty days.

A THRILLING COACH RIDE

On receiving our pay, which was our promised salary less twenty dollars for the Hostetter's Bitters, my chum and myself decided to go direct to Denver, our friend remaining in the Mountain City. We boarded a Concord coach with six snow-white horses to wheel us on a dead run over and around steep mountains and through dismal canyons, first on four wheels, then three, then two and occasionally one, keeping us constantly busy retaining our seats and fearing at every turn that we would be dashed into eternity; and yet, it was one of the most picturesque and thrilling rides one could take. Being tossed from side to side in the roomy coach, now and then grabbing a

fellow passenger with desperation, gazing down from lofty peaks to yawning chasms below, hearing the crack of the long-lashed whip urging the noble steeds to faster speed, turning the rough, ragged, serpent-shaped drive, thundering through clouds and mist with lightning rapidity, and always in constant terror of a breakdown or error on the part of the fearless driver, gave one a sensation that would nearly make his hair stand on end. During the descent a slight error on the part of the horses or driver, would have hurled all to a horrible death; but those mountain drivers, strapped to their seats, were monarchs of the Rockies and unerring in every move. From among the snow-covered glaciers sparkling in the morning sun, emitting the many tints of a mid-day storm-bow and presenting a sight of unsurpassed grandeur, we emerged from the mouth of the last canyon and struck the smooth rolling trail. All the way from Golden we were going, it seemed, on the wings of the wind and were landed in Denver on scheduled time.

CHAPTER IV

DENVER IN 1865

IN THAT period Denver was appropriately called the "City of the Plains." Situated sixteen miles from the base of the nearest Rocky Mountain peak, and six hundred and fifty miles from Atchison, Kansas, the nearest town to the East; while seven hundred miles to the west loomed up as from the very bowels of the earth, the beautiful city of the Mormons, Salt Lake City, Utah. The nearest forts—two hundred miles distant—were Fort Cottonwood to the northeast, Collins to the north and Halleck to the northwest. Its northern limits extended to the South fork of the Platte River; Cherry Creek running through one-third, dividing it into East and West Denver. Its population numbered about five thousand souls. Here was to be found the illiterate man—but a grade

above the coyote—lawbreakers of every kind and from every land, to men of culture and refinement. Here it stood, a typical mining town, a monument to the indomitable energy of man in his efforts to settle that barren and almost endless plain and open to the world the Rocky's unlimited hidden gold. Here were brick structures modern for that day, the brick being made from the soil of the territory; a United States mint, a church, a school house, large warehouses, stores, and the home of the *Rocky Mountain Daily News*, which kept one partially in touch with happenings in the faraway states. Isolated from the outside world, it was an ideal place of refuge for those anxious to escape the outraged law. Knights of the green cloth held full sway. Men in every walk in life gambled. A dead man for breakfast was not an uncommon heading for the menu card, the old tree on the west bank of Cherry Creek furnishing the man. Society was just a little exclusive and to gain admission the pass was, "Where are you from?" and in some cases, "Your name in the East."

Desperadoes made one attempt to lay the city in ashes and certainly would have accomplished their purpose had it not been for the timely action of the Vigilance Committee in hanging the ring-leaders. When the guilt of a suspect for any crime was in doubt, he was presented with a horse or mule and ordered to leave between sun and sun and never return. During my four years of residence in Denver there was but one Indian scare and it made a lasting impression on the tablet of my memory. A church bell pealed forth the warning over the thirsty desert of an Indian attack. Business places were closed, the women and children were rushed to the mint and warehouses for protection, armed men surrounded the city, pickets on horseback were thrown out in every direction. Couriers kept thundering back and forth between picket line and those in command and others were despatched to the different Forts for assistance that never came. A look of determination stood out on the face of every one and not a man, from clergyman to desperado, within the

confines of the city who would not willingly have given up his life's blood to protect the honor of the women and lives of the little ones. For three weary days and the same number of nights the terrible suspense lasted, but no Indian came. It was a false alarm.

Denver, in its early settlement, was never attacked by the Indians except in isolated cases. The only reason that I ever heard given for their not doing so was that they knew not their strength, for there was no time in the sixties that they could not have swooped down on the place, massacred all and buried the little mining town in ashes.

SECURED WORK AGAIN

For a young man to obtain work other than oxen or mule driving, we were told, was simply impossible. Not being deterred, however, by this discouraging information we at once started out to secure work. Board was twenty-five dollars a week in gold, and you had to furnish your own sleeping quarters, so not to secure work at once would quickly reduce our wealth. We had

called on nearly all of the business places, when my chum secured a position with a grocer and freighter. As for myself, I received little encouragement but finally called at a large restaurant where I was offered work. I told the proprietor it was a little out of my line, but he told me that if I could not find a position to suit me, I should walk in at any time, pull off my coat and go to work, which I did three days later. About the tenth day the proprietor told me his lease expired and that the man who owned the building was going to conduct the business. He came in that afternoon, and I was introduced to him. Before leaving he stepped into the office and informed me that he wanted a man next to him; or, in other words, an assistant and that the former proprietor had given me a good recommend and he thought that I would suit him. He made me a tempting offer and I accepted. The restaurant was located on Blake street, one of the then principal business streets of the city, and kept open until early morning as did the gambling places

in the immediate vicinity. I soon discovered that the new proprietor could neither read or write and that he conducted one of the largest private club rooms in the city where gambling was carried on without limit. He paid me a large salary and allowed me everything my wild nature craved. I had charge of the entire business as well as his bank account.

The restaurant was the headquarters of nearly all oxen and mule drivers and also of the miners who came from the mountains in winter, and were of the toughest type of men of that day. All professional oxen and mule drivers after making one round trip to the river and points in the far Western territories were paid off in Denver and many of them would deposit with me, for safe keeping, a large share of their dangerously and hard earned dollars. They would then start out to do the town, now and then taking a chance at one of the many gambling games, always returning for more money, which I would give them; and this they would continue until all was expended ex-

cept enough to keep them a week, when sober, and a commission for doing the business, for which I was careful to look out. An individual who bore the name of "One Eye Jack" boarded with us and I could always depend upon him in time of trouble. His vocation for a long time was a mystery, until one evening, as I was passing down a side street, he popped out from an alley and with uplifted blackjack would have felled and robbed me had he not recognized the unearthly yell I gave. I forgave him, and afterwards he doubled his energies to protect me and on more than one occasion saved my life. When in his professional clothes he was a tough looking customer and could fight like a bull dog. He was always liberally supplied with someone else's money. Yet with all his bad traits, his word was as good as his gold; but like other similar individuals that infested Denver at that time, he finally went to the end of his tether, and was presented by the Vigilance Committee with a hemp collar that deprived him of his life.

Before his demise, however, a party of ten tough-looking individuals entered the restaurant and, in forceful language, demanded the best the country offered in eatables and drink. My friend, or would-be-murderer, was in at the time and I noticed a look of cunning pleasure steal over his rough countenance. The strangers were dressed in corduroy trousers, velveteen coats, slouch hats and black ties. Their shirts and collars of red flannel made a conspicuous appearance and caused their undoing later. After seeing them well cared for, I returned to the office and calling Jack inquired his opinion of the gents.

