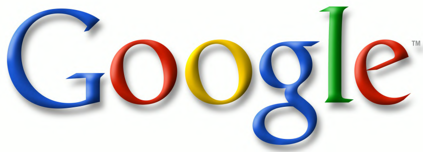

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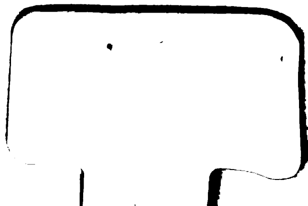

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AN OREGON BOYHOOD

BY

LOUIS ALBERT BANKS

AUTHOR OF "WHITE SLAVES" "HONEYCOMBS OF LIFE" ETC.

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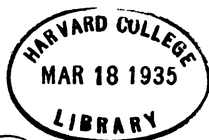
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AN OREGON BOYHOOD

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AN OREGON BOYHOOD

I

A ROMANCE OF THE PLAINS

To the great majority of those who read these chapters, the scenes portrayed will be so different from those to which they have been accustomed in their Eastern homes that they will, no doubt, often seem unreal, and almost impossible. And, indeed, much of it would appear very different if the same communities were visited to-day. The boys and girls who are growing up under the shadow of Mount Hood at the present time will never know, except from chronicles like these, the wonderland into which it was my fortune to be born forty-one years ago.

Yet the natural scenery is so magnificent that it must ever be a wonderland while the world stands. I shall have to ask you, while you accompany me in these chapters, to take leave of the accustomed and conventional, and

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"Follow me
To where the white caps of a sea
Of mountains break and break again,
As blown in foam against a star —
As breaks the fury of a main —
And there remain as fixed, as far.

"Ye who love
The shaggy forests, fierce delights
Of sounding waterfalls, of heights
That hang like broken moons above,
With brows of pine that brush the sun,
Believe and follow."

The journey to Oregon to-day is a very simple matter — a mere item of six days in a drawing-room car; with a comfortable bed at night, with soft pillows and fresh sheets; and a dining-room car attached, with all the delicacies of civilization to tempt the appetite. It was a very different experience in 1852, when it took my father six months to go from Benton County, Ark., to Benton County, Ore., with an ox team. Very slowly their long lines of canvas-covered "prairie-schooners" wound their way behind the patient oxen, meek and slow, across Kansas and Nebraska and Colorado, that were then thought to be the Great American Desert and not worth the settling. With tireless pluck and ever-springing hope they climbed over the Rocky Mountains and pushed onward, traversing the great "inland empire" of

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Eastern Oregon, forcing their weary limbs to carry them around the mighty gorge of the cascades of the Columbia, the Oregon of the youthful Bryant, and which as yet

> "Heard no sound save its own dashings."

On, always on, poured that second tide of Argonauts, until they reached the Willamette Valley, which was at that time the goal of the Western pioneer.

Far back, on what was known as the plains, in that weird and strange region on the boundary between Oregon and Southern Idaho, where the little Burnt River enters the large and treacherous Snake River, my father saw the great sunset of his young life in the death of his father and mother. After five months of ceaseless travel and exertion, enduring hardships beyond number, when almost in sight of the promised land, their devoted train was overtaken by an epidemic of cholera which that year followed the trail of the emigrants and destroyed a large portion of the men, women, and children of their fated band.

His mother fell first, and they buried her with other friends who succumbed to the fatal disease at that sad camping-place at the foot of a giant boulder, as big as an ordinary dwelling-house, covering every grave over with huge piles of stone to

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save the bodies from the ravaging teeth of prairie wolves. At that time this lonely graveyard was half a thousand miles from any human habitation, save an Indian wigwam or some trader's movable hut. Imagine my astonishment when, a few years ago, I came over that old trail with a camping outfit, pitching my tent night after night at the old camping-places, coming with sad interest to seek out the spot of my grandmother's grave, to find there a bustling, growing railroad town, and that the Union depot of the Oregon Railway and Navigation Company's line, and the Oregon Short-Line Branch of the Union Pacific Railroad, was building almost on the very spot of that once lonely burying-place, and stands to-day as her strange and unique monument.

Those long wagon-trains left their mark on hills and mountains everywhere. So deeply did the wagons cut their ruts, and these have been so exaggerated by the wash of the rains and melting of the snows of succeeding years, that it is as easy to follow that old trail that has not been used for more than a quarter of a century as it would be to follow a railroad track.

Perhaps it was the memory of many a tale of buffalo-hunting and perilous nights standing guard over the sleeping camp, watching against hostile Indians, with which my father had often regaled

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my childish ears, that made those days on the old trail full of romance to me. At any rate, they seemed to me to be haunted with the shadows of passing wagon-trains, and I should not have been astonished at any time to have seen coming over the brow of the hills a band of mounted Indians in war-paint, with bow at rest and quiver of arrows dangling at the shoulder.

Joaquin Miller, a native Oregonian, who was a backwoods boy of several years' standing even at the time of my early advent in those Western wilds, has sung the story of those hardy pioneers in a way that deserves appreciation, even at the hands of the successors of those other pioneers who landed on Plymouth Rock:

"A tale half told and hardly understood;
The talk of bearded men that chanced to meet,
That leaned on long, quaint rifles in the wood,
That looked in fellow faces, spoke discreet
And low, as half in doubt, and in defeat
Of hope; a tale it was of lands of gold
That lay toward the sun. Wild-winged and fleet
It spread among the swift Missouri's bold,
Unbridled men, and reached to where Ohio roll'd.

"The long chain'd lines of yoked and patient steers;
The long white trains that pointed to the West,
Beyond the savage West; the hopes and fears
Of blunt, untutored men, who hardly guess'd
Their course; the brave and silent women dress'd

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In homely spun attire, the boys in bands,
The cheery babes that laughed at all, and bless'd
The doubting hearts with laughing lifted hands,
Proclaimed an exodus for far untraversed lands.

"The plains! The shouting drivers at the wheel,
The crash of leather whips; the crush and roll
Of wheels; the groan of yokes and grinding steel
And iron chains, and lo! at last the whole
Vast line that reached as if to touch the goal,
Began to stretch and stream away and wind
Toward the West, as if with one control;
Then hope loomed fair, and home lay far behind;
Before, the boundless plain, and fiercest of their kind.

"The way lay wide and green and fresh as seas,
And far away as any reach of waves;
And sunny streams went by in belts of trees;
And here and there the tassell'd tawny brave
Swept by on horse, look'd back, stretch'd forth and gave
A yell of hell, and then did wheel and rein
Awhile, and point away, dark-browed and grave,
Into the far and dim and distant plain
With signs and prophecies, and then plunged on again.

"Some hills at last began to lift and break;
Some streams began to fail of wood and tide,
The sombre plain began betime to take
A weary brown, and wild and wide
It stretched its naked breast on every side.
A babe was heard at last to cry for bread
Amid the deserts; cattle lowed and died,
And dying men went by with broken tread,
And left a long black serpent line of wreck and dead.

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"They sat in desolation and in dust
By dried-up desert streams; the mother's hands
Hid all her bended face; the cattle thrust
Their tongues and faintly called across the lands.
The babes, that knew not what the way through sands
Could mean, would ask if it would end to-day.
The panting wolves slid by, red-eyed, in bands
To streams beyond. The men look'd far away,
And silent saw that all a boundless desert lay.

"They rose by night; they struggled on and on.
As thin and still as ghosts; then here and there
Beside the dusty way before the dawn
Men silent laid them down in their despair,
And died. But woman! Woman frail as fair!
May man have strength to give to you your due;
You falter'd not, nor murmured anywhere;
You held your babes, held to your course, and you
Bore on through burning hell your double burthens through.

"They stood at last, a decimated few,
Above a land of running streams, and they?
They pushed aside the boughs, and peering through,
Beheld the cool, refreshing bay;
Then some did curse, and some bend hands to pray,
But some looked back upon the desert, wide
And desolate with death: then all the day
They wept. But one with nothing left beside
His dog to love, crept down among the ferns and died."

My mother had come to Oregon the year before my father arrived. She was then only a girl of fourteen. Her family came from near Detroit,

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Mich., and they made the way overland by mule teams — more stubborn, but not so slow as the oxen — in a little more than three months. A hundred miles south of Portland, on the banks of the Willamette River, they had made their last camping-place, and there being plenty of water and fertile valleys and abundant timber, my grandfather had staked out his land claim and begun to make a home. Here it was, the next year, that my father, a lonely, broken-hearted boy not yet twenty years of age, came seeking employment and a chance to work out his destiny in this new land.

He staked out a donation land claim of the old generous sort of those early days, across among the oak hills some ten miles away — for the land in the river bottom was already claimed. He built him a little log-cabin, which he stayed in over night often enough to hold his claim, but had to work at splitting rails, or clearing up land, or whatever employment opened, for more established settlers, to make his living in the meantime. He worked hard all the week, and when Sunday came, saddled up the little dun-colored mare that he had ridden from Arkansas, and on which he had chased more than a hundred buffaloes to their death, and rode the ten miles across the prairie that lay between his lonely cabin and

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the little blue-eyed girl, not yet sixteen, at Father Hurlburt's.

No wonder they should have been in a hurry in those days to get married, for it was lonely in a log-cabin, with the nearest neighbor three miles away; and courting must have been rather unsatisfactory in one of those old one-roomed houses, where father and mother and all the brothers and sisters had to hear all that was being said; so they soon made it up. The lack of proper conveniences for a long-continued courtship is no doubt to some extent responsible for the fact that my gentle little mother is only seventeen years older than myself.

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II

BABYHOOD IN A LOG-CABIN

THE old Oregon Donation Land Claim was a mile square, provided it was a married man who staked it out; otherwise it only ran half a mile in one direction. It is wonderful how a little arrangement like that helps to stimulate the matrimonial market.

Up in the oak hills, overlooking the Willamette Valley, and having for its background the long green wall of the Coast Range Mountains, with their sombre forests of fir and hemlock and spruce reaching as far as the eye could gaze, my father staked out his claim and prepared his cabin against the wedding day. Here he brought his wife in August, 1854, and here I came to keep them company on Nov. 12, 1855.

My mother needed company, for father's work took him away for a good part of every day, and the nearest neighbor was three miles distant. I suppose there are not a great many log-cabins in existence, now, of exactly the type of the one in

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which I was born, though three-fourths of all the dwellings in Oregon were of the same kind at that time. The house was built of logs unhewn. The timber was felled in the forest and cut off the proper length, and either "snaked out" on the ground, endways, or hauled to the place where the house was to go up. Then notches were chopped near the end, so that the logs would fit together into a square building. Of course this left a little crack between the logs. A thin strip of split timber, the proper length and thickness, was driven into this crack, and then it was daubed over or "chinked" with mud. This made the house quite warm, so long as the "chinking" kept snug and tight; but when that became dry and began to fall out, or a rat or a squirrel dug a hole through it, it improved the ventilation, but made it decidedly airy on a cold night.

The cabin had only one room, and therefore only one door. After it was built up the proper height they sawed out a hole for the door, and sawed out on the other side two logs deep, and about two feet long, for a window. The door was fastened by a latch on the inside, and a buckskin string ran through a small hole in the door, and hung down on the outside. If we wished to give notice that people were not to come in, we pulled in the latch-string. The common expression in

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giving invitations to visit one another, throughout all my early days, was, "The latch-string hangs out."

The floor was made of split logs, with the flat side up. This upper side was smoothed down with an adze or a foot-axe until it was comparatively smooth. This was called a "puncheon" floor. There was no carpet on the floor, and mother kept it clean by scouring it twice a week with white sand. When the baby was put on the floor, he was set on a buffalo robe, or deerskin, or bearskin, until he was supposed to be old enough to look after himself, and keep the splinters out of his legs. One or two dogs, usually deer hounds, were considered to be necessary and healthy associates for the baby in his place before the fire.

A good part of one end of the house was taken up with the fireplace. If stone was plenty, and easy to get, the fireplace and chimney were built of that; but if, as on my father's claim, it was scarce, it was built of mud and timber, and was what they called a "stick-and-clay" chimney. A stranger to that sort of building would find it hard to believe that such a chimney would stand weather in the winter, or fail to burn the house down in the summer; but they did sometimes last for many years in safety, though it was by no means an uncommon occurrence for a cabin to take fire

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and burn up from the clay getting knocked off and the chimney-sticks catching fire.

This fireplace was a mammoth affair, and would take in a big oak back-log five or six feet long. The regulation fire was made by putting in one big log, as thick through as my father could manage; and often he would get help, and have two or three men assist him in rolling in a great log, two feet thick or more; then another log, about half the size, went on top of that. Where people were forehanded enough, they had a pair of andirons, or "dog-irons" they called them out there. They were none of your dainty brass fixings, but were made by the country blacksmith out of a cast-off wagon-tire. Many people were not able to afford such fancy arrangements as that, and my father was one of them, and so we had two large stones to hold up the forestick in front, which was itself a piece of wood of no mean proportions, and usually as big as a man would care to carry on his shoulder.

My! What a fire that did make! It was both warmth and light, and it was a rare thing that any other light was used, even for reading at night. When a better light was necessary, some tallow was put in an old plate or in a tin dish, and a rag wick, twisted and greased and all immersed in the tallow except the end, was lighted. I saw no other

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lamp than that for several years. After I grew older, and we began to get more well-to-do, we began to dip candles, which did not make a much better light, however, than the old way.

All the cooking was done at the fireplace. I was quite a large boy before I ever saw a cooking-stove. Across the long way of the fireplace ran a stout iron bar just below the mouth of the chimney. Along this bar there were always hanging a number of strong iron hooks of different lengths, to accommodate the kettle to the condition of the fire. A large part of the cooking was done by boiling or stewing in the kettle. There was a broad stone hearth, and the bread-baking was done there. Some people had big tin reflectors, in which they baked their bread, but my mother baked hers in a big oven that made round loaves about the shape and size of a small cheese. It sat up on legs two or three inches high, on the hearth, and when the bread was raised and ready to bake, the red coals were pulled under it. A big iron lid fitted down over the top of the oven, and this, too, was covered over with hot coals. There was a ring in the top of the oven-lid, and it required a pretty steady nerve to put a poker through that ring, and lift it off, covered with coals and ashes, without spilling something off the lid into the bread.

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Potatoes were often roasted in the hot ashes, and the children thought eggs were pretty good that way, too. One of the first memories I have of eating was the delicious roasted apples that were cooked on the hot stones in front of the fire. How they would sputter! The picture all comes back to me now! My sister is a little baby in the cradle, and I a three-year-old toddler with an appetite big enough for a man. The great fire flames up about the old iron tea-kettle that steams and puffs like a young locomotive; the venison, stewing in the great pot beside it, sends out a savory odor, good enough to the smell to make you forgive Isaac for letting his blessing turn on a mess of venison. The bread is toasting on long forks stuck in front of the flames. The red apples in a row are roasting for the dessert, and are not redder than mother's face, who has just been rescuing the coffee-pot from its bed of coals in the corner, where it has but now boiled over.

By the way, that was true Oregonian coffee, made of parched wheat or barley, and in no danger of keeping one awake at night.

The bed ran across the back end of the room. A long pole, the proper distance out from the wall, ran across the entire end of the room; split boards formed the base-work of the bed, and this was high enough for a trundle-bed to go underneath. The

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trundle-bed was a great institution in those days. As the family grew (for I am the eldest of twelve children, eleven of whom are living), nearly every bed in the house had a trundle-bed under it. A big straw bed went next the boards, and then a splendid feather-bed, made of feathers plucked from the breasts of wild geese and ducks, the spoils of my father's gun, made a resting-place that was not to be despised by weary limbs.

The roof of the cabin was made of boards, split or rived by hand. These were just laid on in rows, with a third board over the crack where the two came together, and then, as nails were scarce and expensive, and not to be thought of in the first cabins, big heavy logs were laid on, the full length of the roof, and staked at the ends with wooden pins that fastened them to the logs at the end of the building. This was not so good as nails, but it served to keep the boards fairly well in place, and to hold the roof down and keep it from blowing away.