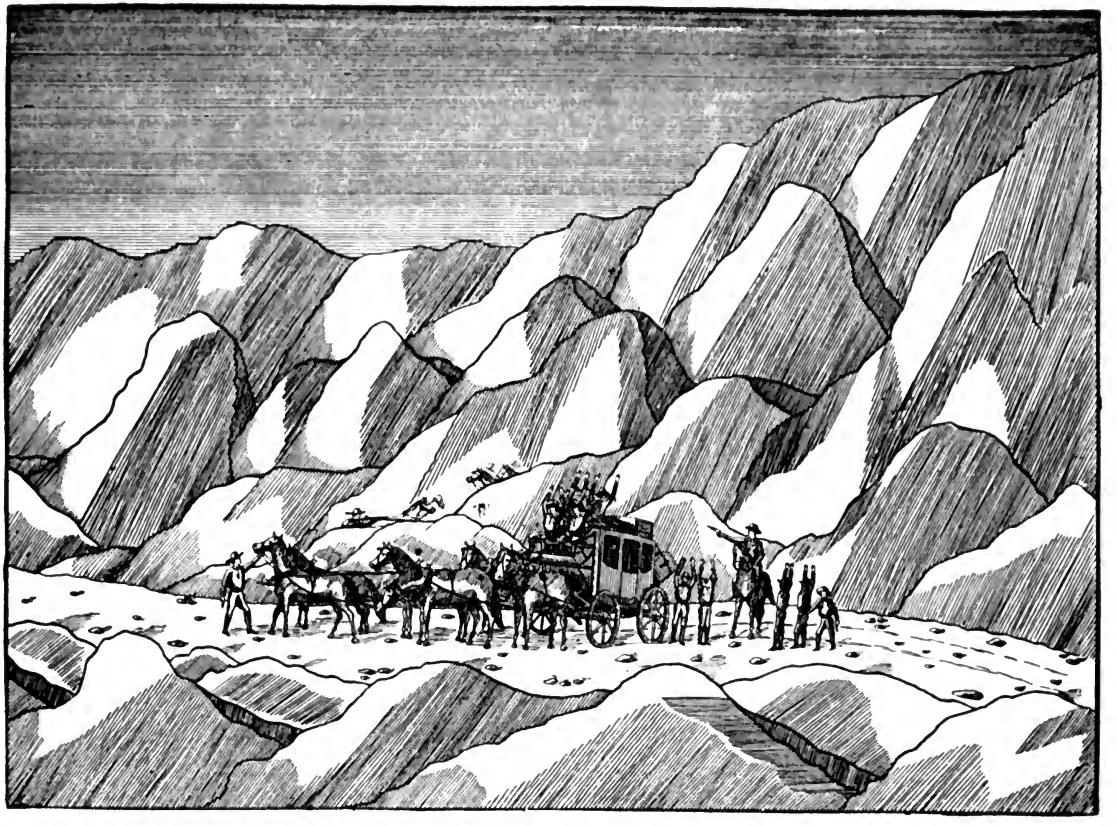
"Well," he replied, "I may be mistaken but I will just bet you a ten spot they are road agents." "Yes," I said, "I am inclined to agree with you, but keep mum."

You may think it strange I did not give this bold highwayman away; but life in those days was sweet and I had no desire to have that young life taken so I followed Commanche Bill's advice and strictly minded

my own business. If I had not, I would not be living today.

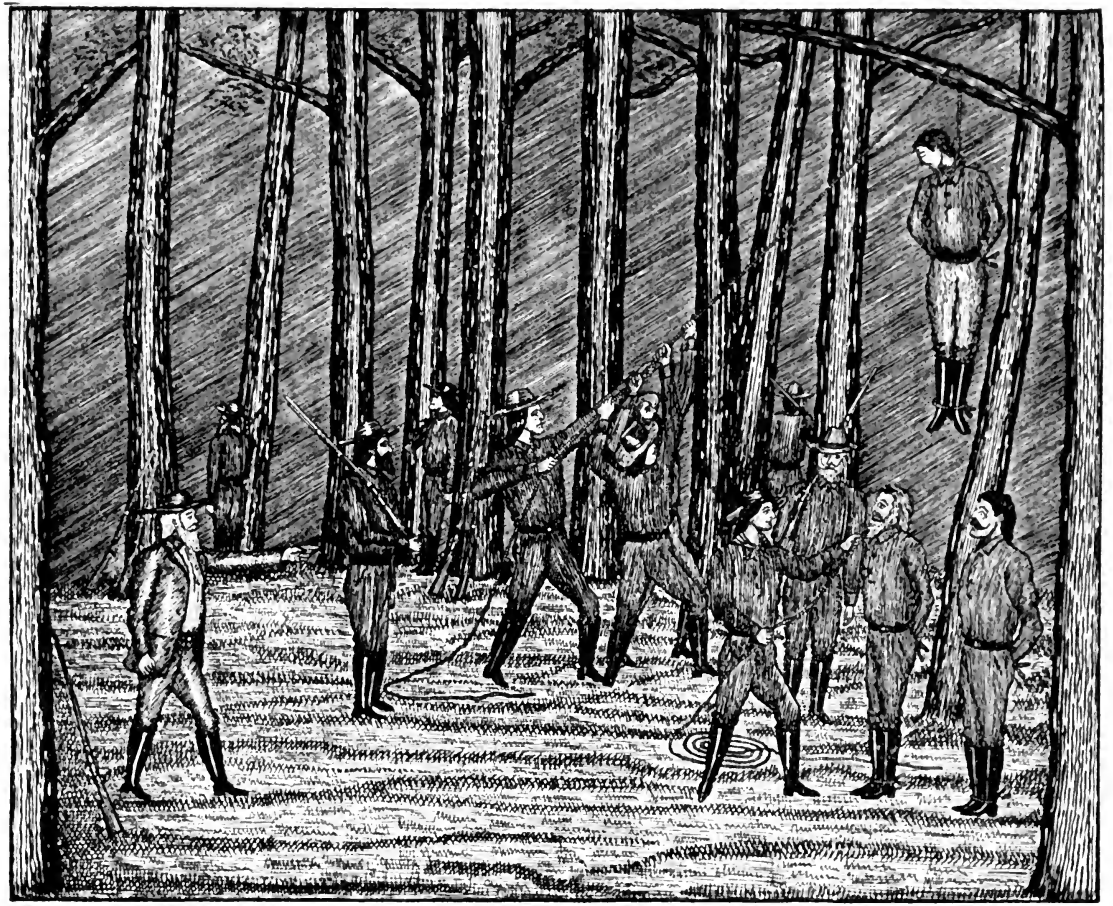
HIGHWAYMEN OF THE WEST

Two mornings later on entering for breakfast one of the band had his head done up in a bandage. From words he dropped I was satisfied that Jack or one of his cronies had been improving their spare time by relieving him of his over abundance of gold. The reckless manner in which they disposed of their money and their conversation when flushed with wine betrayed their true characters and stamped them a murderous band of mountain highwaymen who had made their headquarters in the fastnesses of the Rockies, near the overland mountain trail and there devoted their time to holding up stage coaches, compelling the driver with a shot from a carbine to halt, descend, disarm and be quiet. The passengers were then ordered to alight and stand in a row, continually being covered with guns by a part of the band and by others relieved of their personal effects.



ROAD AGENTS HOLDING UP STAGE COACH

Then the stage coach was systematically gone through together with the Wells Fargo & Co's. safe, which often contained gold into the thousands. These hold-ups were not infrequent and were the fear of all who were obliged to pass through these canyons of robbery and often death. The bunch that we harbored were undoubtedly as bold a band of robbers and murderers as ever infested the silent caves of the Rockies. Could their dingy walls but talk they would reveal crimes unspeakable. I knew there were many strangers in town and was almost certain their every movement was watched; nor was I mistaken. The seventh day after their arrival a young school teacher whom I knew by sight called at the restaurant and inquired by name for one of the band. I asked if he knew him. He replied, no more than that he had met him in one of the corrals of the city and had been offered free passage to the States if he would do their cooking. I told him of my suspicions and all I knew about them and advised him not to go with them, but like many



VIGILANCE COMMITTEE JUSTICE

others he gave no heed. Two days later they were missed at meal time. The next morning word came by courier that the entire band including the school teacher were dangling by the neck from the branches of cottonwood trees twelve miles down the Platte River with their pockets inside-out and outfits gone. Thus was meted out innocent and guilty alike the Vigilance Committee justice, which was not of uncommon occurrence.

Mr. Pembroke secured a position at Black Hawk, Colorado, in the year 1865, with the first smelter works erected in the Rocky Mountains. He was employed in the separating department where sulphur was freely used, and he inhaled much of the fumes emitted therefrom, which was the direct cause of a severe illness.

He fought retirement for a long time, but was finally forced to give up.

The latter part of February, 1886, he arrived in Denver on his way to his home in Geneva, N. Y., but remained with me at the restaurant for ten days where he

was cared for and given the best of medical aid available in those days.

He finally prevailed on a mule freighter to take him as a passenger to Atchison, Kansas. Arriving at Fort Carney, Nebraska, he had a relapse and was ordered by the Commander of the Fort to be placed in the Army Hospital for treatment, where he remained until able to continue his journey by stage to Atchison, thence by rail home.

He left Colorado with the full determination of returning on recovering his health. A mother's influence, however, changed his plans and he finally decided to remain in the East. He purchased a grocery business and conducted it with great success until his death, March 17th, 1910. By his strict attention to business, square dealing, genial disposition and original wit, he gained the confidence and respect of his fellow-men. He was buried in St. Patrick's cemetery in his home city where a surviving sister has caused to be erected an appropriate and costly monument to his memory.

NEW EMPLOYMENT

I remained with the restaurant keeper one year, when through the assistance of influential men that boarded at the restaurant, I secured a position with a grocer. Shortly after entering his employ I made the acquaintance of an ex-army officer, a graduate of West Point and a well educated man, who afterwards became my boon companion. At that time he was an ex-pork merchant from Cincinnati; an eccentric old fellow without chick or child, and with plenty of money to loan at 3% a month. He owned a large warehouse on Cherry Creek in West Denver where he slept and did his own cooking. His evenings were passed at the store and many were the nights that we told stories and otherwise enjoyed ourselves. He was a silent member of the firm and I was wise enough to keep on the right side of him. During that time the head of the firm ran for Congress on the Democratic ticket. Such an election I never want to see or go through again. Large wagons loaded with barrels of all kinds of liquor on tap were driven from

poll to poll. Many more ballots were cast in each precinct than there were voters and by night nearly the entire male portion of the inhabitants were a drunken, howling mass. The outcome of the election resulted in the Governor giving the Democratic nominee the certificate of election; the Secretary of the territory favoring the Republicans. The Governor left the city that night and never returned. The contest terminated in a Republican Congress seating the Republican candidate, and Andrew Johnson—then President of the United States—appointing the Democratic candidate Governor of Colorado. A year from that time General Grant was inaugurated, and shortly afterwards the Governor's head went into the basket and mine fell on the outside.

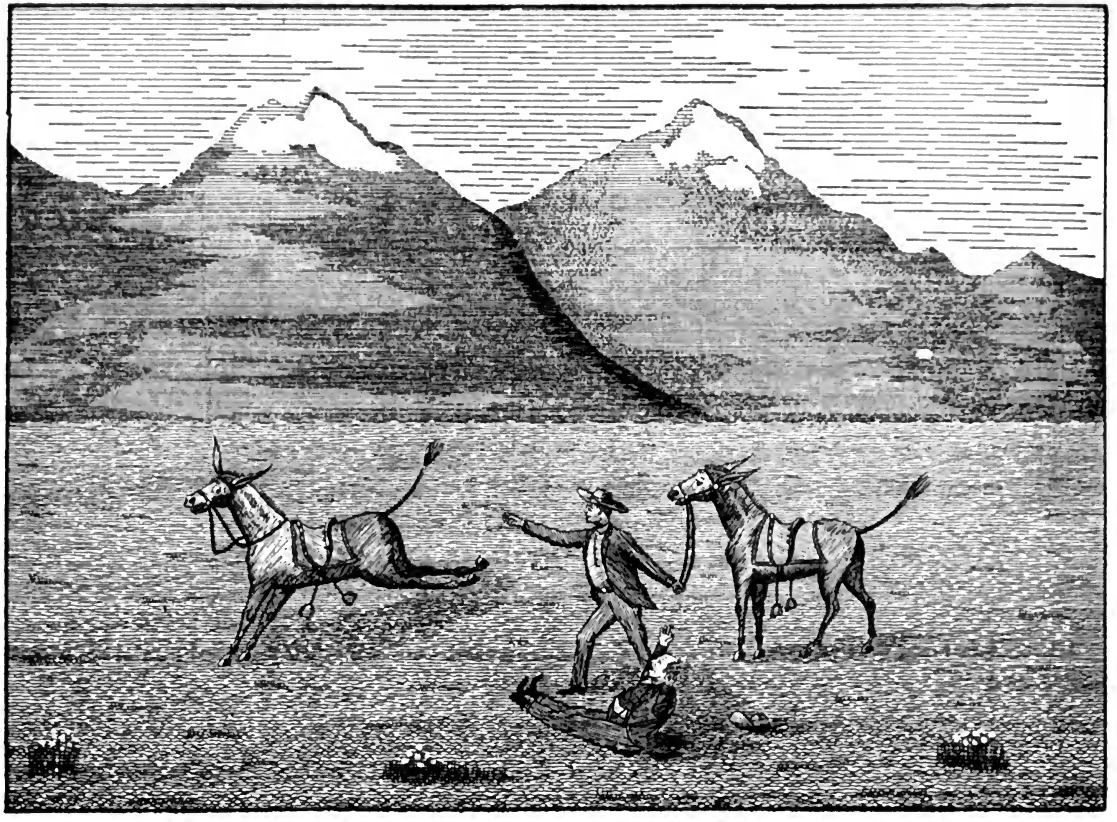
On another occasion there was to be a prize fight at Golden City, sixteen miles from Denver. My friend, the ex-pork merchant, I could see was anxious to attend but did not wish to lower his standard of dignity by doing so, so the subject was not mentioned save in a casual way until the

morning of the fight, when he entered the store, puffing and blowing, stamping the floor with his hickory cane and mopping his crimson brow with an old-fashioned bandana handkerchief, said "Charley, let's go to that infernal fight. I don't approve of it, but let's go."

"All right," I said. I was in for any kind of sport.

AN EXPERIENCE IN MULE RIDING

I left everything, locked the store and started out to procure a rig, but found there were none to be had for love or money. The only article of propulsion we could hire were saddle mules. Both quickly mounted and on a slow trot started for the ring. We had been there less than an hour when both of us became thoroughly disgusted and started on the return trip. When about seven miles from Denver and going at a lively pace—for a mule—the Major's animal stiffened both front legs, and placing his hoofs firmly in the sandy road, permitted the Major's chunky little body to pass over his head and through space for about ten feet, land-



RETURNING FROM PRIZE FIGHT

ing, with much force, on his stomach. The old fellow was an artist at curse words and the more I laughed the more he cursed. He was a sprightly little fellow and on gaining his feet grabbed for the bridle, but Mr. Mule shook his head, made a side step, and the devil could not have caught him again until he reached the barn. I dismounted and with much difficulty my friend scrambled into my saddle, with myself on behind. But my long-eared critter objected and the fun commenced. He bunted and kicked. All of a sudden his hind quarters rose and like lightning his long lanky legs shot high into the air. First, I went off, and on gaining a sitting position with mouth, ears and eyes full of sand, I witnessed a spectacle befitting the clumsiest bareback rider on one of their first lessons. The old Major had both arms affectionately entwined around the mule's thick neck and was hanging on with desperation. Up and down went the hind quarters of that unkind brute, bunting and kicking, the Major's little body keeping taps with the ups and

downs and every time he caught his breath he let out a war whoop that would do credit to a Commanche brave. The old mule finally dumped him all in a heap and followed his mate to Denver. Such an appearance as both presented, each blaming the other for our misfortune and vowing we would never be caught at another prize fight. Lame, bruised, and crestfallen, we walked the remainder of the way into Denver. Each cautioned the other to say nothing of our misfortune; but the two Mauds had carried the news ahead, and we were the laughing stock of the town for the next nine days.

At another time I was attending a performance in the "Old Languish Theater," when from the stage I was informed I was wanted in the bar room of the building, a necessary adjunct to all western theaters in those days. Upon entering I was taken by the hand by one of those trusty and warm-hearted stage drivers of the plains and Rockies, and told that my chum had been caught in one of those treacherous mountain snow storms on the Catchla Purder River

two miles above La Port and was badly frozen, and, if he didn't receive medical aid at once, could not survive. I left the theater at once and commenced preparing plans for the trip. I started unaccompanied the following afternoon at 2:30 o'clock on a one hundred fifty mile ride.