The outside of the cabin was as picturesque as the inside. When a coon or a deer or a wildcat or a panther or a bear was killed, the settler took a good deal of pride in putting up the skin where it could be seen. So the outside of the frontier cabin was a pretty fair barometer of the luck, or sportsmanship, of the man who lived inside. The

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skin was turned the fur side to the wall, and stretched as tight as possible, and nailed to the logs, and there it would stay until it dried, when it was taken down to be made into a rug, or tanned for buckskin, or carried to the neighboring town to sell.

Life went on very quietly, for the most part, and a journey to the county town fifteen miles away was the occasion of nearly as much preparation and after-comment as a summer trip to Europe is now. I was a little slow in learning to talk, and when I was twenty months old my mother took me to the doctor, making the long journey of thirty miles there and back in a dead-ax wagon, in order to have me examined, as she feared I was tongue-tied. The physician, after due examination, assured her that I would in all probability talk till she was tired of it, — a prophecy which I amply fulfilled.

Looking back on it now, I can see that babyhood in a log-cabin was a very rude and primeval experience. There were no modern toys. No tin wagons, with cast-iron horses, or marbles with squirrels in them, or Noah's ark loaded with animals that it would be perfectly safe to worship, since they are unlike anything "that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth." The nearest store

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was ten miles away, and all the little pretty things in the way of pictures, children's books, and kindergarten blocks were unknown and undreamed of. But I had my father and mother, and I saw them to my heart's content, for there were no clubs to go to, no lodges to attend, and nothing to take them away from the house at night. I had my dog and my cat, the chickens and the ducks, the little colts, and the calves and the pigs, the wild flowers, the birds and the squirrels, in endless profusion; and above all, I had a mile square in which to make mud-pies, and halloo and laugh as loud as I would. I exercised my liberty to the fullest extent, and looking back over it, I would not exchange my memory of that log-cabin up in the oak hills for the richest mansion on Fifth Avenue.

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III

PRIMITIVE CHURCH-GOING IN OREGON

When I had reached the mature age of four years, my father purchased one of the oldest settled farms in the county, — one having on it an unusually large orchard. It was one of the first really splendid apple orchards planted in that part of the country. He had to go in debt for it very largely, but, by hard work and painstaking economy, he managed to pay for it out of the fruit.

When we moved on to this farm, we changed from the old log-cabin with one room to quite a large, two-story house, built of big, hewn logs, with a wide porch along the front, after the style of the old-fashioned Southern houses. It was at the time one of the best houses for a great many miles around. There was a large sitting-room, with a bed and trundle-bed in it, and then a large dining-room and kitchen, all on the ground floor, with other bedrooms upstairs. The two big fireplaces were built back to back in the centre of the

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partition between the two rooms, and the cooking was done on one side in much the same style as in the old cabin.

Our sitting-room was the largest in the neighborhood, and that was one reason why it was a very popular place for religious meetings, before there were any churches. My parents were very thoroughgoing in their religion, and the very first memories I have are of family worship. Every evening, as it came to be bedtime for the children, father would take down his old family Bible, which he had brought across the plains, and which had two or three generations of Bankses registered in it in his father's handwriting, and would read a chapter, and, after singing one of the old-fashioned hymns, we would kneel down there in the firelight, and he would lead in prayer. If father was away from home, mother took the Bible in his stead, and the fireside church went on as usual.

My father was a good singer, and throughout all my younger days always "pitched the tunes" in the meetings held in the neighborhood, or at the camp-meeting. It was really worth while to see him lead the music at the camp-meeting. His voice had little training, but it was a wonderfully rich, clear voice, and had the greatest carrying power of any voice I ever heard. I have often heard him talking to other men in the field, and

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could distinguish every word when I was half a mile distant; and it was a common thing to hear his laugh a mile away. When he got turned loose on "Coronation" or "Martyn" or "Nettleton," a cornet was not in the race in comparison with his great, whole-souled voice in leading the singing in a backwoods congregation.

The very first church I remember, except the family worship, was when some passing preacher would happen in unexpectedly to stay over night. Then father would get on his horse and ride around to some of the neighbors, and perhaps start some of them on to tell the news, and by the time supper was over and the chores done, the people would begin to come in until the big sitting-room would be crowded with men and women and children, hungry for the rare opportunity for hearing a sermon. How they would drink in every word he said! It was none of your little sermonettes, either, for an hour was a very short sermon for one of those week-evening meetings, and he would often preach an hour and a half.

The first religious meeting I attended, outside of our own sitting-room, was at the old Bellfontaine schoolhouse, which was about two miles from our place. It was a small log schoolhouse, that would probably seat comfortably about seventy-

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five people; though people who are accustomed to sitting on cushions in modern church pews could hardly believe that it could seat anybody "comfortably." The seats were made by splitting a log in two, and smoothing off the flat side to sit on, and then auger-holes were bored into this piece near the end, through which the legs were thrust. There were no backs, and under long sermons they became very tiresome. Some people put their old-fashioned leather-bottomed chairs in the wagon, rode in them to the meeting, and then carried them into the schoolhouse and put them in the aisles for a sort of private pew during the service. One of the childhood diversions of those meetings was the not uncommon occurrence of a small boy going to sleep on one of those puncheon seats and rolling off on the floor. This not only woke the boy up, but everybody else in the house, including the preacher.

If there was to be preaching in the evening, the preacher would announce that "There will be divine service in this place at early candle-light." That was as near as anybody ever thought of arranging for an hour for evening meeting. Perhaps not half the houses in the neighborhood had a watch or a clock; people milked their cows and had their suppers about the same time in the evening, and then would gather rather more

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promptly than they do now in an Eastern church.

The old schoolhouse was never locked, and there was no sexton. There was a pile of wood kept outside, on the ground, and the neighbors took turns in going first with kindling-wood to make a fire, in the season when fire was needed. There was no arrangement whatever for light in the schoolhouse, except some boards hanging on nails around the sides of the wall, with a little foot strip across the bottom, about the size of a man's hand, in which were driven three nails, close enough to hold a candle between them. Every family was supposed to bring one or more candles with them. Most people did this willingly, but there were some stingy folks who attended the meeting as regularly as anybody, but who were never known to bring a candle. Such people got their pay in being gossiped about, and one of our neighbors used to say that a man who always went to church and never took a candle was "close enough to skin a flea for his hide and tallow."

It used to interest me very much, when we happened to be first at the meeting, which was not a rare occurrence, to see the old schoolhouse lighted up at night. The walls were blackened and smoked, and required a good deal of light to

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make much impression. We would go in and put up our one or two candles, and then, one by one, as the families came in, the light increased in proportion to the size of the congregation. When the holders were full, if still other candles were brought, the owner would light them and drop some hot tallow on the window-sill, and then stand the candle in it before the grease hardened. I have often seen a candle standing that way on every window-sill, as well as on the table which did service for a pulpit. Usually some one brought a brass or tin candlestick for the preacher's own special use. It would have been a hard place to have read a sermon.

Of course the candles had to be snuffed several times during the service, and I don't know anything that will make a mischievous boy laugh in church more quickly than to see some clumsy fellow burn his fingers snuffing the candle, and dab his hand into his mouth to suck out the fire, or choke down the bad word he feels like saying.

The great meetings of my boyhood, however, were the camp-meetings which were held every summer in a pine grove not far from this schoolhouse. There was a fine spring of water there, which was famous throughout the country, and the people used to come for forty or fifty miles around and camp out at those meetings. There

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were no planked tents at those first camp-meetings, and nothing of the modern Chautauqua cottage idea, but white canvas tents were put up by the hundreds. Chickens were roasted, pies made by the scores, and bread baked to last a week or more, and the people came together to give all their time to the public services.

There was a big platform, large enough to hold a dozen or more preachers, and what was called the "preachers' tent" was put up behind it. Flat puncheon seats, like those in the schoolhouse, were placed in long rows in front of this platform. Hay was scattered among these seats to keep the place from getting dusty. The lights, with the exception of candles at the pulpit stand, were made by great torches. Four upright sticks, about four feet apart, were driven into the ground, strips were nailed across near the top of these, and a floor of green poles laid across these strips. This was covered with a bed of earth six or eight inches thick, and then a big fire was lighted on the top. When a dozen of these torches, scattered about through the outer edges of the congregation, were fed by pitch-pine sticks, they made an illumination that was as weird and spectral as it was effective.

It was not only the saints, however, who gathered at these camp-meetings; for on the

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frontier, as well as in the days of Job, when the sons of God came together for worship, Satan came also. The preachers and leading laymen were always on the lookout for reckless fellows who would bring whiskey on the grounds, and start up what was called a "brush barroom." Usually about the third or fourth day of the meeting they would begin to get up horse-races somewhere near, and seek to annoy the camp-meeting folks. Hardly a camp-meeting passed by without some tussle with the ruffians who would undertake to break up the meeting by their hoodlumism. Every once in a while some irreverent scoundrel would come to the "mourner's bench," pretending to be very seriously concerned about his soul, when in reality he was only seeking for an opportunity to do some outbreaking deed that would cast discredit on the meeting. But those frontier preachers became very shrewd in handling such cases, and often turned the tables on the youngsters in a way to teach them a good lesson.

On one occasion, which I remember, one of the men, who was on guard to prevent disorder on the outskirts of the camp, heard two young men make a bet with some of their comrades that they would go to the altar when the invitation was given, and when the meeting was thoroughly warmed up they

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would take the whiskey bottles out of their pockets, and drink the health of the preacher, and get away without being caught. He came in, of course, and made the plan known, and so the preachers were on the lookout for them. After the sermon, when the invitation was given to those who desired to begin a Christian life to come forward to be prayed for, these two young men presented themselves with the others. When all kneeled down to pray, the minister in charge knelt behind these men, and managed to slip their whiskey bottles out of their pockets, and push them back in the hay under a seat, without anybody knowing it except the young men in question. They saw at once that their game was up, and began to plan as to how to get away. The preacher, seeing that they were whispering together, leaned over and heard one say to the other, "When they get up to sing you cut for the brush with all your might, and I'll follow."

But when they rose they found one of the minister's strong muscular hands thoroughly clenched on the collar of each of their coats, and his warning voice saying in their ears, "Kneel down, brother, kneel down!" They knelt down. When the regular meeting was dismissed, he told the brethren that he would like to have some of them remain with these two a little longer. He kept

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them there till after twelve o'clock, and when they finally got away it was with a most earnest promise never to undertake to disturb a camp-meeting again. One old German brother who was present, when he was told about the circumstances, said: "Ach, mein goodness! unt all dose gut prayers wasted!"

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IV

IN AND OUT OF THE OLD LOG SCHOOLHOUSE

ALTHOUGH I did not go to school until I was seven years of age, my education was by no means neglected in the meantime, for my mother began with me as soon as I was able to talk, and despite the added cares which came upon her with the rapidly increasing family, she managed to take time enough from other duties to insist on a pretty thorough application to my studies. By dint of her devotion, and a generous use of plum and cherry switches and various other orchard growths, when I first attended school, at the age of seven, I could read very passably in the fifth reader, and had gone as far as "cube root" in the old "Davies' Arithmetic," and managed to get away with the prize in the spelling class, where most of the boys and girls were twice my age. I have an abiding faith that the best school on earth in which to start young ideas to shoot is a farmhouse with a mother in it as a teacher who possesses a good deal of ambition and grit enough to use the plum switches well.

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The average school district in those days had only three months of school in the year, but in our district we usually had school six months. This covered three months in the winter and three months in the early summer. By the time I was old enough to go, a schoolhouse was built only a mile away from our place, and I was considered a very favored individual, for there were few of the children who did not come much farther, and some walked between three and four miles.

The first teacher that I had was a young man by the name of Martin, who has for many reasons remained in my memory a very romantic and splendid picture. He was a fine-looking young fellow, tall and straight as an arrow, and while kindly in his disposition, had remarkable self-possession and dignity for so young a man. He only taught a few weeks, as his school was broken up by his enlisting as a volunteer in the army. This was in 1862, when the war was in full blast, and while Oregon was not called upon for troops to go to the South, the regular troops were drawn away from the forts, in what was then known as the Indian Country, and the state was called upon to furnish volunteers to take their places. Each county was levied upon for its proportion of the number required. The recruiting officers, accompanied by a brass band and speakers to make

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patriotic addresses, held mass-meetings in every schoolhouse in the country, and when the fervor of patriotism was raised to the highest pitch, the call was made for volunteers. Many a young fellow enlisted under such circumstances who repented it afterward at his leisure. It was a most exciting day in our schoolhouse. It had been announced through all the country round about, and the people came in and brought their dinners and made a picnic day of it. A brass band was then a very uncommon affair. I had never seen or heard one, and I remember that the instrument that impressed me most was the cymbals, and after that the big bass drum.

The boys who lived to get through their term of service and come back were received with great consideration and regard by all the neighbors.

We were not always as fortunate in our teachers. Some of them were men who would have fitted some other business a great deal better. I remember one man whose name I have forgotten, but whom the boys called "Old Rusty," because, on many occasions when there were things he could not understand or explain, he would scratch his head, and say with a puzzled air, "I used to know that well; but you see I'm a little rusty, I've been out of school so long." Some of his punishments were very novel. One was to send

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a boy to the blackboard, with his face to the board, and command him to stretch himself up just as far as he possibly could, then the teacher would draw a chalk-line and require the boy to hold his nose up to that line. It seemed too easy for anything, at first, but if you've never tried it you have no idea how monotonous it gets after a minute or two, and what a desire you will have to let down a little.

Once, when the weather was getting warmer, and there was no fire in the sheet-iron stove, he put three boys to stand on the stove, using it as a dunce-block. One of the boys was much larger than the others, and he was standing next the stove-pipe. The teacher was sitting at the end of the room, in a straight line from the rear of the stove, with his head down, doing some writing. Suddenly the two little boys gave a combined lurch with their shoulders into the ribs of the bigger one, and brought him with such force against the stove-pipe that the whole pipe came down, striking the teacher on the side of the head, scattering the soot everywhere, and dispersing the school to the door. The three barefooted rascals, of course, rolled off on the floor, and got up weeping, and were sent to their seats without further punishment, a leniency they highly appreciated — as I know, having been the middle boy in the scrimmage.

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In those days the teacher "boarded around," and as "Old Rusty" was an especially interesting converser and had been a great traveller, my father welcomed him to spend nearly the entire term at our house.

The sports of those days partook largely of the atmosphere of the country where we were. Baseball was then unknown, but we often played shinny, which we had, of course, learned from the Indians. A wooden ball was used for this game, and long wooden clubs, crooked at the end. I suppose it was called shinny because it was a terrible game on a boy's shins. Rude as it was, however, and learned from half-savage Indians, it did not begin to be so brutal and dangerous as the modern football exploits of our Eastern colleges.

Another game which was a great favorite in the summer time, at the noon hour, was "deer and hounds." The fleetest boy in the school — or one among the fleetest, for there were always several rivals for that championship — was chosen for the deer, and all the rest were hounds. A broad open pasture of several hundred acres, with here and there clumps of brush and timber, was the running-ground. The deer was allowed a certain start, but he was well surrounded, at a distance of a couple of hundred yards or so, with the hounds, who sought to close in on him and hold him. It

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was not sufficient to catch him; he must be held. The game at least had the merit of being good exercise, and was a good settler for a healthy boy's lunch.

In the winter time big snow forts were sometimes erected, in case of a snowstorm, and two of the boys would "choose up," dividing the forces as nearly equal as possible, and the way the snowballs would fly would be a caution. Although it was against the rules of the game, sometimes, when bad blood was stirred, the balls would be soaked in water and squeezed until they were as hard as rocks, and then some one was almost sure to get hurt, and the teacher would have to interfere.

There was a hill near the schoolhouse, fine for coasting in winter, and a favorite way was to take a plank about six or eight feet long, sharpening it a little on the under side at the front end, and, nailing a cleat across the top about a foot from the front, sit flat down on the board with feet braced against the cleat. In that way we had a sort of a rude toboggan, though we had never heard of that word. In this game the girls often took part.

I remember another game which I never saw played but once, but which all the school took a hand in that time. One of the older neighbor boys had been out hunting, and brought home a black bear cub, which in the course of time grew to be

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a very fine-looking bear. He was kept chained to a post, the chain being long enough to permit him at will to go into a little house for shelter, and to climb a pole for exercise. But one day Bruin got his wrath up and broke his chain and came to school. The door was standing ajar, and the first thing anybody knew, in walked a black bear, and stood up on his hind legs, looking around with the most cunning astonishment imaginable. It came upon us all so suddenly that no one thought but that it was a wild beast from the forests, and the way big and little scrambled on to the desks, knocking over the ink-bottles as they went, was a spectacle to be remembered. One agile little fellow jumped out through the window and ran nearly half a mile before he dared to look back. That, I am proud to say, was not myself, though if my window had been up, it might have been a temptation. After we had all sought the highest place we could get in the room, some of the boys recognized the bear as the neighbor boy's pet, and managed to capture him and lead him home. That was the first bear-hunt in which I ever participated.

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V

A BUDDING NIMROD

THE hunting instinct sprouted very early in a frontier boy. The very air he breathed was gamey; his very first playmate, after he got down from his mother's lap, was a dog — and usually either a bird-dog, or a squirrel-dog, or a deer-hound. The guns and the powder-horns he associated with his first conscious vision of the walls of the log-cabin where he was born. On rainy days the bars of lead were brought out, and bullets were run in the old, queer-shaped moulds for the long Tennessee rifle, or were cut into ragged slugs to shoot from the army musket. In addition to this, game was always coming into the house, and was depended upon as a regular stand-by in the family larder. Wild ducks and geese and grouse and pheasants and quail were much more common visitors than chickens to the family table, and venison was about as common as beef. Under such circumstances the average healthy, well-developed boy took to hunting as naturally as a duck does to water.

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My first hunting experiences began when I was a very small boy (before I could be trusted with a gun, or indeed would have had the strength to carry one, — at least the kind that was common in those days) in making trips around the fields with a dog, in search of squirrels. A species of large gray squirrel was very numerous and exceedingly destructive of the grain crops, and I was encouraged in these hunting excursions, not only because fat squirrels were delicious eating when broiled, but because the death of the squirrels meant safety to the grain. The fields were fenced about with old-fashioned worm fences, staked and ridered, and the squirrels were very sharp in taking care of themselves. Although some of them had their winter homes in hollow trees, most of them made winter quarters in the earth at some distance from the fields, up in the hill pastures where they were not likely to be disturbed. There they would dig a hole, running deep, and then rising again nearer the surface of the ground, so as to make themselves safe from water running in at the mouth of the hole. It was wonderful the amount of grain and nuts these squirrels would stow away in these winter garners. It was quite a common thing for the older boys, late in the summer after the hazelnut time was over, to club together and dig out squirrels where their holes were in hazel groves,

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and they often found as many as a half bushel of hazel-nuts, nicely hulled, in a single hole.

But Mr. Squirrel was pretty sharp and had found out that, in order to save himself from the boys and the dogs, it was necessary to have temporary hiding-places in the fence-corners around the edge of the field, and so nearly every corner had its squirrel-hole. But I soon discovered that these holes were very shallow, usually not as deep as a boy's arm is long; so after I had had a good deal of experience squirrel-hunting — for my plan was to help get the squirrel into the mouth of the dog, and the dog did the killing — I conceived the scheme of running my hand into the hole and pulling the squirrel out by the tail, handing him over to the dog's ready teeth. I had great luck at this for a long time, and I suppose I had not pulled out less than a hundred squirrels in that way, when one day I got hold of an unusually profitable hole. One after another I pulled out three squirrels, and ran my hand back to see if there was another, when I found that there was — an unusually wide-awake one; but he had forgotten to offer me his tail end, and seized my finger between his sharp teeth and came out that way. The dog killed him, but I thought I was killed, too, for a good while. I have never put my hand into a squirrel-hole since. After that I

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used to take a forked stick and twist it in the squirrel's hide, and either make him run out or pull him out. This was just as hard on the squirrel, but it was much safer for the boy.

Another favorite section for squirrel-hunting was a belt of ash timber that followed a line of swampy ground through my father's farm and the next one adjoining. This was a place the squirrels were very partial to on hot days, along about noon or a little after. They would fill themselves with grain, and then crawl up in the cool shade of the ash limbs, and lie there lazily, taking a nap. I would come along with the dog, and when I discovered a squirrel I would climb the tree and shake his squirrelship off into the mouth of the dog that was standing ready to catch him below. The dog enjoyed the sport immensely, and became very shrewd and cunning at all these schemes, and understood them, and would play his part as well as if he were able to talk about it. I would take him out away from the tree, and point up to where the squirrel was, and he would watch at the place where he thought the squirrel was going to drop, with flashing eyes and every nerve trembling with excitement.

Long before I had a gun of my own, I used to go along with father to carry the game. When I was only six or seven years old, I used to walk

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many miles at a time for the pleasure of being in the hunt, and carrying grouse, or ducks, or pheasants home. One summer afternoon I was carrying two or three grouse along that way through an ash-swamp. I was jumping from the top of one big ant-heap to another, when suddenly I lighted with my bare foot plump down on the folds of an enormous bull-snake, which was curled up asleep on top of the ant-hill. The snake was scared as badly as I was, and that was saying a good deal; for when I felt him squirm under my foot, I leaped into the air with a scream that could have been heard a half-mile, and the grouse I was carrying flew in every direction. Father killed the snake and measured it, and it only lacked two inches of being six feet in length.

My first experience in hunting where I was permitted to use a gun was in going with my father to shoot wild geese where they lighted in the ponds to feed at night. Once, along in November, father noticed that for several nights the geese had been coming to a pond about two miles from the house. It so happened that just at this time this was the only open piece of water in the whole neighborhood, and the wild geese, which were coming in by the tens of thousands every day from the North, would alight in this pond towards evening and spend the night there in the most noisy kind of goose fellowship.

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So, while we were doing up the chores, father said we would get the work out of the way early, and try that pond for a goose. He said if I would be very careful I might take his squirrel rifle and have a shot too. Oh, but wasn't I proud! I had gone with him hunting many a time, but that was the first time I had been permitted to carry a gun like a man. He loaded up his old musket, and gave me the rifle, and a little before sunset we slipped down to the edge of the water, and crept into the brush on one side, where we were well hidden from view, and there we lay and waited for the game.

It was very still in there, and a muskrat jumping into the water near us gave me such a start that my father laughed at me, and said I was a great man to be carrying a gun. Just about sundown, a little band of perhaps a score of geese came floating along over our heads, talking low and cautiously to each other. How big they did look! They sailed around, making a complete circle of the pond, searching everywhere with their sharp eyes for any possible enemy; but, not discovering us, they settled down with a great splash only a few yards from where we were. Father whispered to me to pick out one and take good aim, and when he counted three we were to shoot. I squinted along the barrel until I saw

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an old goose between the sights, but I think I shut both eyes when I pulled the trigger. Bang! went the guns, and when the smoke cleared away three of the big geese stayed behind. The water was only two or three feet deep in this part of the pond, and father waded out and brought them in, and we lay down to watch again, hoping another band might come.

Sure enough, after a little another flock, larger than the first, lighted in the pond, but at the farther side from us, and we concluded to wait and see if they would not swim nearer. And it was well we did, for suddenly the very air seemed to be filled with geese, and our ears were almost deafened with the flapping of wings. It was a regular goose mob. There must have been many hundreds, and possibly thousands, in that flock which was passing over, and, seeing the open water, suddenly determined on camping for the night. They covered the pond all over. The very place was black with geese up to within a few feet of where we were lying in the brush. I am sure I could have run and jumped on the back of one before it could have gotten out of the way. I was so excited that it was hard to keep me from shouting. Father whispered to me that I was to shoot my rifle into the mass of geese, and then when they rose to fly he would shoot into the

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flock with his musket. What a time there was when that gun went off! We took nine geese on that haul. Some of them only had a wing broken, and led father a great chase through the cold water. But at last he had them all in — twelve great geese, deliciously fattened on the stubble fields. Father carried the game home, and I carried the two guns. I would have thought they were pretty heavy, usually, but I was so excited over our success, and especially that I had had a hand in it, and nobody could tell how many of those geese I had killed myself, that I seemed to walk on air, and the guns were light as feathers. I felt I was a full-fledged hunter from that day.

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VI

A BOY'S HUNTING TALES

ON the Oregon frontier where the country was hilly and largely timbered, and especially so near my home, — where the mountains with their unbroken forests of from fifty to seventy miles in width and hundreds of miles in length were less than three hours' walk distant, — it was a common thing for domestic animals to run wild and seem to lose all their knowledge of man and all memory of ever associating with him. The climate was mild, and there were at times several winters in succession when stock would live out in the woods and keep in very good condition without being fed from the farm. Sometimes horses and cattle would become as wild as deer and almost as hard to get back into the home pasture. It was especially a good country for hogs. There was a large amount of oak timber that yielded splendid crops of acorns. As it rains a good deal in the Willamette Valley, the ground is always soft enough for a hog to root well in the woods, and so they fared very well with-

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out any master. The next fall after my experience shooting geese with my father's rifle, the neighbors concluded to kill off some of the bands of wild hogs that had become very numerous in our neighborhood. No one could tell to whom these hogs belonged. One old sow after another had stolen away into the forests and reared her litter of pigs, and bringing them up there, they had come to be as wild and fierce as the wild hogs of Louisiana, or the famous wild boar which is considered to be such royal game in the forests of Germany. These hogs became so numerous that they were a great pest to the grain fields. A drove of wild hogs would come into the field at night and eat or trample down two or three acres of wheat, and slip back again before daylight into some dark cañon or thick jungle-like undergrowth where they had their special camping-place. This summer and autumn they had been unusually bad in this way, and the neighbors agreed to set apart a week to hunting wild hogs. Every one was to have what he was able to kill. The younger hogs were, of course, excellent meat, as they were in good order. Usually the hunters went in groups, but one afternoon my father and I were hunting alone on a hillside where the timber was thick and the underbrush made it almost impossible to get through. Finally we heard a hog grunt, and, care-

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fully slipping along, we came in sight of them, and father shot one, wounding him. We had a dog with us, which I was leading, and we now let him loose. He ran in and caught one of the younger hogs, and while the others were dashing about defending him, father shot two others. Just then a big fierce old boar with great tusks came to the defence of his family, and struck the dog a terrible blow in the neck, cutting a gash far into his throat. The poor dog made a piteous howl, and we both ran closer to see if we could give him help. Father shot and killed another hog, when I foolishly went far enough ahead to get quite separated from him while he was loading his rifle. The angry old boar, having finished the poor dog, caught sight of me, and with a fierce grunt that made my hair stand straight on my head came crashing through the brush. I had no gun, for I was not yet considered big enough to be safe with one, and I thought my time had surely come. But I had no intention of being eaten by that old boar if I could help myself, and so I took to my heels and ran as fast as I could through the brush, screaming at every leap. It was not very good running for either of us, but the boar had the advantage, and was within a few feet of me, snorting with rage, when I ran under a big oak limb that came down from a wide-spreading tree. It must

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have been two or three feet above my head, but I jumped on it, catching it by my hands and flinging my legs over it, and scrambled up along the limb like a monkey. I was in the very nick of time, for that old hog threw some of the froth of his mouth on my legs as they went up over the limb. He tore around under the tree in a great rage, until father, who had been greatly frightened on my account, finished loading his old muzzle-loading rifle, and put a bullet through his vicious heart. I never in my life was quite so glad to see anything die. His chasing me was not the only grudge I had against him, for he had killed the best squirrel-dog I ever had. Poor old Bull! We had had many a good time together, and when we went away and left him there in the thicket, my face was wet with tears for my old friend.

It was a proud day for me when I was allowed to have a gun of my own. It was a small, second-hand, single-barrelled shotgun, one of the old-fashioned muzzle-loaders. It was not very much of a gun, but to me it was a great treasure. Father gave it to me in the early spring, when the big dark grouse were just coming down out of the mountains. The Oregon grouse is quite a large, strong bird. It winters back in the mountains, in the fir timber, where it feeds on the buds of the trees and comes to taste very much like them.

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Hunters who are searching for bear or deer in the mountains in the winter often find the grouse in the depths of the forests. They come down into the foot-hills along in the first days of spring, and, feeding on other things, soon lose their obnoxious flavor and become very delightful game for the table. One of the first memories of springtime, and one of the pleasantest that lives in my treasure-house of boyhood's experiences, is the first hooting of the grouse as the winter was breaking. This hooting is the cry of the male grouse for his mate. His neck swells up like an old turkey-gobbler's, and with a wonderfully boastful strut he brings a sound out of his swollen throat that is a kind of guttural "hoot! hoot! hoot!" with quite a little pause between each sound. It is considerable of a noise and can be heard for fully half a mile when the atmosphere is clear. I have gone out grouse-hunting about daylight in the morning when the old "hooters" would be so thick in the woods that their voices would drown out every other sound, and it would be confusing to select any single one to look for out of so many.

My first grouse came to his fate in a very accidental way. I was trying to slip up on an old "hooter," when a big grouse came flying through the timber and lighted in a tree right over my head. It was a big curly-maple tree. The picture

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"He Tore Around the Tree in a Great Rage." *Page* 47.

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of it is clear in my mind now, — from the squirrel hole under one of the great gnarled roots to the big crow's nest on the topmost branch. The grouse did not see me, and stood up there on the limb with his great breast looking big as a turkey's to my excited imagination. I took "a rest" along the side of a sapling that stood in front of me, and took good aim at the centre of its body. Father always shot their heads off with his rifle, and I used to do that later, but I did not take any risks on my first grouse. I was so excited that I could hear my heart beat, and I was afraid the grouse would hear it and get scared. But when the gun went off, down came the grouse, tumbling through the branches and falling almost at my feet. I was wild with delight. I didn't stop to load my gun again, but with the grouse in one hand and the gun in the other I ran home as fast as I could to find somebody to share the joy of my success.

Pheasant-hunting was always a great sport in the thick brush along the creek bottoms. The male pheasant has a fashion of selecting an old log that has been blown down, where the timber is very thick, as his special domain. There he calls for his mate by beating with his wings either on his body or on the log. He begins with a slow, heavy beat, and then it gets more rapid,

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until in an almost imperceptible flutter the noise dies away among the trees. Many a time I have spent an hour creeping along as still as an Indian under the thick brush, to where I could get a glimpse of Mr. Pheasant, and then have him fly away through the timber before I could get a shot; but if I had all the pheasants here that didn't get away from my gun, I could open a game market. A favorite way of hunting pheasants was with a little dog who was trained to stand and bark under the tree where they lighted. A pheasant will stand and peer down into a dog's face and pay no attention at all to the hunter so long as the dog keeps barking.

Coon-hunting was good sport in those oak hills. There were a great many hollow trees in the oak timber, and they make just exactly the sort of home a coon likes. Along in the early fall, when the harvesting was getting pretty well by, the younger men and boys used to make up parties and go coon-hunting at night. A good coon-dog was a great necessity, for a dog that was not trained would get off after rabbits or squirrels; but a well-trained coon-dog rarely deceives his master. The coons feed at night, and the dogs would chase them into some tree, which the men would often cut down in order to get the coon. Then they would build a big fire, and roast corn

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and potatoes, and sometimes broil the coon himself over the coals, and have a great feast, which would often last until daylight, and time to get back to work at the harvesting. About the middle of the afternoon they would look pretty sleepy, and would vow never to go coon-hunting again; but they usually went when they had a chance.