A RIDE IN A STORM

My conveyance was a long old-fashioned buggy. The buggy, which was well filled with straw, blankets, medicine, grub, and a commissary bottle, had two good roadsters hitched in front to wheel me to the rescue of my friend or to an ignominious death. I had not only Indians to fear, but the treacherous elements. The trail ran close along the base of the mountains. It was a lovely May day. I was obliged to make thirty-two miles that night to reach cover. Less than half of the distance had been traveled when the wind veered suddenly to the north, mild at first, then a hurricane of anger, roaring and blowing with such force as to nearly upset the buggy.

Dark clouds gathered and floated around those silent peaks of ages. Lightning darted hither and thither among the stalwart pines, which were creaking, bending and crashing. Clap after clap of thunder pealed through and from those dismal canyons, vibrating between Nature's slopes of granite, quartz and rock. The din was fearful, rain fell at first, then turned to snow. Just before it became dark I adjusted the front piece of the buggy. My compass was useless. I urged my faithful steeds to faster speed, and at the same time gave them the rein. As I did so, they left the trail. Cold and chilled to the marrow or very bone, I took frequent drafts from the commissary bottle, and fought with all my power against sleep, but it was useless.

On gaining partial consciousness two squaws were bending over me rubbing me with all their Indian strength and a third forcing something warm down my throat. Men, rough of dress, were smoking and playing cards. Revolvers, chips and gold was in front of each, with plenty of the latter in the

center of the table. I knew not if they were friends or mountain highwaymen. Many claim that horses are dumb brutes with no instinct, but that faithful pair on leaving the trail avoided a long bend and made straight for the adobe stage ranch, sixteen miles away. On reaching it, they ran the buggy-pole through the only opening of that mud shack rousing the inmates to action and bringing me to safety.

The large Concord coach filled with passengers soon arrived from Denver, and owing to the severity of the storm, put up for the night. The time was passed in smoking, drinking and playing cards. At six o'clock the next morning the coach pulled up at the door. The storm was over, but not the wind. The cold was intense. My team soon came up, but their ears and noses were badly frost bitten and otherwise showed the effects of the storm. I followed the coach but for a short distance only, as the snow which was drifting badly obliterated the trail. The six black horses on the coach were too much for my two bays and

soon left me far in the rear. My compass had been lost and by noon I was back at the ranch I had previously left, the horses having made nearly a complete circle without my knowledge. I secured another compass and at nine o'clock that evening rolled into La Port, a city of adobe ranches, and stage station, where I put up for the night. (A place of two or three houses in those days was called a city.) I was informed that my chum was two miles up the river and in bad shape. The next morning I was up at day break. After grub I started and found my companion quartered in a little old log cabin at the base of the mountains, and being cared for by an aged squaw and her daughter—the old buck being out caring for the cattle. My chum had encountered the same kind of a storm as his rescuer, and unable to find his way was obliged to remain out the entire night and only one hundred feet from the cabin. Both of his feet were badly frozen. The Indians had done everything possible for him. The daughter, for an Indian, was extremely

pretty, and I soon discovered that she was very much taken with my chum. I applied the remedies which I had brought. Then the little Indian maiden bundled him up, and with the promise that he would return they parted.

We were at once off on the return trip and arrived at the stage ranch, where I was cared for the previous night at just six o'clock. On driving up to the door of the station all three of the reaches of the buggy broke and gently dropped us to the ground. Fortunately there was a blacksmith connected with the station and I assisted him through the long night, forging reaches and repairing the buggy. At daylight we were off, reaching Denver in safety at 3:30 that afternoon and making the trip in just three days.

Both of my chum's feet had to be amputated at the insteps. He was very grateful and quite conscious of the fact that true friendship still existed.

Before leaving the governor's employ, I accompanied a mule train of ten wagons

with supplies for the Ute tribe of Indians who lived in one of the parks of the mountains in the vicinity of Pike's Peak. The Utes, at that particular time, were on friendly terms with the white men as there was a treaty of peace existing between them and the Government.

CHAPTER V

A PROOF OF MARKSMANSHIP

E TOOK with us a Mr. Baker, who was conceded to be one of the best guides, hunters, trappers and interpreters of that day, with a heart as large as an American bison, and as tender as a child's. But when his anger was aroused by danger or treachery, the very devil seemed to possess him; he had the courage of a lion, and was a dead shot. We had been friends for a long time, and on more than one occasion he had proved a true one.

The park was an ideal summer resort, an extended plateau with acres of fresh green grass, wild flowers, and virgin soil. In the center was a beautiful lake, its ice cold water well stocked with the finny tribe of speckled mountain trout, the delight of the angler. The park was inclosed by mountains of great height and grandeur, their

rocky slopes were dotted with spruce, pine, and cottonwood, and capped with ages of crystal snow, presenting a sight more pleasing to the eye than the Falls of Niagara, and a perfect haven for an Indian maiden's love dream.

We had been in camp but a few days when Mr. Baker informed me that the young bucks, as the men of the tribe were called, wanted us to join in shooting at a target. After Mr. Baker and myself had made a few bull's eyes, they proposed we two should choose sides, and we did so. The teams were very evenly matched, making the game interesting. In the meantime, I had been presented to the chief in true Indian fashion and in turn was made known by him to his squaw, young bucks and maidens. The Indians had ther tribal laws and customs as well as the white man and were required to live up to them. The maidens were two in number, their ages fourteen and seventeen moons respectively; the latter a picture of Indian beauty, perfect in every feature, form and carriage, a rare model

for an artist. They were nearly always found together. At first they were quite reserved, but finally we became fast friends; we would ramble, hunt, fish from canoes and sail the placid waters of the little lake.

Early on the morning of the tenth day Mr. Baker entered my tent with a troubled look. I bade him good-morning and inquired the cause. Without fencing, he asked me if I wanted to be a squaw man. I asked him what the devil he was getting at.

AN OFFER OF MATRIMONY

He replied, "All there is to it, the old chief has taken a great liking to you, and wants you to marry Weenouah, his oldest daughter. He has plenty of money, and his horses and cattle run into four figures."

"That is no inducement," I said, "and it could never be."

Mr. Baker asked, "How are you going to get out of it?"

I replied, "I have been in lots of tight places, as you know, and have always

managed to squeeze through, and I'll get out of this one in some way.

Little did either of us dream at that time of the manner, or rather the sacrifice, that one of us was doomed to bear, for me to escape the wrath of the old chief, when informed I would not marry his daughter. Fate decreed he was never to be so informed, but instead, a most cruel and unfortunate accident was to provide the means.

That afternoon the young bucks were again anxious to test their skill at the target. We all used the same carbine, which contained seven cartridges, one in the gun barrel and six in a magazine in the butt of the gun. Mr. Baker and I always tossed up a pebble to see who had first shot. As Mr. Baker won the first chance, he took aim and pulled the trigger and such an explosion as took place will never be forgotten. Everyone was stunned by its force. When the smoke had cleared, poor Baker's body was found lying on the ground with the lower jaw torn from its place. On

recovering from the shock the young bucks fairly flew for the Indian medicine man. I quickly reached the corral and informed the wagon boss of the accident. He at once ordered the mules brought up. The light wagon was supplied with straw, blankets, commissary bottle and grub. Six of the fastest mules were hitched to the wagon and selecting two of the mulewhackers gave instruction for his care en route. I took the lines and quickly drove to the spot where poor Baker had fallen. Just as soon as the flow of blood had been checked and his wounds dressed we raised him gently and placed him in the wagon. Without a word I mounted the driver's box and drove for all there was in those six mules, reaching Denver late the following night. Some who read this narrative may be skeptical, but it is a fact, nevertheless, that poor Baker recovered for I saw him a year later, but he could partake of liquid food only. The once stalwart form of that brave man, now emaciated and wasted to a mere skeleton, still stood erect.

THE TOLL OF THE PLAINS

My whole heart went out to him who, in years past, had hunted the antelope, deer, elk and buffalo; fought the cowardly savages and desperadoes on the thirsty plains and amidst the ragged slopes of the Rocky Mountains; penetrated the silent recesses of the dismal canyons and caves; crossed the snow covered divides; faced danger of every conceivable nature; and at last, although maimed for life, was grateful that he had escaped death and thankful in the thought that he had done his share in the settlement of the then Far West. As I gazed into his once keen eyes and beheld that shriveled face, my heart wrung with remorse, for I knew he had keenly suffered. Tears filled my eyes and trickled down my weather-beaten and sun-tanned boyish face, and I knew he accepted it as an emblem of my sorrow for being the innocent cause, in a measure, of his cruel misfortune. Thus, by the flip of a pebble was my life spared, but at the expense of a true friend.