I shall never forget my first coon-hunt. It was in the daytime, and I was out grouse-hunting with my dogs and gun, and they began to bark at a small tree that had a hollow limb with a hole in it big enough for a coon to hide himself. I knew the dogs would not bark that way for squirrels, and decided at once that there must be a coon in that hollow limb. I left my gun, so that the dogs would remain, and walked about half a mile to the nearest house and got a neighbor boy. We each took an axe, and went back to catch the coon. It was a hot day, and we sweat like good fellows before we got the tree down. When the tree fell, the hollow limb broke open, and out sprang a beautiful striped animal which the dogs, having run away at the crash of the tree, now ran in to catch; but it quietly turned its tail toward them and showered them and us with a perfume, the stench of which was so terrible that the dogs fairly howled for pain, and instead of seizing the animal ran and rubbed their noses in the grass. The wise plan for us

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would have been to do the same thing; but instead I shot the polecat, for such it was, and then, being thoroughly saturated with the odor, the animal did not seem to smell very bad, and so we set to work and skinned it. I took the skin home, and was disgusted to find that the three or four people I met on the way held their noses and advised me to keep on the other side of the road; but it was worse yet when I got home. Mother would not let me come into the house. She made me first go and bury my beautiful skunk skin, and then she put some clean clothes out on the porch and bade me go to the barn and change my raiment. Even my hair had to be scoured with soapsuds before I was permitted to be with the rest of the family. Everything I had had on had to be soaked for a week before the odor of my "coon-hunt" was banished.

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VII

A HUNTER'S LUCK

In the early days, living up in the foot-hills, on the edge of the mountains, as we did, there was always the chance of coming on wild animals of a sort that one did not care to meet unless prepared for them. Black bear were in great abundance, and the larger brown, or cinnamon, bear were not uncommon. Wildcats were nearly as plenty as the tame feline, and the large and fierce panther was a sort of haunting ghost in the imagination of a boy, hovering about every dark cañon.

I remember that on one occasion I was hunting for pheasants, in company with my teacher and three or four of the boys of the neighborhood, when, as we were separated in the timber on the lookout for the birds, suddenly an enormous panther leaped from a tree over my head, and only a few feet away. But he seemed as badly scared as I was, and went plunging away into the forest with long, cat-like springs. He gave me a terrible

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fright. My hair stood on end for quite a while afterward.

The wild pigeons furnished many of the most delightful hunting excursions of my youth. They used to come into our section of the country by hundreds of thousands, and were especially abundant about seeding-time in the spring, and again in the autumn. Sometimes they came in such great flocks as to cover the fields, and I have seen a forest of fifteen or twenty acres literally covered over with pigeons. I have sometimes killed all I was able to carry home. Later, when they were not so plentiful, I had to study their habits more. A pigeon has a great fondness for sitting on the point of a dead limb that stands up above the living branches of a tree. I know one old tree down in the Mary's River bottom that had such a dead snag standing out prominently, where I have killed hundreds of pigeons. It stood not far from the main travelled road, and was surrounded by splendid fields, and whenever pigeons were disturbed within a half a mile of it, several of them were sure to make for that old snag. I used to take my place underneath, where I was well hidden, with my shotgun, and shoot them at my ease until I had enough for a mess.

What is known as the California quail was very abundant in Oregon, in those days, and is one of

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the prettiest of birds, and one of the most fascinating to the boy hunter. It is a much handsomer bird than its cousin, the "Bob White." It has a jaunty way of carrying itself, has a pretty topknot, and goes courtesying along, bobbing its head in a very defiant and mocking way. It depends on its legs fully as much as on its wings to escape from its enemies. It can outrun any boy in the brush, and will be a hundred yards from where it lights in a twinkling. Many a hot chase have those little witches run me, but I got even with them once, and every boy is pot-hunter enough to think the end justifies the means. I had been hunting all one afternoon in the river bottom for pheasants, and was going home with only one bird, and was feeling tired and cross, and generally disgusted with myself, when, creeping under a thicket of young firs, between sundown and dark, I glanced overhead and saw what made my eyes stick out with wonder. I had come on a quails' roosting-place. I don't know how many there were there, but there must have been a dozen bevies of quail that had selected that dense evergreen thicket for their snug roost. I belched away with my little shotgun, where they were sitting thickest, and got three at the first shot. I had only expected to get one shot, but to my astonishment and delight the silly things were

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so confused in the semi-darkness that I killed thirty birds before they got sufficiently aroused to get out of their roosting-place for good. I never had taken home so many quails before, and my fame as a hunter went up several notches, not only at home but in all the neighborhood round about.

Every autumn parties of the big boys and young men would go into the mountains to hunt for deer and bear. The deer were so plentiful that some men lived back in the mountains all winter and killed them just for their hides. In this way one man would slay from one to two hundred deer in a single winter, and with the exception of what he needed for food for himself and his dogs, leave the carcasses to be eaten by the wolves or the panthers. Two of our neighbors, young men, went up in the mountains, about ten miles from where we lived, one fall, for a week's deer-hunting. They pitched their camp by a beautiful stream of water, caught a string of speckled trout for their supper, and settled themselves down for fine sport. After the supper was over, one of the young men proposed that they should circle around a little heavily timbered mountain in front of them, as it was yet an hour or more before dark, and see if they could not get a deer. One took one side of the hill, and the

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other went the other way, intending to make a circle and perhaps meet on the farther side. The young man who had made the proposition for the hunt had only gone about a half a mile when he saw a big buck, and fired at it, but only wounded it. He was armed with one of the old-fashioned muzzle-loading rifles, and in his haste to load he rammed home the bullet without putting in any powder. In trying to pick some powder into the nipple at the base of the barrel back of the bullet, he broke the lock of his gun. His friend, hearing him shoot, and then not hearing anything more of him, fired off his own gun several times, and our young friend with the broken gun undertook to go to him, but in so doing became entirely lost. The other went back to camp, finally, and kept up a fire, and from time to time shot off his rifle through the night. The next day he hunted for his friend until afternoon, and then, becoming badly frightened, came back to the settlements and gave the alarm. Messengers rode all over the country that night, and fully one hundred men, my father among them, went to hunt for the lost youth. They divided themselves into parties, and planned a thorough search of the mountains. One or two of the parties went over the mountains and made a long trip clear through to the ocean, having an exceedingly hard tramp of it.

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But though the forests were honeycombed with these searching parties, they could find no trace of the man. After wandering about for eight days, having nothing to eat for all that time except licorice roots and a bird which a hawk had dropped on being frightened by a club he had thrown at it, having been terrified by panthers on two nights, and almost insane from hunger and worry, he crept down to a clearing and up to the door of a log-cabin, where he fainted away on the door-step. The settlers kindly nursed him, and the husband carried the word of his recovery out to the foot-hills and valley beyond. The news spread rapidly that the lost was found, but some of the searching parties were over a week later in returning home.

Sometimes, when the snow was deep in the mountains for a long time, the deer would come down into the foot-hills in large numbers. We once counted a band of forty passing through our orchard at one time. Some of them were immense bucks with long antlers, and some were not a year old yet, and altogether they made a beautiful sight.

Among the young fellows a favorite way of hunting for deer was to watch for them when they came into the orchards and gardens in the fall. They were very fat at that season of the year,

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and were easily taken by what was known as "torch hunting." I never killed a deer that way, but I once carried the torch for another boy. We split up some pitchwood from an old pine stump, and made a splendid torch. Such a torch will burn for a long time, and make a great light. Deer had been coming into the orchard near by to feed on the apples and on a big garden of peas adjoining, so we had good hopes of making a haul. We lighted the torch, and I carried it up over my head, while my friend walked just behind me with his gun. We slipped along as still and quiet as we could, peering into the edge of the darkness around the lighted place made by the torch, until suddenly I caught a glimpse of the outlines of a big deer with wide-reaching horns, which looked more like a ghost-deer than a real one in the weird and vague light. He stared at us in great wonder, and did not show any intention of running away. My friend knelt down beside me and, taking good aim, shot him through the heart. He made one great lunge into the air, and then fell heavily on his side, stone dead. At the sound of the gun and his fall, two or three others ran away through the darkness, but we did not get another shot. It was the largest and fattest deer I ever saw.

I shall never forget my own first deer. I had

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been deer-hunting a good many times, and had often seen them killed, but had never had any luck myself. Finally, I was put on a run-way to watch for a deer that was started up by the hounds. Deer are very tenacious in their habits. They have certain ways of going about through the forests, and will face almost any danger rather than to break away from their accustomed route. An old hunter can tell just about what a deer will do when it is pursued by dogs. On this occasion, the man who had charge of the hunt sent one man with the dogs over through a great forest, some three miles from the house, and then placed three of us to watch as many different run-ways which the deer frequented. He stationed me on a ridge, about fifty yards from a fence, behind a tree, and told me that any deer started up by the dogs within a certain portion of the forest beyond would certainly pass between an old dead snag and where the fence entered the brush fifty feet away. I watched with a great deal of interest for a while, but it became dull and lonesome after a time, and I was beginning to get sleepy, when suddenly I heard the hounds bellowing away on the trail. After that I kept awake and full of interest. In a few minutes the barking sounded louder, and I could tell by the noise that they were coming my way. All at once, over the fence

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leaped an enormous buck with magnificent, wide-spreading horns, and came to a full stop as he caught sight of me beside the tree. I never saw a finer sight in my life than that great deer, standing with his head thrown back, and his nostrils panting hot steam. He took me so by surprise that I admired him a moment before I raised my gun to shoot. That moment saved his life, for, as I lifted my gun, he gave a great snort, leaped away to the right, and off he went down the hill. I fired after him, but I don't suppose I came within ten feet of him. I was disgusted with myself, but mechanically loaded my gun, and just as I got it loaded two other deer came bounding over the fence. Both were yearlings, — one a buck and the other a doe. They, too, halted for a moment on seeing me, and this time I held my admiration in abeyance, and sent a bullet through the buck's shoulder, knocking it down, and as it struggled to its feet again, I quickly slipped in another cartridge, and put a ball through its head. The doe bounded away unhurt at the first shot.

Although I had seen deer, and been accustomed to their hunting all my life, this was the first one I had killed myself, and I was wild with excitement and delight. The great Bismarck says that the proudest moment of his boyhood was when he killed his first hare; but I am sure a first deer would greatly discount a hare.

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VIII

THE LOG-BOOK OF A YOUNG FISHERMAN

We lived during my younger boyhood about midway between two streams, being about a mile distant from either. Both of them abounded in fish: one in trout exclusively, and the other in trout and chubs and suckers. This latter stream, which was the favorite haunt of my boyhood days, had been for a great many years, perhaps for a century or more, dammed up by the beavers. These interesting little animals had with their sharp teeth gnawed off hundreds of trees near the ground, and made a most formidable dam, which by constant oversight they kept in a good state of repair. People who are not accustomed to the beaver would hardly believe the truth concerning the way in which they will fell trees and drift them into a proper position for forming the base work of their dam, and then with infinite patience bring small underbrush by the wagon load, and weave it in between the logs, and then over this daub it with dirt, which they pack down with their flat, smooth

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"They too, halted for a Moment on seeing Me." *Page* 61.

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tails, which are equal to a mason's trowel. The beavers live in families, and the families work together in colonies, and are certainly the most industrious and cunning of all the animals it has ever been my pleasure to become acquainted with.

A long slough of back water, very deep, and from fifty to two hundred feet in width, had been thrown out opposite our farm, for two or three miles, by the beavers, and many of the most interesting hours of all my youth were spent there fishing. The work of the beavers was a constant delight to me. Many a time I have seen a beaver slip into the water down a well-worn slide, under the overhanging willows, and swim away, keeping sometimes two or three feet underneath, all the way across the stream. At other times I have seen them swimming with a green branch that had been cut for use on their dam.

The muskrats, too, abounded, and every little while a sly mink would slide his long dark body, like a cunning shadow, swiftly through the bushes. Only once, there, I saw a beautiful pair of otters. The mink did not always confine themselves to the water, but sometimes paid attention to the hen-roost. On one occasion, fourteen chickens and two ducks in our old log hen-house had their throats cut in a single night, and were found lying there dead in the morning. Father thought it

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might be the work of weasels, but on taking up the floor of the chicken-house, a big mink ran out on top of the house, and fell at a shot from his rifle. My mother made his lovely robe of fur into a collar and cuffs for my winter coat, to my great pride and delight.

But I have strayed from the fishing-pole. Many a splendid string of fish did I bring away that had been lured to my hook, usually by a grasshopper bait. Later, I used to have great sport in catching suckers in another way. We would take a piece of annealed copper wire, and tie one end of it to a pole stiff and strong, and eight or ten feet in length. On the other end of the wire, which was long enough to go to the bed of the stream without putting the pole in the water, we would arrange a slip-noose several inches across, and then slowly and quietly let the noose down in front of the suckers as they were feeding on the bottom of the stream. The fish did not seem to see the wire at all, and if they were moving would work themselves straight into the noose if held in front of their heads. If the fish were quiet, we would slowly work the noose back until they were well inside of it, and then suddenly jerk it tight. You never saw such an astonished fish as that sucker was then. It was like a flash of lightning out of a clear sky to him. But the fun of it for the boy

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was that the more the fish wriggled and tried to get away, the tighter the wire held him. In that manner I have caught many suckers that would weigh from three to four pounds each.

Another scheme which we country boys had for catching fish has been prohibited by law now for many years, and very properly so, for it did not give the fish a fair chance. We bought at the drug-stores what were known in common language as "fish berries," though they had some other long Latin name. We took these and pounded them up, and mixed them into soft dough made of flour and water. Armed each with a piece of dough as big as his fist, two or three wide-awake boys, in reach of a well-stocked fish stream, were good for all the fish they could carry home. The favorite place for operations was where there was a large deep hole in the river, where there were likely to be big fish, and which ended in shallow water. We would then strip ourselves so as to be ready to wade or swim, and break off our fish-dough into little bits, and throw these in at the upper end of the hole. In a few minutes some of the fish would be sure to come up to the top of the water, and swirl around, playing all sorts of silly antics, acting as though they were drunk; and, indeed, that was just what was the matter with them. If they had not got

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very much of the dough, the effect would soon wear off, and they would go on about their business; but if they had a good dose of it, they would play about a little, and then turn over on their backs and float at the top of the water. As soon as they began to come up, we would wade in at the mouth of the pool, and catch them as they drifted down, and immediately dress them, so as to prevent the drug in the dough from injuring the flesh. I have spent many a merry afternoon in that way, and been one of half-a-dozen boys to carry home all we could pack. I can see now it was a very unfair advantage to take of the fish, and very unsportsman-like, but to a frontier boy all is fair in love and war, and most of his living is got by war on the denizens of the forests and brooks about him.

The salmon did not come up on our side of the Coast Range Mountains, as they were stopped by the falls in the Willamette River at Oregon City; but just over the mountains they came up the streams that emptied into the Pacific Ocean nearer to us, and the settlers often made trips across the mountains in the fishing season, and brought home loads of salmon. I once went with my father and two other men, in a big covered wagon with four horses hitched to it, on a fishing trip to the Alsea Valley. It was about forty

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miles from our place, and a long day's drive over the rough, muddy mountain roads, in the late fall, after the rainy season had begun. We did not get to the house where we were to put up at night, and from which we were to do our fishing, until long after dark, though we had started before day. This house was on the bank of the Alsea River, which, after the two weeks of heavy rains, was a very swollen and turbulent stream. The man assured us that the fish were running well, and I dreamed of salmon that night, and was up and dressed before daylight, ready to take my luck with the men.

The settler rowed us across the river in the morning, in his big, flat-bottomed boat, and guided us to the mouth of a little stream that came down through a big dark cañon on the other side. It was only a little brook, ordinarily, but was now much swollen by the rains. The vining maples twined in so close about it that we had to get right in the water and follow up the stream. Two of the men had spears, which they had bought from the Indians. They were made out of bone, and fitted over the end of a pole. There was a buckskin string about a foot long, with one end tied to the spear and the other end tied to the pole, and when the spear was thrust into a salmon he would run away with the bone part, but the string held

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him fast. Father and I, not being able to find any spears to purchase, cut two stout clubs, with which we struck the fish over the head a smart blow. If struck in the right place, just at the base of the head, it turned him over on his back every time. These proved so much more effective than the spears that the others soon threw them away and took clubs also.