CHAPTER VI

ON TO LEAVENWORTH

HE NEXT summer I was not very well, and so I made a trip to Leavenworth, Kansas, by the Southern or Smoky Hill route. We made the trip by mule train of twenty wagons with six mules hitched to each. The driver rode the nigh mule and with one line guided the team. If he wanted the leaders to go to the right he simply jerked fast or slow, depending on how quick he wanted to make the turn; if to the left, a steady or quick pull. The Indians on this trail were more numerous than on the Platte and scarcely a day passed that they were not to be seen, and continually trying to drive off our stock. We did not receive any great scare until we reached the Big Blue River where on the fourth day of July at ten o'clock in the morning a large Concord coach filled with passengers and a small guard of the United States soldiers,

which had previously passed us, were awaiting our arrival before daring to proceed. On reaching the crest of the bluff leading to the valley of the river we saw hundreds of Sioux Indians, in war paint and feathers, camped on the opposite side in the underbrush and woods, and in the main trail directly in our path.

We at once went into corral. Thirty men against a horde of savages, if they were there to dispute our right of progress, was not a pleasant position to be placed in nor a fitting manner in which to celebrate the glorious Fourth. Consultations were numerous and all took part. The redskins, camped in plain sight, were hurrying to and fro, evidently in council like ourselves. To the right of the trail was a dense wood close to the river bank; on the left was a high perpendicular bluff, its sides unscalable, so our route was a genuine death trap, should they attack us. After grub all gathered in a circle and with pipes we proceeded with our last council. The situation was talked over from every point as to what the

Indians might do or might not do. We finally arrived to the conclusion that they had the best of us whatever move we made. A majority vote decided to proceed with every man for himself in case of attack. Our wagons were empty which was a little in our favor as we could go on a mule trot or gallop. The coach filled with passengers was placed in the lead; and, being the youngest of the party, they were considerate enough to let me follow, and I did so as closely as possible. On reaching the river bottom, the driver of the coach started his horses on a run and the lash was put to every mule. We were all yelling like demons and on our approach the Indians left the trail and took to the river, thinking that we were a hundred or more strong. All passed safely through that valley of what might have been a horrible massacre. The unearthly racket we made was undoubtedly our salvation, but we were not out of danger by any means and continued our flight until eleven P. M. when we went into corral for food and rest. At three A. M. we again

struck the trail and it is well that we did, for those blood-thirsty redskins laid death and destruction in their wake and came very near overtaking us a day later. Arriving at Leavenworth, I boarded a Missouri River palace for St. Louis, thence to New Orleans.

A FALSE FRIEND

On returning to St. Louis, I met a Westerner that I knew only by sight, and by him was induced to remain over a few days and take in the city. I did and was scooped. On the third morning I went through my pockets and the bed, piece by piece, dumping its contents in the center of the room, but my roll was gone. At once I sought my friend, but he was nowhere to be found. Plain case of misplaced confidence. He had made a touch. In my desperation, I made a confident of the caretaker of the hotel register. Being of a sympathetic nature, he consoled me with an invitation to stimulate, which I did. Being without a trunk, I was informed on my arrival it was customary to pay as you enter; fortu-

nately I had a meal to my credit. I was in good condition, having had sufficient victuals to last the day, after which I proceeded to the river front and here discovered a boat bound for Omaha. I boarded her, sought out the steward, and applied for a position. He replied that he did not want any help.

"Well, I suppose you will let a fellow work his way, won't you?"

His answer was "Get off this craft," and without further talk, in not a very gentlemanly manner he assisted me.

On landing, I was mad clear through, and made up my mind I was going on that boat, and I did go. Just before the gang plank was pulled in I walked on board, keeping a sharp lookout for the steward. After I had avoided him for an hour and just as I was on the point of congratulating myself, I bumped into him.

"You on board?"

"It looks very much as if I were in evidence."

He grabbed me by the coat collar and hustled me before the captain. I told a

straight story, and he, being a man, told the steward to take me up to the kitchen and set me to work. He did, and had his revenge in seeing that it was nearly continuous. After supper I worked the dish racket until twelve o'clock. At three the next morning he awoke me out of a sound sleep and set me to cleaning the woodwork of the cabin. Another of my desirable duties was to wash and polish the silver, throwing the water over the sides of the boat.

AN ALERT STEWARD

After dinner of the second day I proceeded with the tin bucket to the side of the boat and overboard went its contents, including three silver spoons. The spoons had no sooner left the bucket than I felt something of great force come in contact with the seat of my trousers. For a moment I thought surely perpetual motion had been discovered. Turning I was face to face with that infernal steward. Nor did that end my troubles for during the entire trip that particular locality of my person was the target for that

fellow's boot. With a terrible oath, he informed me that my landing would be reached about midnight a day later and was called Wood Pile Landing. A short time before reaching the place, I was hustled from my bunk by the steward and in no gentle manner forced to the bow of the boat. The night was pitch dark, and produced a decidedly lonesome feeling in the one that was to be put off at a Wood Pile on the edge of an immense forest and undoubtedly miles from a dwelling. As the boat reached the bank, not even waiting for the gang plank to be shoved out, the old sinner gave me a push and at the same time applied the now familiar boot. I reached the earth on all fours. My first thought was to present him with a rock, but I curbed my temper, for I had no idea of deserting the old ship.

In those days the boilers of the boats were fired with cord wood purchased of the planters and delivered on the bank of the river. All boats plying on the Missouri River at that time were flat bottom with

paddle wheel at the stern. Two long heavy poles were carried at the bow and worked with a windlass, being used to raise the bow of the boat when becoming fast on a sand bar. The pilot was obliged to keep a continuous lookout for these bars, as the channel was treacherous and changed often.

On approaching the river bank one of the deck hands would jump off with the bow line and make fast to a stump or tree, then the stern line was thrown to him and similarly connected. Then the negro deck hands would proceed to carry on the wood on their bare shoulders to the tune of a Southern plantation melody. When ready to start the bow line was cast off, the paddle wheel was started by the engine, and by means of the steering gear the craft was swung out into the stream, then the stern line was thrown aship, and the boat was off—but not without the steward's victim. No sooner had the colored gentlemen reached the deck, than I followed. Waiting until all was quiet aboard, I sought my berth. The next morning I proceeded with my work as if nothing had happened.

I anticipated the steward's next move would be to throw me overboard, and in that belief told the cook of what he had done the previous night. At that point he came in, and on discovering me said, "You here again," his face purple with rage. His right foot at once became restless, he made a rush for me, but the cook with butcher-knife in hand prevented the action of said foot, and my troubles with that gentleman were over.

ARRIVAL AT LEAVENWORTH

We soon reached Leavenworth, and I left the boat without regret, but a much wiser youth. I went to the First National Bank of Leavenworth, drew my money, and after a few days' rest, I again embarked for Denver astride a mule. We saw plenty of Indians, but as the train was a long one they did not molest us.

On reaching the city of the plains I at once hunted up my old friend, the Major, who introduced me to the head of a firm of contractors, who were at that time engaged in getting out ties in the "Black Hills," for

a portion of the Union Pacific railroad, then under construction. He told me that he wanted a man to go there and straighten out a set of books that a former employee had left badly mixed. He also took the trouble to inform me that the country was alive with Indians, and that the man who went there took big chances; and, if I were at all timid, I had better not accept the position. My friend gave me a strong recommend and I clinched the matter by telling the gentleman that I was not afraid of man, ghost or Indian. He replied that I was just the man he was in search of, and would give me five hundred dollars in gold, a good horse and pay all expenses; that I should get my traps and be at the Planter's Hotel for dinner.

He expected his two partners from the east to inspect the camp and business, and everything was to be in readiness to depart on their arrival. Our conveyance was a full sized Concord coach with six good mules to draw it. The boot of the coach contained the best of everything to eat and drink—the latter being just as essential in that

country as gun and ammunition. The partners were detained en route, and did not arrive until the second day, when they wished to rest and see the western sights, so we did not leave until the fourth day. Two Denverites accompanied us, making six in the party.