I have never known a day of such exciting sport as that was. The salmon were just plentiful enough to keep us alert and strung up, watching for them, and yet not sufficiently abundant to make it cloy on us. We would find them, usually, in the deeper water, just below the riffle, and would endeavor to run them on to the next riffle above, where we could get a good stroke and kill them without bruising them unnecessarily; but sometimes they would turn on us, and come down the stream, and a big salmon weighing twenty-five or thirty pounds, with full head of steam on, going down over a riffle, is rather a formidable enemy. I was knocked down several times that day by a salmon striking my shins, and not one of the men escaped a fall from the same cause. Sometimes we would slip and go down into a deep hole, and go clear under, head and all; and then how the rest would laugh and poke fun at the unlucky victim! The salmon would hide under

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"We Struck the Fish a Sharp Blow." *Page* 68.

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an overhanging bank, occasionally, and we would scare them out with our clubs. I ran my hand down alongside of one, intending to put my fingers in his gills, but got my hand in his mouth instead, and received a cut from his sharp teeth that did not heal for many a day.

As fast as we killed the salmon, we hung them on the limbs of the trees bending over the stream, and pushed on. So exciting was the sport, and so constantly varied our experiences, that we did not think about the flight of time, until, on pausing, we found it was three o'clock in the afternoon, and we had started in at daylight. Then we started back down the stream, gathering up our salmon as we went, stringing them through the gills, on long, slender branches with a fork at the end. In that way, one could pull a great load of fish in the water. When we reached the mouth of the little creek, we found we had taken one hundred and twenty salmon, of all sizes, making not less than 2000 pounds weight of fish which we had captured that day. Next day we found that it was all four horses could pull over the mountains.

It was long after dark before we got over the river, and had a chance to think about supper. How hungry we were! We had taken no lunch with us, and had had nothing to eat since before

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daylight. We skinned two fair-sized salmon — not big ones, but of a good size — and cooked them in the frying-pan over the great log fire. I have had many a good meal since then. I have feasted at Delmonico's, have sampled salmon fresh out of the river at the Grand Causeway Hotel in Ireland, and come with a good appetite to the Trossachs in Scotland, but never have I tasted fish that seemed so perfectly delicious as those Alsea salmon which I devoured after a twelve hours' fast, spent in the most violent exercise, drenched to the skin in cold water nearly all the while.

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IX

WIGWAM AND FISH-SPEAR

ALTHOUGH my adventure in the Alsea Valley was my first experience in catching salmon, it was by no means my last. One of the liveliest little sporting incidents that I remember was the capture of a big salmon trout in a little trout brook running into the Umpqua River. I was fishing for trout with a slender little rod, and a delicate brown hackle, when, as I came around a little dam which a family of beavers had thrown across the stream, I saw in the pool below me a splendid specimen of salmon trout. I doubt if there is a prettier fish in the world than a salmon trout. I delighted my eyes in looking on him, and then began to wonder and try to invent some means of capturing him. I knew that even if he would bite at my small hook, it would only be to lose my tackle, and that I must contrive some other way. I finally hit upon a plan, and dropping my pole and line on the bank, and getting a green branch, I dropped into the water at the lower end of the pool, and brought

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the branch down on the water with such a sudden splash as to frighten him up against the beaver dam ahead. As I had hoped, he undertook to hide himself under the irregular logs that the beavers had thrown across the stream, and in that way soon had himself in a trap. The water became very roiled, but I felt about for him, and at last clutched him by the tail with both hands. But just as I was going to throw him on the bank, he gave a sudden wriggle, and slipped into the water. Away he went down the stream, and I after him, pell mell. There was a long riffle some twenty yards below the pool, with scarcely water enough on it for him to get over the rocks, and on that I headed him off, and he was glad to get back into the pool again. He was rather chary of trying to hide in the dam a second time; but as I kept urging him from behind, he finally slipped back into the old trap. I had learned this time by experience, and taking my pocketknife, I cut a little hole in the flesh above the tail, while he was wedged in among the logs. This gave me a good grip with one finger, and by that purchase I was able to throw him far out on the bank. He was a fine fish, and turned the scales at eight pounds and a half.

Up in the Walla Walla Valley, in the state of Washington, the salmon go up the streams flowing

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into the Columbia River, and follow back the little brooks into the Blue Mountains until the bed of the stream is so small and narrow that they do not have room to turn around. I have gone many a time with another young fellow, each of us armed with a pitchfork, and followed up a little stream only a few miles from the city of Walla Walla, in salmon-running time, and in the course of an hour or so we would spear with our pitchforks and throw out on the bank as many fish as we could carry home. When we had all we wanted, we would string them through the gills on the fork handle, and then carry them between us, with one end of the fork on the shoulders of each, in the same way that the Hebrew spies carried the bunches of grapes out from the Promised Land.

The Columbia River is famous the world over for its salmon fishing, although, to the great sorrow of Western sportsmen, the salmon there will not take a hook as they will in Eastern rivers. There are a number of favorite ways of capturing salmon. Wherever there is rapid water on the Columbia, and there are a number of waterfalls in its long course, the Indians gather in large numbers, set up their wigwams, and catch the salmon and smoke and dry them for their store of winter food. With large numbers of the Indians, salmon is the staff of life. A great many

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of them gather at the Cascades every year in the fishing season.

The Cascades of the Columbia are one of the wonders of the world in splendor of natural scenery. No description can ever do justice to this marvellous panorama of nature. Imagine, if you can, a great river exulting in the irresistible power of a hundred allies, gathered into its bosom in its march of a thousand miles and more, through mountains, plains, and valleys, hurling its torrents sheer through one of the most massive mountain chains of the globe. The walls rise 4000 feet on either side. The streams of water come pouring from the melting glaciers of Mount Hood on the one hand, or Mount Adams on the other, and tumble their dark green floods over the lofty heights above you in wild profusion. Ever and anon the rollicking sea-winds catch these reckless streams, and tear and scatter them into a feathery wreath of helpless spray. And then again, on some granite cliff, they gather their distracted waters, only to fall to the river's bed a thousand feet below. Joaquin Miller sings of this inspiring scene one of his most artistic songs:

"See once Columbia's scenes, then roam no more;
No more remains on earth to cultured eyes;
The cataract comes down, a broken roar,
The palisades defy approach, and rise

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Green-moss'd and dripping to the clouded skies.
The cañon thunders with its full of foam,
And calls loud-mouth'd, and all the land defies;
The mounts make fellowship and dwell at home
In snowy brotherhood beneath their purple dome.

"The rainbows swim in circles round, and rise
Against the hanging granite walls till lost
In drifting dreamy clouds and dappled skies,
A grand mosaic intertwined and toss'd
Along the mighty cañon, bound and cross'd
By storms of screaming birds of sea and land;
The salmon rush below, bright red and boss'd
In silver. Tawny, tall, on either hand
You see the savage spearman nude and silent stand.

"Here sweep the wild waters, cold and white
And blue in their far depths; divided now
By sudden swift canoe as still and light
As feathers nodding from the painted brow
That lifts and looks above the imaged prow.
Ashore you hear the pappoose shout at play;
The curl'd smoke comes from underneath the bough
Of leaning fir: the wife looks far away,
And sees a swift sweet bark divide the dashing spray."

In the salmon-fishing season, out on nearly every sharp rock jutting into the current, along the seven miles of rapids at the Cascades, there used to be an Indian with a long pole in his hands, and on the end of the pole a hand-net. With this pole grasped sturdily, he would bring the net down under the water, giving it a long sweep, and

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out again; repeating this over and over, hour after hour, the only sound escaping from him being an occasional guttural "ugh! ugh!"

When I was a boy, the farmers used to laugh over the story of how the eccentric George Francis Train came out to Oregon on a lecture trip, and some of his admirers went with him up to the Cascades to see the scenery. He proudly imagined he could handle a salmon net as well as a native, and, borrowing the net of an Indian, he went out on the edge of a slippery rock jutting into the river, where the water was boiling and surging, to try the experiment. He had not, however, properly appreciated the tremendous power of the Columbia River current, for no sooner had his net and pole struck the water than he performed a somersault and landed head first in the foaming flood. His friends fished him out a hundred yards below, a very much colder and wetter, but not a much wiser, man.

Another story which used to greatly please the frontiersmen was one which old Governor Gibbs, the Governor of Oregon in war times, related at the expense of Vice President Colfax. During the term of his Vice Presidency, Mr. Colfax made an extended tour of the Northwest, and was naturally shown a great deal of courtesy and attention by the politicians and government officials. The Gov-

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ernor and other official gentlemen accompanied the Vice President up through the Cascades, and on to Celilo, some fifty miles above, where the entire river pours its flood through a very narrow channel in an exceedingly graceful and beautiful waterfall. About the falls at Celilo there is a vast deal of sand, and in the spring and autumn the wind blows a great deal, and piles the sand up into the most toy-like and ideal-looking little sand mountains. In the old geographies which I studied in my boyhood, there were pictures of sharply defined cones running up to a needle point, and marked underneath "Volcanoes." Since I have come to be a man I have climbed real volcanoes, but have never seen any resemblance between them and those early pictures. But when I first saw the sand-hills at Celilo, I exclaimed, "There are the volcanoes of my geography!" Now when the water is high, as it usually is in salmon-fishing time, the overflow water at the Falls of Celilo runs about among the sand-hills in the most beautiful streams, resembling ideal trout brooks. Mr. Colfax had heard so much about the salmon fishing in the Columbia that he was very desirous to be able, on his return to Washington, to boast of having himself speared a "Chinook" salmon in his native waters. Willing to do anything to please him, the Governor and his staff of entertainers placed the Vice President down beside one of these little

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overflow streams, where he was in no danger of getting a wetting, and giving him a spear, told him to be on the lookout. Then one of them slipped away and bought a fine big salmon which an Indian had just taken out of his net, and put it into the little stream Mr. Colfax was watching, only a few yards below, but around the sand-hill out of sight of that distinguished fisherman. True to its instincts, the salmon, glad to have another chance at life, pushed its way up stream toward Mr. Colfax. He speared it with a great deal of excitement and pride, and, flushed with success, declared he must have another. While he was anxiously watching the water, one of the politicians slipped the salmon into the stream again; and Mr. Colfax, thinking he was doing "land office" business, had speared that poor salmon thirteen times, and the unlucky fish was pretty badly used up, before he discovered the huge joke which they had been playing upon him.

The Indians become very expert in throwing a salmon spear, and are certain of a fish which they have a fair chance at, if it is within two or three feet of the top of the water. Sometimes a white man becomes as expert in spearing salmon as an Indian; but one thing you may always be sure of, that a white man who can throw a fish-spear equal to an Indian is not likely to be good for anything else.

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X

WATERWHEELS AND FISH-NETS

THE Columbia River is not only one of the most beautiful streams in the world, but rising as it does in the heart of the Rocky Mountains, and flowing for hundreds of miles through vast mountain ranges, receiving many tributaries that are fed from the great wastes of snow stretching over millions of square miles of unexplored mountain regions, it receives into its bosom in the spring and early summer such enormous quantities of water that it is often unable to carry it. At the Cascades the Columbia often rises sixty feet above the ordinary stage of the river. I was at the Dalles one time, forty miles above the Cascades, when the mass of extra water superimposed on the ordinary stage of the river was fifty-one feet thick and over a mile wide, moving at the rate of nine miles per hour. For several days it rose at the rate of an inch an hour. Its hourly increase would have made a stream equal to the Merrimac, and its daily rise was more than equal to such a river as the Hudson.

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It is through this great spring and summer flood that the fish swarming out of the Pacific Ocean hasten toward the mountain streams to find their spawning grounds. The smelt season is specially interesting. They sometimes come up the river in such enormous quantities as to almost fill the stream. In Vancouver once, seven miles across the peninsula from Portland, the smelt were so abundant in the river that the farmers came in their wagons and hauled home wagon loads of these delicious fish, using what they could for food, and the rest to fertilize their gardens. The boys would take a broom handle for a pole, and taking a hoop from the top of a barrel or keg, get their mothers to sew a piece of cheese cloth loosely on one side of the hoop for a net, and standing by the edge of the river bank would scoop out a dozen or more great, fine smelt at a time. Running with the smelt that year were a great many very small fish, about the size of ordinary sardines. In scooping one would get two or three of these to every one of the large fish. These little minnows, or whatever they were, had remarkable tenacity of life. I went down to the river one afternoon, with a hand-net made according to the description I have given, and in a few minutes scooped up a basketful of fish, making as heavy a load as I could carry. I took them

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home and set them out in the woodshed where they would keep cool, and the next forenoon when I poured them out of the basket, the little fish sandwiched in everywhere between the larger ones were alive and wriggled about in great commotion. Out of curiosity I gathered them up and put them into a pan of water, and they swam about in apparently as good condition as when taken from the river. They had received enough moisture in being with the other fish to keep alive.

The great interest, however, commercially and otherwise, centres in the run of salmon. In addition to the spear which the Indians and occasional fishermen use for capturing the salmon, another popular method is the fish wheel. If an Eastern traveller were out on the Columbia in low-water season, he would see some things hard to understand. Away out on some sand or gravel bar, perhaps a hundred yards from the water, high and dry in the air, would be disclosed a big waterwheel, and running away from it a long wooden flume extending back to the high land. But if one is there in high-water season when the fish are coming up, he will see that this big wheel is in the midst of the current, gathering up its buckets full of water as it revolves, and dipping every unlucky salmon that comes in its

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way, pouring water and fish out to be carried off to the high land where they are taken care of. Large numbers of fish are taken in these wheels. I remember seeing a story in the Portland *Oregonian* a number of years ago which declared that fifteen hundred salmon had been taken in one of these wheels in the twenty-four hours of a single day. This big fish story was well fortified with affidavits. I am frank to say that my name was not attached to any of the affidavits.

Still another kind of wheel is attached to a flat-bottomed boat or scow, which is so fashioned that the wheel turns with the current, pouring out the water in such a way as to leave the fish in the boat. A large part of the salmon for the local markets in my Oregon days were caught in these wheels.

But the salmon fishing of commerce, which has business relations with the entire civilized world, is done by means of nets. For many miles up from the mouth of the Columbia River, almost every bend in the river, where it is easy to establish one, has a cannery. These canneries have in connection with them a large number of boats and fishing-nets, which they hire out to fishermen. As the fishing season draws near, rude and weather-beaten men, who are accustomed to the sea and fishing, gather from all parts of the world to try

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their luck after the salmon. Two men go in partnership, as in the early mining days, and hire a boat together. Their wages depend altogether on their "luck," as they get so much apiece for the fish they bring in. The nets are so arranged by law that a salmon below a certain number of pounds in weight will pass through unharmed.

Astoria — a city ten miles up from the mouth of the river, which was named after old John Jacob Astor in the fur-gathering days, when his hunters and trappers were searching for beaver and otter and mink skins along the little streams making into the Columbia — is a wonderfully busy place in the salmon-fishing season. The fishermen in its streets speak nearly every language in the world, though a great many of them are Swedes and Norwegians, and have been trained to fish for salmon in their own northern land. I have been in Astoria when the entire river, which is there seven miles across, seemed, when looking out toward the sea, ten miles away, almost black with fishing boats and nets.

The fishermen press down to the very mouth of the river in fierce rivalry with one another, each one looking out for the main chance and trying to get the first strike at the salmon as they come into the river. They run a great deal of risk in this way, and often pay for their reckless-

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ness with their lives. If a sudden storm comes up, their boats are likely to be capsized; or if the tide changes while they are near the bar, they may be swept out to sea. Scores have thus been swept out over the bar, never to be heard of again. Sometimes they have great good fortune and escape by the most hair-breadth experiences. Once when I was in Astoria, a couple of Irishmen were carried out over the bar just after they had taken their load of fish and nets on board. Their companions gave them up for lost, and that night had a great wake in their honor. The two paddies, however, had their own ideas as to the time having arrived for their wake. They were both very strong and courageous men, and rowed their boat around to the Washington side of the coast, and took the desperate chances of pushing it straight through the heavy surf on the sandy beach. Fortunately for them, an unusually strong wave hurled them far enough up on the beach so that they were able to drag their boat out of the way before the next wave came. They hired a farmer to hitch up his team, and, fastening their boat on the running gear of his wagon, he hauled it across the point and put them safely in the river again. And it so happened that about two o'clock in the morning, when their wake was at its height, they turned up to enjoy it themselves,

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with their boat-load of fish, nets, and all in good condition. It isn't every man that gets an opportunity to attend his own wake.