The first afternoon we made thirty-two miles, and camped near a stage station, where they keep, for the weary pilgrims, supplies and the rankest kind of corn juice known to the professional drinker.

The following morning we made an early start, and before noon rolled into La Port, on the Cachella Pondre River, the only settlement on the trail to the hills. We put up at the stage station for the night. There we met a drover, and a party of cow boys with one thousand head of California bronchos bound for the States. Those cowboys were as wild as western life could make them, yet, a jolly good lot.

During the evening, at the suggestion of someone, a poker game was started which lasted all night, and in the morning those who had indulged in the game were not feel-

ing any too good—especially the losers—but, nevertheless, they all strolled over to the large adobe corral to see our party off. Mr. A—, the head of the firm of contractors, had his large winnings safely concealed in a chamois bag placed close to his hide, where all wise men of the West carried their money in those days.

The drover had been a heavy but good loser. When about ready to hitch up our mules he called out to Mr. A—, "I'll go you six of my best bronchos against five hundred dollars that you haven't a man in your outfit that can drive the d—d brutes a mile and return."

The contractor approached me and asked if I thought I could do it. I told him that I was willing to take the chance.

Without another word he walked over to where the drover was standing and informed him that he would take the bet, provided he would have his cowpunchers hitch the little devils to the coach.

"Agreed," shouted the old fellow in no uncertain language.

The boys turned to the work with a will; for the fun expected, even if I received a broken neck for my daredevil recklessness, excited them to the highest pitch.

The reader has undoubtedly seen in the Wild West circuses the old-fashioned overland coach hung by heavy springs from front to rear axle. One of the most uncomfortable conveyances to ride in ever invented, especially for the driver, for, if the coach was not heavily loaded, when the front wheels dropped into a hole the old ramshackle thing was liable to topple over on the animals; and, if the driver was not securely strapped to the seat when the rear wheels reached the hole, he would land some distance in the rear. The contractor had the old ark properly balanced before starting, so I had no excuse to worry from that source.

The cowpunchers selected one broncho each and after a half hour's hawling, pulling and coaxing succeeded in hitching them to the coach. I climbed to the seat and was securely strapped with a large leather apron. Then I gathered up the

lines and placed myself solidly for the start.

The whip socket contained a hickory stick five feet long with a lash twelve feet in length attached to one end. I gave the word to let them go, but the little bronchos thought different and balked. The number of times they bucked and threw themselves, started and bucked again, would be impossible to say. Finally the contractor accused the drover of being in collusion with his cowpuncher in order to win the wager by holding the bronchos back and a volley of words of not very mild character ensued, after which the six cowboys, three on either side of the team, stood off six feet. The noise made by the cracking of their whips their everlasting yelping made the excitement stronger than before, and I was off on the wildest ride I ever took. A hurdle jumper would not stand much of a chance with one of those wild bronchos.

A DANGEROUS RIDE

It was a lovely June morning and the bracing air of Colorado made me feel as wild as

the young animals that were fast wheeling me over the dangerous trail and possibly into a camp of hostile Indians. I gave no thought to danger for I was too busy keeping the fiery little beasts to the trail. They were going at breakneck speed with no sign of tiring, so I let them go enjoying the sport even more than they. My hat went flying with the wind, I looked back, but could not see the ranch. How far I had left it behind, or what distance I had covered, I knew not.

At last I came to myself and realized for the first time what terrible danger I was in. Slowly turning the team to the right, I began a circle, hardly perceptible at first, but finally again reaching the trail. On the return trip, I plied the long lash to the leading pair. They shot forward faster than ever, all steaming with foam and covered with lather. At a great distance to the south I could see a party of Indians riding in the same direction. This additional danger seemed fairly to intoxicate me and I plied the whip with all my strength. The corral loomed up and then the stage station. The

others, with hands in their pockets and mouth agap, were holding their breath; and, as we wheeled past them, the cowboys lashing the bronchos, a mighty shout went up. I had won the wager and was the lion of the day.

We did not make a start until the following morning. We fastened the bronchos together and tied the leader to the rear of the coach, and thus resumed our journey to the hills, where we safely arrived two days later, but minus four of the treacherous brutes. At night we always picketed them with the mules and the four that were lost had pulled their picket irons and undoubtedly gone to join the much read of "wild horses of the plains."

The camp in the hills consisted of shanties for fifteen hundred men, saw mill, and outfit store. The latter included in its stock plenty of the best kind of liquor. Each man was allowed three drinks a day and no more.

I had the books straightened out in due time and one day the contractor discovered he would soon be out of flour, and the nearest point at which it could be purchased was

La Port, seventy-five miles distant. The Indians were troublesome, and each man who was asked refused to go, with one exception. The contractor finally made me a tempting offer to accompany a driver of a six mule team. I accepted, and at break of day the next morning we started. My companion on that dangerous trip was a plucky son of the Emerald Isle. We camped that night on Lodge Pole Creek. On the opposite side was an adobe ranch, and an immense stockade owned by a Frenchman with a Sioux squaw for a wife.

In our hurried start we had forgotten our tobacco, and without it my companion seemed lost. After grub I mounted my horse, and crossed over the creek to procure some. On making my wants known, I was freely supplied with tobacco, and was also informed that before we arrived they had been fighting the Indians for some time; that one of the cowboys had an arm badly shattered; and that they feared another attack the next morning. I returned to camp and told my companion of our danger.

A WELCOME HAVEN

After giving the animals plenty of feed and rest, we again took the trail at 4:30 A. M. As the day dawned, with the aid of a field glass, I discovered Indians swooping down on the ranch with the stockade at break-neck speed, and others coming in our direction. I told Patrick to urge the mules to a gallop. He suspected the cause and did so at once. Over the rolling ground we flew until the sun was well up in the heavens, and as each hour passed the redskins gained on us, until at last they could be seen with the naked eye. The harsh and cruel war-whoop of those blood-thirsty savages echoed and re-echoed back from the distant hills, and over the desolate plains until men and beasts were crazed to desperation. The lash was put to the already tired mules, and we strained every nerve to reach the crest of the next knoll, hoping against hope for succor. On they came, their warwhoops for scalps and the white man's blood was now continuous. The long feared report of their rifles was at last heard; bullets pierced our

canvas covered wagon. We made a last desperate effort and reached the summit of the bluff. Not a half a mile from its base was a large corral of white covered wagons. Down the incline we flew, looking neither to the right nor the left, and, on reaching the corral, both men and beasts fell into a heap exhausted.

The red devils rode to the top of the hill, and the warwhoop of anger they sent up rings in my ears at times to this very day.

That evening we again took the trail and made the remainder of the trip by night drives. Reaching La Port the third morning, we secured our load and after giving the animals a much needed rest we started on the return trip. The fourth morning we arrived at the ranch with the stockade. Three mornings after we reached the foot of the hills where the company had a log cabin for their hunters and trappers, who, with their trusty rifles, furnished antelope, deer and buffalo meat for their small army of employees. On entering, a sight met our gaze too revolting to pass from memory.

Upon the earthy floor lay two of those sturdy and warm-hearted dwellers of the plains and rockies, cold in death, scalped and mutilated almost beyond recognition—a deed committed by those dastardly red fiends of the Far West. Both were friends of mine and with uncovered head, in the presence of that gritty son of old Ireland, I vowed vengeance.

"At least, Charlie" said Patrick, "Let's give them a decent burial and move on."

We did so, reaching camp that evening just as the sun, with its beautiful tints of carmine, was bidding plains and hills good-night, as if in memory of those stalwart and brave men who made the settlement and civilization of the West possible.

CHAPTER VII

A PLUCKY GERMAN

WO WEEKS later a strapping six-foot German, who was in charge of another camp further down the line, came for a visit. Shortly after his arrival, he proposed that we should go hunting, to which I agreed.