The seals follow the salmon in from the sea, and add a great deal of interest to the fishing season, though it is a very unpleasant and unwelcome interest to the fisherman on account of the destruction which they work among the nets. The seals follow the salmon for over a hundred miles up the river; and one of the sights from the decks of the river steamboats is to watch for the seals as they poke their black heads above the water. Thousands of sea-gulls, too, follow, ready to feed on any fish that falls a victim to the seals and is not entirely eaten by them, or to pounce upon the many that die in their hard struggle to get up the river. It is a paradise for the big fish-hawk, which is in great evidence.

Another pest to the salmon nets is the sturgeon that sometimes get in them. The sturgeon is well worth fishing for on his own account, but he plays havoc with the salmon nets. Sturgeon of very large size are sometimes taken here. It used to be no uncommon thing to see fish hanging in the markets that would weigh from two to three hundred pounds. Some fishermen once fastened their sturgeon lines to a big snag in the Willamette River near its mouth. The snag was so firmly

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imbedded that the government snag-puller had not been able to pull it out; but a sturgeon got hooked on that line, which was so strong that he managed to get some sort of a purchase on it, and pulled the snag loose. They finally captured him, and he has the reputation of being the largest sturgeon ever taken on the Pacific Coast. He weighed seven hundred pounds.

I was once on the coast above the mouth of the Columbia River in the fishing season, when an enormous sea-lion was swept up on the shore at night. He had been wounded by a bullet, no doubt from a pistol in the hands of a fisherman, and had afterwards died, and the tide had thrown him out where I found him. He was as big as an ox, and I had a great desire to save his skin for a rug. I hired two men to help me, and we worked several hours skinning the monster. I rolled the hide up and took it home with me that evening on the steamer, but the weather was so warm that, to my great disgust and disappointment, it spoiled before I could get it into the hands of some one to cure it for me.

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XI

TENT AND CAMP

AMONG the pictures that are indelibly impressed on my memory, are the old-fashioned covered wagon, the canvas tent, and the camp-fire by the roadside or by some babbling brook in the woods. My father and mother had both become greatly enamoured of camping out and of tent life in their long trip across the plains, and not a year of my boyhood passed without experiences of that sort. It was not only that we went every year to the big camp-meeting, but often in the summer, when the blackberries were at their best in the mountains, groups of neighbors would go up into the forests for a few days' outing, and fish and hunt and can up the wild blackberries for the coming winter. Indeed, that is a great custom in the Willamette Valley to this day. Thousands of families go into the Cascade Mountains every summer and camp out for a week or two in the biggest berry patch there is on the globe. Tens of thousands of acres of forest in these mountains have been burned over

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by forest fires, and wherever the fires have gone the ground is covered with wild blackberry vines, climbing up and over the fire-blackened logs, making a green berry garden for hundreds of miles in length and twenty miles or more in width. The people take the jars and sugar with them, and, building big camp-fires, prepare their fruit for the table there in the mountains.

The black bear is also very fond of the berries, and abounds at that season of the year. These animals are, however, so well fed that they do not usually give the berry-pickers any trouble unless they are cornered and compelled to fight in self-defence, yet when wounded or fretted in any way they become almost as dangerous as a grizzly. One day a young neighbor of ours was out blackberrying, having taken only a bird gun with him, when he suddenly discovered a black bear which was enjoying itself feasting on the luscious ripe berries. The wind was blowing from the bear to the boy, and he was able to slip up very close without being discovered. The foolish fellow, with more recklessness than courage, thought by shooting his load of shot into the bear's head, he would stand a good chance to kill it by hitting it in the eye. As a matter of fact he only stirred up the bear and made it mad, and instead of running away it came plunging through the vines

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"Treed by a Bear." *Page* 89.

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straight for its enemy. A black bear has a most amusing way of running, but it did not seem funny at all to my young friend that day. He threw away his gun and climbed up a little tree which was fortunately near, just in time to escape the ugly grinning teeth of bruin. The youngster thought his troubles were all over when he discovered that the tree was too small for the bear to climb after him, for he supposed of course the bear would soon tire of watching him and go off about its business. But the bear, every time it scratched its head where some of the shot had punched holes through its tough hide, seemed to get more angry, and settled itself down to stay by that tree. It was early in the afternoon, and at first the young fellow did not undertake to attract any attention, for he knew the campers would laugh at him for being "treed by a bear," but after being in a most uncomfortable position for three or four hours, the bear showing no sign of a disposition to raise the siege, he began to halloo as loud as he could, hoping to be heard by the people at camp, but to no avail, as the camp was over a mile away. He called till he was so hoarse that he could scarcely speak, but no one came to his relief. As the sun went down and twilight came on he became very hungry, but there sat bruin at the foot of the tree, every little while opening his mouth

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and showing his teeth in a most suggestive way, indicating that he was hungry, too, and giving every evidence of his purpose to stand by until he got his meal. It gets very cold in the mountains at night, even in the summer, and the boy in his shirt-sleeves crouched on the limb of the tree and shivered until his teeth chattered, but bruin stayed by through all the long night. Just as the sun came up in the morning he seemed to lose hope of getting fresh meat in that quarter, and, giving a big grunt, plunged off down the hill. The young fellow crept down from his perch with stiffened limbs and gaunt stomach, a very much wiser bear-hunter than he had been the day before. He recovered his gun and slipped into camp, a shame-faced youth; but as they had been greatly frightened about him, he met with a warm welcome, though the neighbor boys chaffed him on his "sitting up" with a she-bear for a long time.

Sometimes we would encounter some very novel experiences in these mountain camping trips. I once went with a company of young folks for a day's picnic in the mountains, and we camped for our lunch in a rocky creek bottom and spread out a tablecloth over some bowlders where the grass grew up among them. Our luncheon was placed on this cloth, and we all gathered around it, squatting on the ground. We had a jolly time with the

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lunch, as young people will when out on a picnic, but just as we had concluded and one of the girls had lifted a plate from the improvised table, we were startled to hear a very significant *rattle* from underneath. There was a great scurrying, and when we carefully pulled the tablecloth away there was an enormous rattlesnake curled up within a foot of where one of the young women had been seated. We killed him, and I remember he had ten rattles, and was a very ugly sort of an enemy to have skulking under the table.

We lived, in my early boyhood, about a hundred miles south of Portland, which was then, as now, the chief city of Oregon. My father sometimes went in the late autumn to Portland to obtain sugar and coffee and such necessaries as could be purchased a great deal cheaper there than in the little country store near our farm. He would often take with him a wagon load of bacon, which had been fattened on the acorns in the oak woods and cured in the old-fashioned smoke house — one of the outbuildings of every frontier farm. At other times he would take a load of chickens, and occasionally a load of turkeys, and these were usually exchanged for the groceries and things needed at home. I was always permitted to go with him on these trips. At night we would camp out beside the road, buying hay for the horses from some

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farmer, and sleeping under the wagon. If it rained, we would get permission to sleep in some wayside barn, where we put up the horses for the night.

On one trip there were in the party four other teams besides ours. It came on a very rainy night, and a blacksmith gave us the privilege of sleeping in his shop. In the evening, when we were gathered around the fire on his forge, the old blacksmith brought out a big jug of apple-jack, which is a very strong and very popular liquor among the farmers on the frontier. They all drank except my father and myself, and one of the men drank several times, and finally became very silly, and said such foolish things that it made a great impression on my mind. I think that was my first temperance lesson.

In going from our farm to Portland we crossed two quite large rivers, — the Willamette and the Santiam. There were no bridges across these streams then, and as they were too swift and too deep to ford, we were compelled to cross them on ferry-boats. These ferries were just big flat scows, usually large enough to take on two wagons with a span of horses attached to each. A big rope was tied to a tree on either side of the river, and the ferry was attached to this rope by a pulley, a little wheel running along on the big

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"There was an Enormous Rattle-snake." *Page* 91.

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rope. The swift current was used to work us across. The ferryman had a long pole with which he pushed the boat off from the bank into the stream, and when the boat struck the current, the little wheel would run along the rope very fast and we would make good time, but when we passed out of the current toward the other shore, the ferryman would push with his pole against the bottom, and that was slow going.

My father had a very large orchard, and every summer he would hire a number of farmers with their teams, and take sometimes as many as a dozen loads of apples at a time out to the gold mines in Southern Oregon, and Northern California. These trips would be to points from two to three hundred miles distant from home. They loaded each wagon with as heavy a load of fruit as the teams could easily haul on a good road, and then when they came to the long hills in the mountains, they would have to double up, and sometimes put on three teams to a single wagon. I shall never forget my first experience on one of these trips. The entire journey was a series of sights and adventures, far more interesting and wonderful to me then than a trip to Rome and Venice was twenty-five years later. The scenes in the mines were very strange. It seemed so odd to see such a number of men camped about

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and at work, without seeing a woman or child. Into one of these large camps we were the first wagon train of fruit that year, and the miners were so tired of living on salt meat and flapjacks, without any vegetables or fruit, that when we opened our apples and pears they gathered about the wagons almost wild with excitement. They had been picked just as they began to ripen, and carefully packed in the soft meadow grass, and when the top covering was removed, the fragrance was delicious. The miners did not have any money, but they had plenty of gold dust. My father had a pair of gold scales, and a miner would bring a big handkerchief or a flour sack to hold his apples, and would hand over his little leather pouch of gold dust, and father would weigh out the price in the scales. The prices seem fabulous nowadays, especially here in the East where so many apples sometimes go to waste for lack of a market. The load in my father's wagon was all of the Gloria Mundi apples. They were large and nice, and the entire wagon load went off like hot cakes at "two bits," or twenty-five cents, apiece, and I think he could have gotten twice as much for them for the asking. A load of Bartlett pears sold at a dollar a dozen. One evening, as we were coming back to camp, we met a man with a load of watermelons. He

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lived about fifty miles away, down in the Rogue River Valley, and had brought these melons from his own farm. Father traded him a dozen apples for two watermelons. We ate one of them, and sold the other one for two dollars and a half.

The miners were most of them a very rough sort of men, and drinking and gambling were on every side. Every night we heard the sound of pistol shots coming from some of the saloons, but they were very kind to me. It seemed strange to me then that these big, rough, bearded men should take so much interest in a little boy, but I was the only child in the camp; and it is pathetic as I look back at it, for I know now that those men were lonely and homesick and were thinking about little boys and girls in their far-away homes.

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XII

NUGGETS OF GOLD

No one will ever see again, in this country, such mining camps as those of Southern Oregon and Northern California in my boyhood. Mining in those early days was a very different thing from what it is now. In those pioneer and democratic times, there were no big mining companies, or consolidated trusts, employing great gangs of men to work for them.

As the winter began to give way, and the snow to melt out of the foot-hills, a miner who had been wintering in the town, and had managed to waste or use up all his money, began to think about a prospecting tour, to try his luck in the gold diggings. His first step was to look up a "pard," who was often a man as bankrupt in pocket as himself. Under the peculiar customs of the time, these two penniless men could go to any of the stores and purchase all they needed for their prospecting trip, on credit, the storekeeper taking his risk as to their being shot by the Indians, or fail-

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ing to strike gold, or running away to some other town and never paying up. To the honor of human nature it ought to be said that if these men lived through to the next winter they usually squared their accounts.

The mining outfit that these prospectors carried was very simple. Each had a long-handled shovel over his shoulder, and attached to the shovel end was a pick, a shirt, and as much flour and bacon as he could carry. They went up into the mountains, dug for "pockets" by some mountain stream, and washed out the dirt and rock in a rude "rocker" which very much resembled the old-fashioned baby cradle, treasuring up the fine dust and nuggets of gold as best they could with their rude apparatus.

In that sort of mining "luck" was a kind of fabled deity, for science or past conditions seemed to have little to do with a man's success. Because a man was "strapped," that is, without money, was no possible disgrace to him. He did not feel bad about it, and his neighbors did not look down on him. To-morrow his pick might turn up a rich "find" and he be the richest man in the gulch. I remember the story of a Frenchman who had been out of luck for a long time, and had to depend on the generosity of others to keep from starving, whose pick uncovered a nugget of gold worth five thousand dollars. Like a great many other people,

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he could stand adversity better than prosperity. He clutched the big nugget in his arms with a shriek of delight, and became a raving maniac. He was taken to the asylum at Stockton, Cal., but never recovered.

One of the boys from our county, a great, overgrown, green sort of fellow, but who looked "greener" than he really was, went out to the mines to make his fortune. He went into a big camp and began to look about to locate a claim. He had with him five hundred dollars, which was all the money he had in the world. A couple of dishonest fellows who had been working at a claim for some time and discovered no sign of gold, "salted" a little pocket — that is they put a few small nuggets worth ten or twenty dollars, perhaps, in some dirt, which they washed out before his greedy eyes — and he gladly gave them all the money he had for the claim. He bought it in the forenoon, and as the news spread about among the miners, there was a great deal of indignation at the mean trick played on the young fellow, and some of the old miners quietly determined to compel the scoundrels to give him his money back that evening. But the young greenhorn, entirely oblivious to the fact that he had been cheated, began to dig away merrily in his new-bought mine, and in less than two hours dug up a nugget of gold worth twelve

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hundred dollars. That night he sold his claim for twenty thousand dollars, and, green as he was, he had sense enough to take the back track for home the next day, where he bought the finest farm in the community, got married, settled down, and, as the story books say, "lived happy forever afterwards."

Perhaps it is not uninteresting to say that the two men who bought the claim dug away at it for a month, and then abandoned it, not having taken out enough to pay expenses, which illustrates what a lottery the old placer mining was.

An old forty-niner told me that he and his partner once went into a gulch where very rich discoveries had been made. They staked out a claim and built them a cabin alongside of it. They worked away with a will, digging down twenty feet, the one digging while the other hoisted the dirt with a windlass. When they got down to bedrock they prospected the dirt all around but could get only the color of gold. They continued digging farther down the flat, but with poor success, while fortunes were being taken out of the adjacent claims. They finally gave up in despair, his partner going away to other diggings, while my friend went down below the camp and took a claim on a little sand-bar in the middle of the creek, and by putting in a waterwheel he set to work in

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the bed of the stream and made it pay fairly well. While he was working along in this moderate way, some newcomers came to him and asked him if he had given up the old claim up on the flat where his cabin was. He replied that he had, that he could find nothing there, and as he had abandoned it they were at liberty to go in and try. They set to work, and digging through the stratum which he and his partner had ignorantly taken for bedrock, after going down about fifteen inches, they struck through into a layer of quartz pebbles and gravel, six feet in thickness, and so rich in gold that in less than two months' time they took over sixty thousand dollars out of the claim.

This same old Argonaut told me the story of a young fellow who came out to the mines from the East, having left his sweetheart, who had promised to wait for him until he made his fortune and came home to claim her as his bride. The poor fellow was terribly homesick, and was very anxious to get gold enough to go back home. One day everybody within the sound of his voice was startled to see him jump suddenly out of a hole about eight feet deep, where he had been digging, and throwing his hands high in the air he shouted, "I'm married, boys; I'm married!" They gathered around him excitedly, and made him stop shouting and explain. He told them about the girl who

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was waiting, and pointing over into the hole he showed a yellow crust of gold at the bottom, about twelve inches in length by four or five inches wide. Poor fellow! He was doomed to realize the truth of the proverb, "There is many a slip between the cup and the lip," for his wonderful find proved to be only a thin film but little thicker than gold leaf, lying on a flat rock. I hope he lived to make his fortune and go home to his sweetheart.

One of the funny things, to me, on our visits to the mines, was the rude way in which the men did their cooking and patched their own clothes. Of course cloth was very scarce up in those camps, where everything had to be taken by wagon or on the back of a pack-mule. The flour was taken in sacks, and nearly all the flour was self-rising, or mixed with yeast powders so as to need no other preparation than mixing up with water to be all ready for baking. Because of the scarcity of cloth these sacks were all saved with great care, and were used by the miners for patching their pantaloons. It looked very amusing to see the words "Self-Rising" across the broad seat of a big burly miner's trousers. Many of the small camps were deserted in the winter because of the impossibility of getting food, but in the larger camps food was brought in by wagons or mule-trains. If these were disturbed by the Indians, or

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overtaken by heavy snowstorms, food often became very scarce and naturally very expensive.

I remember the story of one of our old neighbors, who never tired of telling the experiences of those winters. It was a large camp, with many hundreds of miners, who were shut in by enormous snowdrifts, from six to thirty feet deep. First the flour gave out in all the stores, and then all the beans, and finally there was nothing left but barley, which was on hand for the mules; but as the mules had long since been eaten up, the miners fell back on the barley. They ground it in coffee-mills, and sifted it clean of the coarsest pieces of chaff by shaking it in a pan with holes punched in the bottom. They made it into cakes or loaves. At last the barley gave out, and it seemed that the whole camp would be starved to death. At length, when they were almost hopeless, a packer came in through the snow with the news that he had succeeded in getting his pack-train within four miles of the camp out on the mountains. A mass meeting was held, and it was determined that everybody that was able to walk should start out and help break a trail through the snow. Many of them were very weak, but as it was a question of life or death, the whole camp turned out, and after a hard struggle they succeeded in reaching the pack-train. When they

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reached the train the scene was one that no person who has always lived where food was plenty could possibly picture to himself. The men were almost wild with hunger and excitement. The whole load was bought right there on the mountain, each one securing at least a fifty-pound sack of flour, paying a dollar a pound for his load, and carrying it home on his own shoulders. Yet the owner of the pack-train made little, if anything, as nearly all of his mules died before he could get them out of the mountains.

One interesting feature of the provision trade in these winter camps would be that flour, bacon, sugar, coffee, rice, beans, and tobacco would sometimes all be the same price, — a dollar a pound.

Mining to-day is a very different thing in those Northwestern mountains from what it was in the old times. Now great hydraulic engines furnish the power, and streams of water are forced against the mountain sides, tearing them asunder in a way only dreamed of in the legends of the Titans. Mammoth quartz mills with their ponderous crushers and shaking tables run day and night where once was only silence. The patient mules and still more patient oxen, with their canvas-roofed "prairie schooners," have vanished before the breath of a steed who is never weary, or lazy, or old, and finds his food in the "black diamonds"

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which are stored up in the hills he climbs, or in the mountains he tunnels. The old was the more romantic, but the new is more in harmony with this nervous, restless, inventive age.

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XIII

MOUNTAIN CLIMBING

About twenty-five miles from where I was born, and about a hundred miles south of Portland, standing like a watch-tower on the long, green wall that shelters the Willamette Valley from the foggy embrace of the Pacific Ocean, is Mary's Peak, or by some called June Peak, the summit of the Coast Range Mountains in Oregon. The average height of the range, some four thousand feet, is lifted here to an elevation of nearly seven thousand feet above the sea. Some have been inclined to name the mountain from the month during the last days of which the snow usually disappears from its summit, yet in backward summers the bald crown of this ancient sentinel has looked northward over a white shirt front as late as the middle of July.

I made two very happy pilgrimages to the top of this mountain in my boyhood. One of them was made during the first days of July, in a spell of terribly hot weather for that climate. Accompanied by a young friend I found myself one morn-

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ing in a two-horse wagon with a full camp outfit, driving in a cloud of dust out of the quiet railroad terminus at Corvallis, with face toward the Peak. The day was exceedingly sultry in the valley. The thermometer, hanging in the shade of the post-office in the little college town of Philomath, where we ate our luncheon, registered ninety-eight degrees, which is an extreme heat for Oregon. But a few miles farther on we began to climb the hills, and in the shade of the great green firs, fragrant with balsam, found a cooler atmosphere. The farms were now farther apart, the road rougher; then the farms were little log-cabins with tiny potato patches adjoining, and by five o'clock our road ended in a squirrel path, which did not, like Emerson's, "run up a tree," but up a mountain.

The road ended at the cabin of an old Missourian who had been used to the backwoods all his life, and had always kept ahead of the railroads. He had a family of sixteen big strapping boys and girls, and they made a crowd of about the finest specimens of physical manhood and womanhood I have ever seen. The old man and five of the grown-up boys were none of them under six feet two inches high, and the old woman and some of the girls were nearly as large. They made their living largely by hunting and fishing. The old woman struck me as one of the oddest characters

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I ever met. She had very fierce black eyes, and though she must have been over sixty years old, they were as untamed and sparkling as in her youth. She said of all wild game she liked panther the best, and that the family had been feasting on panther steaks that day. As I looked in the glittering eyes of that old Amazon, my sympathies were with the panther.

We left the wagon with this panther-eating family, packed tents and blankets, guns and provisions on our horses, and, each leading one, took the trail for the foot of the Peak, where we were to camp for the night. Just at sunset we reached our camping-ground beside a beautiful stream that had its birth somewhere up on the side of the mountain, perhaps gushing full-born from a great spring, and came dancing and splashing over its bed of rocky bowlders. I told my friend that if he would set up the camp and make a fire, I would risk getting trout enough from that brook for supper. He agreed to this, and I at once set out on my delightful quest. The long, crooked vining-maple twined so closely about the stream that only a little hazel switch, perhaps eight feet in length, could be used for a rod. This, with a fragment of silk line with a small brown hackle dangling from the end, entirely innocent of bait, completed the preparations. Slipping quietly down to the brook

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side, I came up behind a great moss-covered rock, and dropped the fly on the face of the little pool below. Scarcely had it touched the water when, with a sudden rush from under the rock, a half-pound trout seized it, and bent my frail rod almost double with his brave attempts to carry off his prize. My friend did not yet have the coffee-water boiling when I returned with a string of fourteen speckled beauties, from a quarter to half a pound in weight, that would have made any fisherman's mouth water. We had shot several young grouse on our way through the foot-hills in the afternoon, and it is needless to say that with fried trout, broiled grouse, and the cool mountain air for an appetizer, we feasted like kings.

Tired from the day's hard exertions, we spread our blankets early under the wide-reaching branches of a giant cedar, and went to sleep with the night-hawk's "boom" ringing in our ears. Just as the daylight was creeping modestly over the forests, I awoke to enjoy the grandest concert I ever heard. Never this side of heaven do I expect to listen to sweeter minstrelsy than in that July dawn under the shadow of June Peak. The unusual heat had driven most of the birds out of the valley, and it seemed as if all the sweet singers of the Oregon forests had gathered in that mountain cañon. What an orchestra they did make! Every-

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thing that could chirp, or warble, or pipe, or whistle, or trill, or trumpet, or screech, or scream, was doing his very best. They were all going at once, every feathered musician seeming to be bent on making all the noise possible, yet the great diversity of sounds blended into a sonata such as Beethoven never dreamed of, not even in the moonlight.

We were up with the sunshine, and after a hearty breakfast started leisurely up the mountain trail. The bridle path led up a long ridge, and except at distant intervals was not uncomfortably steep for slow walking. It was a lovely morning, and the absolute silence, so far as any human noise was concerned, was wonderfully restful. Since then I have done some mountain climbing in a modest way in Switzerland, the pleasure-ground of the world, but have never found there that perfect isolation from human beings, that delicious sense of solitude, which I used to know in mountain excursions in Oregon. In the Alps you will be lost for a little while from human habitations, and feel that there is a little respite from civilization, when suddenly a Swiss boy or woman will pounce upon you with goat's milk or sausages to sell, and your fond illusion of solitude vanishes. In the great Northwest it is yet possible to find primeval nature. The last mile of our climb, made just before noon, was hard work, the

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trail winding back and forth against the face of an almost perpendicular bluff. After many a pause to rest, we were glad to drop, panting, thirsty, and exhausted, on the outer edge of the green-crowned summit.

The summit of the peak is a great plateau of perhaps five hundred acres of as beautiful natural meadow as human eye ever gazed upon. The grass was a most luxuriant green and struck us above the knee. Some years previous, an adventurous ranchman had undertaken to turn this meadow into profitable account by bringing here his milch cows for three or four months in the summer and making cheese. He tried it for a year or two, but it was such hard work getting the cows up the mountain and down again, and so much trouble to carry the cheese to market, that he gave it up as a bad job. He had built quite extensive log-cabins for the use of his dairy. They had now fallen into a mass of logs through lack of care, and had no doubt been unroofed by the terrific storms that beat about the devoted head of the old mountain in the winter time.

My friend and myself agreed to take our sight-seeing later, and so wended our way over this lofty prairie to where a great spring of ice-cold water bubbled up at the head of a little cañon. Here we made camp. We tethered our horses

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on the meadow, fearing they might get homesick and leave us in the night. After eating our lunch, we took our strong field-glasses and ascended the highest point of the peak to enjoy the fruits of our labors. Facing the east, the entire Willamette Valley, stretching from the Calapooia Mountains on the south to the Columbia River on the north, was spread out before us like a map. This great champaign of mingled hill and dale and broad expanse of plain is from twenty to fifty miles wide and a hundred and fifty miles in length. Looking down from June Peak on this clear July day, farmhouses, churches, and towns all stood out in bold relief, and by the aid of a good glass were clearly discerned fifty miles away. The farming section looked something like a great irregular chessboard, with squares of black and gold. The broad fields of yellow harvest were side by side with others summer fallowed for autumn sowing. Down through the centre of this valley, winding leisurely, is the river from which the whole section draws its name. Its course is plainly marked by the long, dark lines of fir trees that adorn its banks. A native poet sings of the Willamette:

"Grace forever haunts thy journey,
Beauty dimples on thy tide,

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Time that mars us,
Maims and scars us,
Leaves no track or trench on thee."

Down from the mountains trail narrower lines of green, that tell of smaller streams that are born amid the hills, and go plunging over the rocks white with froth until they reach the valley, and then jog along very lazily through the quiet meadows until they join the Willamette.

Skirting the horizon from Puget Sound on the north to far-away Southern Oregon southward, is the great range which makes the far-famed Sierras of California and the Cascades of Oregon. The Cascades were long the paradise of the hunter, but the old romantic hunter of Fenimore Cooper's time who used to rejoice in those mountains has disappeared.

"His footprints have failed us
Where berries were red
And madronas are rankest.
The hunter is dead!

"The grizzly may pass
By his half-open door;
May pass and repass
On his path as of yore;

"The panther may crouch
In the leaves of his limb;
May scream and may scream,
It is nothing to him.

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"Prone, bearded, and breasted,
Like columns of stone;
And tall as a pine—
As a pine overthrown!

"His camp-fires gone,
What else can be done
Than let him sleep on
Till the light of the sun?

"Ay, tombless! what of it?
Marble is dust,
Cold and repellent;
And iron is rust."

So sings Joaquin Miller, and so it is.

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XIV

ON THE MOUNTAIN TOP

FROM our standpoint of vision on the summit of June Peak, the Cascade Range is studded with great mountains clad in eternal snows. The long reach of vision begins with Rainier, two hundred miles and more northward. For a hundred miles about its base, the smoke and haze of the summer afternoon hid everything from our vision, but up above the smoke and the haze the great marble dome of Rainier stood out sharp and clear before our gaze. Standing as it does at the inner gateway of Puget Sound, nearly fifteen thousand feet in height, a hundred miles in girth about its snow-line, feeding six splendid rivers from as many glaciers, — feeding them so generously that they leap almost full-born from their icy home, — Rainier is a sentinel of which the dwellers of that "Western Mediterranean" may well be proud.

From Rainier, following the line southward, the eye rests on St. Helen's and Adams, and then on gray old Mount Hood, — the only rival that dares

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contend with Rainier. There is a legend among the Indians that these two great mountains used to "spit fire at each other." Though the grim old warriors have long since ceased to fight, their jealous friends continue the controversy.

My friend, Dr. Harvey K. Hines, made the ascent of Mount Hood when I was a boy nine years of age, after two unsuccessful attempts. On the first ascent, with three companions, he succeeded in getting within a thousand feet of the summit, when they were suddenly overtaken by a dense cloud that came sweeping against the north side of the mountain and drifted rapidly over it, instantly enveloping them in its folds. The air, from being warm and mild, changed suddenly to fierce cold; the winds howled around the sides of the mountain, and shrieked away in doleful cadences below. The driving snow filled the air so entirely that a cliff of rocks three hundred feet from them was entirely invisible. To go up or to go down was for the time alike impossible. They could only crouch against the forbidding breast of the mountain and brave the beating of the storm. Frost and ice gathered in their hair and beards and clothes till they looked like four ice kings shaking winter from their grizzly locks. The snow was swept by fierce winds in waves and drifts in every direction. It

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was only by almost superhuman endurance that they escaped from the mountain alive. Dr. Hines again ascended the great mountain, and succeeded in reaching the summit, and descended into the crater, where he found the air hot and stifling and great quantities of volcanic rock and ashes. Dr. George C. Wilding, of Jersey City, made the ascent of this Oregon giant, also, a few years since.

But Mount Hood looks peaceful enough to us, looking out on it from June Peak. We let our eyes follow down the great wall again. There is Jefferson, and then, standing together in queenly majesty, — not quite so lofty as their brothers, but more graceful, as becomes their sex, — are the Three Sisters, which are almost opposite where we stand, and perhaps eighty miles away as the crow flies, though they look near enough, when viewed through the powerful lens, to drop in on for an evening call before sundown. We look away on toward the south, and it seems like a vast, empty place. There used to be another in this exalted family, occupying much the same position on the south that Rainier does on the north. To-day it is known as Crater Lake, which is one of nature's marvels. Imagine a lake situated on a mountain that is yet seven thousand feet above the sea, surrounded by walls from one to two thousand feet in height. The water has

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"The Driving Snow Filled the Air." *Page* 115.

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been found by the government survey to be more than two thousand feet in depth, and is the deepest body of fresh water on the globe. In its centre the summit of the ancient mountain still stands. It is now called Wizard Island, and contains the last smoking chimney of the once mighty volcano. The island is six hundred feet high, and the centre crater — called the Witches' Caldron — is ninety feet deep and four hundred and seventy-five feet in diameter. In the old times — a few thousand years ago — it must have been a magnificent mountain. In the days before the hot breath of the volcano soiled its snow-white head, it was no doubt the most towering of all the giant domes of that great line of mountains. It sniffed the air far above the reach of Rainier, or Hood, or Shasta. But its great heart was on fire, and after a while it could no longer suppress the burning hell in its bosom. Great streams of flame poured forth from its summit, and wide-reaching waves of lava rolled down the mountain side for forty miles and more away, as can be easily traced to this day, though these lava ridges have long since become fertile, and forests of mammoth trees grow and wave above them now. At last the foundations of the great mountain gave way, and its proud head — that had battled with the storms and gathered the treasures of the snow

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through ten thousand winters — sank forever out of sight. Down, down, down, deep into the empty heart of the earth it sank, leaving a great yawning blackened chasm which succeeding generations of snow and rain have filled with pure, fresh water, giving to us in our time one of the most beautiful lakes ever revealed to the eye of man.

There is probably no point of interest on the American continent that more completely overcomes the ordinary Indian with fear than Crater Lake. From the time when the memory of the white man runneth not to the contrary, no power has been strong enough to induce an Indian to approach within sight of it. It is easy enough, for a small sum, to hire them to guide you until you come near the summit, but just before reaching the top, your dusky guide will leave you to proceed alone. To the savage mind, this unique lake is clothed with a deep veil of mystery, and is, in his opinion, the abode of all manner of demons and unshapely monsters. The Klamath Indians, who live near it, believe that while once it was inhabited by the Great Spirit, it is now the home of demons, and that it would be certain death for an Indian to behold it.