That morning, as usual, the men called for their liquor, and among them was a long lanky fellow with red hair and bushy beard. He certainly had the appearance of an outlaw. He had received one glass of grog and came for the second which I refused him. Without a word I was on my back. At that point the German came in and caught him with the left hand in the same locality. Suffering with pain and crazed with liquor, he left the store, secured his revolvers and returned. I was behind the counter at the time with my back to the door. The first thing I knew I heard the report of a revolver and a bullet whizzed past my ear and buried

itself in a can of tomatoes not six inches from my head. As I turned around, I saw the fellow being propelled through the door by the German's right. At that point the contractor came in and after being told of what had happened, he discharged the fellow. He wished to retain his revolvers, but his request was not granted. He had an old-fashioned army musket and begged to be allowed to keep that. I told Mr. A— not to let him have it for I was satisfied from the blow he gave me that he was a bad actor; but Mr. A—, being good natured and kind hearted, consented. He ordered four days' rations put up for him and he left camp in an ugly mood and was given no further thought.

After grub, the German proposed that we flip a coin to see who should go for the horses. The visitor losing, he at once started for the canyon below where the horses were grazing. Shortly after I heard a shot and then many more, but gave it no heed as it was a common occurrence there. Half an hour later one of the men came in and told

me that the German lay dead in the canyon below. I, with the others in camp, proceeded to the point indicated, where we found the poor fellow lying on his back. A bullet from that villian's musket had pierced his heart. His watch, belt of cartridges, revolvers, and repeating carbine were gone. After we returned with the body, Mr. A— had the mill whistle blown calling all hands to quarters and for three days and nights with little sleep or rest we searched those hills and trails leading to Salt Lake and Denver. We picketed men on each trail to search all passing trains; but the demon gave us the slip, and cheated that maddened crowd of a lynching, or something worse; perhaps a tug of war between two wild bronchos, which we had in camp, with that man's body as the connecting link.

I can to this day remember just how that poor fellow looked; cold in death, far from home and loved ones, with no mother to weep at his bier. With uncovered heads we lowered him in earth, in a rough box, at the foot of one of the tall sentinels of the

hills, and placed a slab to mark the spot, that his friends might some day claim all that remained of as brave and honest a German as ever lived.

A WATCHFUL PROVIDENCE

Thus by the toss of a coin was my life again spared. This last narrow escape from death was the fourteenth of which I positively knew, and how many more that I did not know of, it is impossible to tell; so I made up my mind to get out of the country alive, if possible. I informed Mr. A— of my intentions and the following day closed my business and at dusk that evening I started, unaccompanied, on a two hundred mile ride over a trail watched by hundreds of bloodthirsty Indians. I knew that no Indian pony could overtake my fleet runner, and all that was to be feared was a surprise or have my horse shot from under me. I camped far from the trail, with lariat fastened to my wrist, never closing my eyes until my faithful animal had laid down for the day. His first move at dusk awoke me, and, after

feed, we were off with the wind at breakneck speed.

At the close of the second day, while I lay sleeping on the desert sands with the saddle blanket for a pillow, and dreaming of my far away home, it seemed as if something of a slimy nature was slowly crawling over the calf of my bare leg. On gaining partial consciousness, too quickly did I realize that it was a reality and not a dream. A rattlesnake's long slimy body was crossing that bridge of flesh, squirming along for a couple of inches, then raising its repulsive body a foot or more and turning its insignificant head, would look straight towards my partly closed eyes and, with its hideous mouth agap, would dart its poisonous arrow-like tongue in and out like lightning, then lowering itself, it would resume the same tactics as before. How many times it repeated this, I shall never know. No words have ever been formed that can adequately express the feeling that took possession of me. I seemed powerless to move a muscle or twitch an eye-lid. The suspense was

terrible, expecting each time that the slimy body descended the viper would thrust his poisonous lance into my leg and all would be over. The horror of it all cannot be imagined, and to this day, when I recall the incident, it sends a shiver through my entire body. As the coarse rattles of his tail left the bare flesh of my leg, my senses seemed to return; but it was only for a moment, for through the pant of my right leg I felt that same crawling sensation and I knew in an instant that it was a mate following the one that had just passed over the bridge of flesh. As soon as it reached the bare leg the dirty reptile went through the same horrible stunts as the first one. The agony seemed impossible to bear and when at last the thing had completed its journey and was at a safe distance away, I leaped into the air—how far I shall leave the reader to surmise. Crazed with anger and trembling from head to foot, I rushed for my revolvers and fired at random. I was considered a good shot in those days, but in this excited condition I would not have been able to hit a

BULLIE | BULLIE

barn. I ran for my Henry Carbine and, grasping it by the barrel, made short work of ridding the earth of the cause that had produced the most terrifying scare experience during my western life.

THE FAITHFUL HORSE

For the first time during the excitement my thoughts turned to my faithful horse, but he was nowhere to be seen. The horror of the situation began to dawn upon me and I realized at once that I was lost on that desolate plain—one hundred miles from any camp that I knew of and apparently alone. I cried out, "My God, what can be done!" The thought was enough to drive one crazy. Can I ever forget it? I think not; nor could anyone. Even to see or talk to an Indian would have been a comfort. Driven to agonizing despair I ran for my field glass and scanned the rolling ground in every direction. Buffalo, deer, antelope, coyote, and a small party of horsemen were visible, but the latter too far away to make out if they were United States Cavalrymen or Indians. Look-

ing again, without my glass, I discovered my horse standing on a high knoll not more than a half mile away with head and tail erect; the breath from his dilated nostrils ascending heavenward in the cold October air and presenting a picture for an artist. I called loudly, "Billie, Billie" and with outstretched hand walked slowly toward him, but he looked not in my direction. All of a sudden he made a quick bound and was off. My heart seemed to stop beating. A minute seemed an hour; but I kept walking after him and he finally stopped, turned around and faced me. That look can never be forgotten. With ears thrown back, he came slowly toward me. Again, I called "Billie, Billie," and held out both hands and with a whinner he came on a gallop, trembling in every muscle, seemingly as frightened as myself. I patted his neck, straightened out his rich heavy mane, rubbed his face and nose and kissed him. He licked my cheek and hand in appreciation of my welcome; moisture gathered in his large eyes and I cried with joy—like a child that I was—and then we

both felt better. I coiled up the lariat and placed my right arm over his perfectly formed neck and slowly walked to our little camp. I rubbed him down until he was perfectly dry; then curried, brushed and rubbed until I could almost see myself in his coat of silky hair. Then I made him lay down and did the same thing myself, using his withers and mane for a pillow. When I awoke the moon shown full in our faces. I patted his neck and soon those large eyes were looking affectionately into mine. I sprang to my feet and he did the same. After brushing off the side on which he had laid, I placed the saddle blanket, buckled taut the saddle, gathered up my small camp kit and fastened it to the rear of the saddle, coiled the lariat and hung it on the pommel of the saddle, fastened on my spurs—from which he had never felt even the slightest touch—threw my field glass over my left shoulder, buckled on my cartridge belt and revolvers, swung my canteen and Henry Carbine over my right shoulder, and with a leap, landed astride the saddle, and was off

with the wind in search of the trail two full miles away.

THE INDIANS CAPTURE A FRIEND

Early on the morning of the third day, I stopped at a stage station, where I met the assistant wagon boss who was with the bull train during my first trip across the plains. He was a genuine Missouri Bushwacker and a desperate fellow. Like all others of his class he wore his hair long, making it a much coveted prize for the Indians. After the days visit and relating our experience of western life, he told me that he was on his way to the Black Hills. I reluctantly volunteered the information to him that I did not think he would ever reach there on the old skate he was riding, and that he should not venture on the trail until after dark, but he knew it all and started at sundown. I was sure the fellow would never reach the Hills, nor was I mistaken, for in less than an hour the Salt Lake Coach rolled up to the door of the station, and the driver asked if a horseman had put up at

the place, and being informed that there had, told us the Indians had captured him and tied him to one of their own ponies and was rapidly going north, leaving his old nag to be picked up by any one who would care for it. Not a day passed that the unwelcome savages were not to be seen, and we were chased many times, but the faithful animal reached Denver in safety.

The Union Pacific railroad had then reached Julesburg and I conceived the hazardous idea of reaching that point by navigating the Platte River—a distance of three hundred miles—so I at once ordered a flat bottomed boat built of material in the rough.

A CUNNING SCHEMER

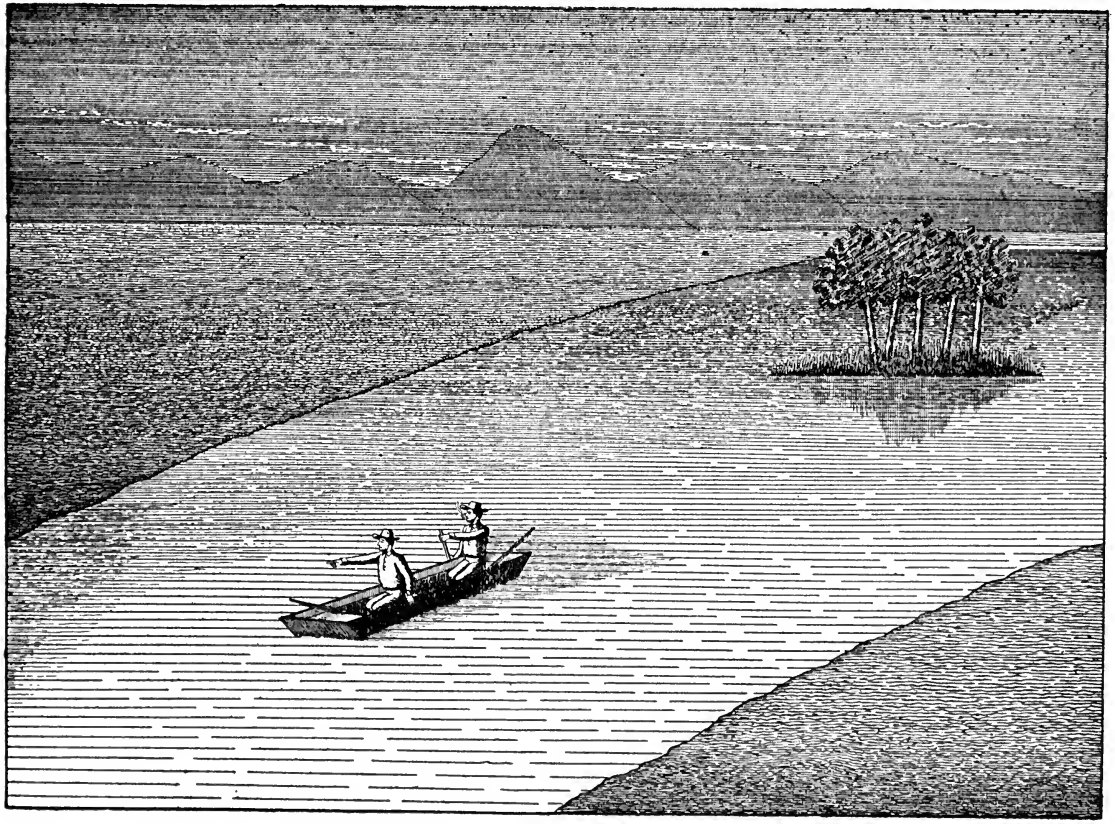
I next went in quest of my aged chum, the ex-pig dealer, who, when found, revealed by a twinkle in his eye another dare-devil scheme, which he was quite capable of concocting when alone in his warehouse den. He exclaimed, with much feeling and a forced tear, that he was right down glad to see me safely back and gave me little rest

until I had related my experiences in the hills. He then unfolded his diabolical scheme, whereby both of us could lay a foundation for a fortune. I was in need of the latter, without any question, but not by this method.

Cheyenne had just been surveyed, mapped and laid out, and the proposition was for him to furnish a man, two mule teams, wagons, tents, provisions and all other necessities; and this man and myself were to go there and squat or take possession of two sections of Government land, consisting of one hundred and sixty acres each, located just outside the city limits. The offer was promptly rejected, and it destroyed the last particle of friendship that had existed between us as far as I was concerned. I had just been through that part of the country and had narrowly escaped death many times, and for us to carry out this scheme, I knew would be impossible, for the tricky redskins would be certain to capture us. I cannot recollect the exact reply that I made him, but am positive I

requested him to go to Hades by the shortest possible route. We parted in anger after three long years of friendship. The old major's love for the almighty dollar was the cause. I never did have a very strong desire to furnish material to the cruel savages for one of their home scalp dances, and besides my mind was made up to leave Colorado, which I did.

I afterwards made the acquaintance of a young fellow, a college graduate who had been unable to secure a position to his liking and was anxious to return to the States. After a few days of good fellowship, and finding him of the right material, I made my plans known to him. He at once fell in with them, and a week later we embarked on our perilous journey. We started at full moon drifting with a comparatively strong current using paddles to guide our roughly constructed craft. We made nightly rides of about fifty miles, and at dawn would land on one of the small islands of the river, conceal ourselves and the boat in the tall grass from which we were able to see all



HOME RIDE DOWN THE PLATTE RIVER

that passed by trail and bluffs, and not be seen ourselves. Our greatest danger was in being discovered by the Indians on the high bluffs, or a visit from them to the island we occupied. The first scare we had was when a party of a dozen or more rode to the bank of the river for the purpose, as we supposed, of crossing. They seemed, however, undecided as to their course, but finally urged their ponies down the bank and into the river. To describe our feelings would be impossible. Just then, to us, a minute seemed an hour. Cold beads of perspiration stood out on both, not exactly from fear, but a sort of yearning to be elsewhere; and I wondered, after all that I had passed through, if I was to be cut down on my homeward journey by those fiendish red devils. "Saved!" whispered my friend, "they are leaving the river." And sure enough those little prairie ponies were climbing the bank on a dead run for the bluffs.

The last night of that eventful ride lasted long until after the sun was up. The large Concord coach filled with passengers passed

close to the river bank a short time before, and from the driver we learned we were ten miles from Julesburg. We proceeded, keeping close to the bank, and with field glass continually swept the valley and bluffs in every direction. We were facing a mild and depressing wind. All of a sudden dismal sounds reached our ears, and as the noiseless current of the river rounded the projecting points in its banks, it bore our staunch old craft to a place of safety, or ourselves to a cruel death, we knew not which. The sounds became more distinct until both of us were satisfied that the Indians had captured the overland coach with its load of human freight. As we rounded the next bend the river took a straight course, but there was no island in sight.

"No island in sight," said my friend. "Where can we go?" And turning around I discovered he was as white as a sheet. As for myself, I was hanging to the edge of the bank trying hard to collect my wits and recover from a fainting spell. We finally managed to get the boat back and around

the bend where we lay concealed for some time, suffering the torture of Hades. I finally crawled to the top of the bank and with field glass surveyed the locality in every direction. No life was visible, still the unearthly noise kept up, and the feeling of those two lone travelers would be impossible to describe. The thought at last came to me that we must be somewhere in the vicinity of the old California Crossing. I crawled back to the boat and told my companion to go ahead, while I continually used the field glass. After fifteen minutes, I discovered a white speck in the eastern horizon. We were soon over our fright, and with light hearts were sailing over the rippling waters of the old Platte feeling assured that we would soon reach a place of safety, as far as the Indians were concerned.

On arriving at the crossing, which it proved to be, we found one of those large white covered prairie schooners stalled in the middle of the stream, and fifty Greasers, as the Mexican drivers were called, and as many yoke of oxen trying to haul it out.

FAREWELL TO THE PLAINS

We sailed merrily along and at two P. M. reached Julesburg, the then terminus of the Union Pacific railroad and overland shipping point for all territory west, north and south. The Union Pacific railroad, when under construction, made a terminus every two or three hundred miles. The houses were built in sections, so they were easily taken apart, loaded on flat freight cars, and taken to the next terminus completely deserting the former town. Julesburg was rightfully named "The Portable Hell of the Plains." My finer feelings cannot, if words could, attempt a description. Suffice to say that during the three days we were there four men and women were buried in their street costumes. The fourth day we boarded a Union Pacific train and were whirled to its Eastern terminus, Omaha, thence home, arriving safely after an absence of four years.

The habits formed during those western years were hard to change, and the fight of my life to live a semblance of the proper life, required a will power as irresistible as the

crystal quartz taken from the lofty snow capped mountain sides, taking tons of weight to crush it, that the good might be separated from the worthless.