These Klamath Indians say that a long time ago, long before the white man appeared in the

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region to vex and drive the natives out, a band of Klamaths, while out hunting, came suddenly upon the lake, and were startled by its remarkable walls and awed by its majestic proportions. With spirits subdued and trembling with fear, they silently approached and gazed upon its face. Something within told them that the Great Spirit dwelt there and they dared not remain, but passed silently down the side of the mountain and camped far away. There was, however, in that company a young chief of a peculiarly courageous and daring temperament, and he determined within his own mind to know more of that strange lake. After all the rest were asleep, he returned to the summit of the mountain to gaze upon its waters. He went up to the very brink of the precipice and started his camp-fire. Here he lay down to rest, here he slept till morn, slept till the sun was high in the heavens, then arose and joined the tribe far down the mountain. At night he came again, and again he slept till morn. Each visit bore a charm that drew him back again. Each night found him sleeping above the rocks; and each night strange voices arose from the waters and mysterious noises filled the air. At last, after a great many moons, he grew courageous by familiarity, and climbed down to the lake, and there he bathed and spent the night. Afterwards he often climbed down in

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the same manner and frequently saw wonderful animals similar in all respects to a Klamath Indian except that they seemed to exist entirely in the water. Bathing in these strange waters had a remarkable effect upon this brave young chief. He suddenly became hardier and stronger than any Indian of the tribe. At first he kept his own counsel, and no one knew what strange thing had come over him. But at last, in an unwary moment, he told his squaw the secret in confidence and somehow or other it got out. After that others began to seek its influence. Old warriors sent their sons for strength and courage to meet the conflicts awaiting them. In an evil hour the chief who first visited the lake killed one of the strange monsters that inhabited it, and was at once set upon by untold numbers of Llaos (for such they were called), who carried him to the top of the cliff, cut his throat with a stone knife, then tore his body into small pieces, which were thrown down to the waters far beneath, where he was devoured by angry Llaos, — and such shall be the fate of every Klamath Indian who, from that day to this, dares to look upon Crater Lake.

Filled with thoughts like these we turned our faces to the west. We looked over a great reach of forest, terraced away for thirty miles and more in a gradually descending stairway to the sea. As

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far as the eye could reach, north or south, stretched the uneven shore-line of the mighty Pacific. Out across the waters in the great western recess the slowly retreating sun flooded the waves with molten gold. We stood rapt and still in this august presence, until like a great wheel of fire it sank down into the dark abyss. Then with a long-drawn sigh, each busy with thoughts of his own, — thoughts no pen can express, — we turned about and walked silently back to camp.

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XV

FUN AND FELLOWSHIP

WHILE a boy growing up on the frontier misses many things that to the mind of the Eastern lad, born into the lap of city life, are absolutely essential in order to have a good time, he has to make up for it a great many other things that no city can furnish. There was a sense of freedom about the old life on the frontier, when the farms were large and the neighbors far apart, when game abounded and the fishing was good, that one born and reared in the large town or city has never known.

One of my earliest joys, after I had gotten good use of my legs, was learning to swim. My father taught me to swim when I was seven years old, and in a little while I could swim and dive like a duck. I do not remember any boy with whom I was acquainted in my youth who was not a good swimmer. It was taken as a matter of course. A boy learned to swim in due time, just as he learned to walk and talk, and afterwards to fish and shoot and ride horseback.

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There is perhaps no greater compensation for being a country boy, and especially being a pioneer country boy, than his friendship with horses, and his almost unlimited opportunity for horseback riding. I cannot recall when I began riding on horseback. As far back as my memory goes it is mixed up with sitting on the bare back of a horse, holding to the mane. Nearly every boy that was at all plucky grew to be expert in the art of what was called "breaking" horses, and thought nothing of catching up an utterly wild horse out of the band, cinching the big western cowboy saddle on him, and mounting him just for the excitement of the thing. I have ridden and really enjoyed it, as most agreeable sport, with Indian cayuses that would "buck" the first half-hour I mounted, no matter if it were three or four times a day.

In addition to hunting and fishing, the winter time in pioneer sections gives to the rugged boy accustomed to outdoor sports a great many pleasures, such as trapping for birds and wild animals. My trapping experiences began with snowbirds and jaybirds and meadow-larks when I was barely big enough to pull the string fastened to the trigger under the trap set in the dooryard, I watching through the window till the bird was in place to be captured under my open trap made of

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split sticks. Later, I managed to get a great deal of enjoyment out of trapping quail in the same way, except that the trap was larger and was set with figure-four triggers so that the birds would throw it themselves. How a boy's heart will get in his throat, when in making the rounds of his traps on a winter morning he comes upon one with ten or a dozen beautiful California quail in it!

A trapping instinct was fed in us by the presence yet in the community of a few wandering belated trappers who had spent their lifetime working for the old fur companies, and who now lived a sort of hermit life in their little log huts back in the edge of the mountains. These men wore moccasins like the Indians, and some of them continued till the day of their death to wear no other clothes save the picturesque buckskin suits quaintly ornamented by some Indian squaw, the whole set off by a coonskin cap with a coon's tail dangling down the back of the neck. These men eked out a livelihood by trapping for beaver and mink and otter in the winter, which sufficed, with their deerskins, to procure what they needed for their simple wants. Besides the ammunition for their rifles, a little flour and tobacco and with some of them a jug of whiskey were all they required. They were odd specimens of human-

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ity, — a leaf out of the still more romantic past, — and were full of stories of Indian fighting, buffalo hunting, and wild exploits with grizzly bears, and all those things which make the delicious shivers run up and down a boy's backbone and cause his hair to stand on end. For days after one of these trappers would visit our home — as they often did to spend the night, for father was a great talker and the soul of hospitality, and mother's cooking was held in high renown — I would be planning trapping expeditions, and every jaybird I caught was magnified into an eagle, and any wandering polecat that got in my steel trap my excited imagination idealized into a grizzly bear. In those days I built many castles in the air, and enjoyed indescribable day-dreams picturing how, when I was old enough, I would forsake civilization and, seeking the deeper fastnesses of the wilder Northwest, become a second Joe Meek or Kit Carson.

There was in many ways a very beautiful though unconscious communism in the neighborhood life of that frontier existence. If one farmer had a killing, whether it was a beef steer, or mutton, or hogs, he never thought of storing it all away in his own smoke house, but without at all considering it a matter of generosity he cut it up and sent large portions to all the neighbors within reach.

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While of course it was expected that the neighbors would treat him in the same way when occasion offered, it was never charged up as so many pounds of meat, or any account kept of it as a debt; but was sent just as freely to those whom the farmer had every reason to believe would not be able to make return. If a house or a barn was to be raised, it was a matter of interest to the community for many miles around.

I well remember an occasion when there was a barn-raising at my father's farm. Not only the men and the big boys came, but the women and the little folks, and it was a great holiday for everybody. Father had been for a long time getting the logs ready,—cutting them the right lengths, hewing them off on each side, and cutting notches in close to each end, so that they would fit into each other. Then he hauled them out of the forest to the place where the barn was to be built. All the neighbors around were invited to come on a certain day, and they came very early in the morning. I can see them now, coming with big wagon loads of boys and girls and little children, everybody whistling and singing and shouting jests to one another as they came. The women went to work with a will to help make the chicken pies and all the other good things that we youngsters thought were the best part of the

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barn-raising. The men got to work in good earnest, lifting the big hewed logs into their places. One of the older men, who was a sort of a carpenter in his way and a recognized leader in the community, was selected as superintendent of the barn-raising, and everything was done as he said. When the walls got up pretty high it was all they could do to lift the logs, and when they were ready to lift they would all cheer and shout "Hee-o-hee-e!" Before the night came the big barn stood there on the hill where the pile of logs had been in the morning.

This neighborly feeling always came out in marked beauty if a farmer was sick. I remember occasions when a neighbor would ride around the community and tell the story of some farmer who was too ill to get his spring crops in, and set a day when the neighbors were to gather at the farm, and do the sick man's planting for him. This was often kept a secret from the family themselves, and was to them a very blessed sort of surprise party; for when the day came, about daylight, their whole field would be alive with horses and men and big boys, a dozen or more ploughs would be turning over the black soil, and pretty soon somebody would set to sowing wheat, or oats, and the boys to harrowing, or may be driving a span of horses hitched to a big pile of

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green branches that brushed the wheat in, and so by night the field that looked so neglected the day before was all well started for a new crop.

Another great gathering time was at the apple-parings in the autumn. I have known people to go ten miles on horseback to spend half the night at an apple-paring, and go home thinking they had been well paid.

Spelling schools and quilting bees were also great social centres in the early backwoods times. Some of the old men, and now and then an old lady, in their rude, backwoods apparel and often uncouth appearance, looking as though they would have hard work to read and write at all, would spell away by the hour, and were especially trained on all sorts of trick words. Such contests would sometimes get to be very exciting.

Never a winter passed without neighborhood hunts, in which all the able-bodied men and boys in the community met early in the morning and chose sides, and started out for a day's hunting, every kind of game being scheduled at a certain number of points. In the evening they met at an agreed place and counted points, and the side that had the least had to pay for the supper for all of them. This was usually an oyster supper, as oysters were scarce enough to make the promise

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of an oyster supper a dream of Delmonico's to a backwoods youth.

In times of sickness nobody ever dreamed of hiring a nurse. If wife and mother was ill, one of the big girls in the neighborhood went in for a week to do the cooking, and then another would take her place if the illness was prolonged, while the neighboring women took turns in spending the night there to watch with and care for the sufferer. Men did the same way in sitting up with their sick neighbors. Weddings and funerals were attended by everybody that was able to go, and such a thing as special invitations, or selecting out special friends on those occasions, was never thought of any more at a wedding than at a funeral. Of course it was all very informal and unconventional, but in its brotherly kindness it came nearer being the ideal life than anything the modern socialist or communist dreams of.

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XVI

THE KNIGHT OF THE SADDLE-BAGS

DURING all the days of my younger boyhood the man who came in from the outside and brought most of interest from beyond the little narrow world of a backwoods community was the circuit-rider, a veritable "man on horseback." Our house was known as the "preachers' hotel," and all preachers of every denomination known to the country at that time put up there whenever they were passing through. They had always a hearty welcome to the best that the place afforded, and it never cost anything, and that sort of a bill is as comfortable to a preacher as anybody else.

The old circuit-rider lived in his saddle-bags. He was often away from home for weeks at a time, and was compelled, like Sherman's army on its march to the sea, to live off the country. He carried his library with him. It consisted of his Bible and hymn-book and three or four books which he usually had along to sell. Nearly all the books we had in those days we had bought

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of the preachers, who brought them in their saddle-bags.

My people belonged to the United Brethren Church, a branch of the larger Methodist fold, and having the same system of quarterly meetings. In those primitive conditions the quarterly meeting was made a great deal of, and usually brought together not only the presiding elder and the circuit-rider, but often a number of local preachers, besides lay members from twenty or thirty miles around. They would come to the place where the meeting was to be held about Friday, and stay over Sunday. On such occasions it was not uncommon for us to have from twenty-five to thirty guests at our house, and beds would be laid down all over the floors, and sometimes there would be as many as three tables full to feed in the big dining-room, which was also the kitchen with its great open fireplace.

We in turn went occasionally to the quarterly meeting when it was held at a distant part of the circuit. I remember on one occasion we went some twenty miles away to attend such a meeting held in the Mary's River Church. This was the first church of our denomination I had ever seen, and indeed the second altogether. It was a little, plain, barn-like structure that would hold perhaps a hundred and fifty people, but I think it impressed

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my boyish imagination more than did St. Peter's in Rome at a later date, after I had been thoroughly steeped in European cathedrals. One of the leading members of that church at Mary's River was a colored man, known as Uncle Reuben. He was a very well-to-do farmer and highly respected. We were entertained at his house. He and his family were the first colored people I had ever seen, and they made such a vivid impression on me that, though I was not more than five or six years old at the time, they each one stand out clearly in my memory, as though it were only yesterday. The old man's Southern vernacular was a constant wonder and delight to me, and his question to my father after the meeting, "Say, Bruddah Banks, will youah hoss tote a light?" has stuck like a burr in the gray matter of my brain through all the years.

Some of those early circuit-riders were exceedingly interesting characters. One of the first of them that I remember was a man by the name of Dougherty. He was a son of the Emerald Isle, and as full of wit and poetry as Tom Moore. His big heart, overflowing in humor and cheerfulness, made him beloved by the children everywhere. Of all the people I knew in my boyhood, he was the most charming conversationalist. The talk never flagged when he was about. He was not only

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brimful of stories, but his wit was so quick and so droll, and the vein of pathos always so ready to well up in him, that as a talker he was not only entertaining, but inspiring and helpful. I think I have always had a tenderer side for the Irish people because he was the first Irishman I ever knew. He was a big man, and fleshy. He greatly loved poetry. I think I never have known any one who quoted as many poems and hymns in his sermons as did this circuit-rider in the Oregon hills. Although he died before I was eight years old, I have no doubt that my own fondness for poetic illustration in public discourse owes a good deal in its beginning to the wonderful impression he made upon my childish imagination. His early and sudden death, while he was preaching on our circuit, spread universal sorrow among all the homes that had been gladdened by his presence.

I remember another one of a very different type, although he, too, was big and fat. His name was Allen, and they called him "Skookum" Allen, because he was so strong. He perspired very easily, and so always, unless it was in the depths of winter, however he began, he ended his sermon in his shirt sleeves. If it was a warm day, he stripped for the race before he began; but if cooler, as he warmed up his coat and vest came off in instalments. He used to bring down his big, maul-like fists on the

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little table with sufficient force to shake the old log schoolhouse with his vehemence. He was not a very entertaining preacher, and had a good many mannerisms. I remember he had a way of saying frequently, "As I said before." He often used this expression when he had not said it before, but put it in simply to fill up. On one irreverent day of my youth, I set myself to count the times he would use it during a sermon, and tabulated sixty-four repetitions against him.

When a little barefooted fellow at school, I first read Oliver Wendell Holmes' poem, "The Last Leaf," in the school-reader, and came to the verse,

> "I know it is a sin
> For me to sit and grin
> At him here;
> But the old three-cornered hat,
> And the breeches, and all that,
> Are so queer!"

My conscience applied it all to my own conduct in regard to "Skookum" Allen.

Another interesting figure in that portrait gallery of circuit-riders was a man by the name of Kenoyer. He was a tall, cadaverous brother, with an awfully solemn mien, and was considered a powerful exhorter. I shall never forget my first memory of him. It was at Christmas time, and he had come home with us from preaching at the

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schoolhouse for Christmas dinner. We had been fattening a big turkey gobbler for that happy occasion, and he was a monster. He had turned the scales after he was dressed at over eighteen pounds. It was a settled thing in the family that I, being the eldest son, always had the gizzard of any fowl that appeared on our table. I had lotted on that old gobbler's gizzard every time I had seen him strut for the last three months, and a good many times that morning had looked forward with happy anticipation to seeing it on my plate while listening to a very long and, to me, dull sermon. The fashion at our table was to carve up the meat, and then pass it around, and let each guest select what he desired. Never a thought of danger entered my head as father passed the turkey to Parson Kenoyer as the guest of honor, and so what happened came as a flash of lightning out of a clear sky. The old man deliberately lifted his fork and set it into that gobbler's gizzard, and laid it on his own plate. If that fork had gone into my own heart, it couldn't have hurt me worse. That my father was biting his lips to keep from laughing, my mother peering out of the corners of her eyes to see how I took it, and my sister pinching my leg under the table, did not help to make it a more pleasing situation. I could not help a big tear rolling down my cheek, though I gulped down my sorrow and did the best I

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could in silence; but the charm of that Christmas dinner had fled.

That was not the last lick that Kenoyer was to get at me. In addition to his accomplishments as a preacher, he was a quack doctor of considerable reputation among the country folks. I was afflicted for several years in my youth with what afterwards proved to be spasmodic attacks of asthma; but Kenoyer, with his grave, medical air, diagnosed my case in a fatal hour, and told my alarmed and horrified parents that I had a tapeworm of enormous proportions. He entered into such details — telling of other cases where he had taken away tapeworms long enough to make a lasso rope for a cow-boy — that he scared me nearly to death; and I was handed over to him a trembling victim to be treated. And that blundering old saint positively did give me the most nauseating nostrums, and submitted me — a growing boy — to the most rigid diet system for six months, in order to develop a tapeworm out of my asthma. He at last gave it up in disgust, to my infinite relief.

One odd case in this group that stands out in my memory was a man by the name of Mayfield, — as tall and straight and dark as a Cherokee Indian. He was a man of remarkable personal magnetism, and was regarded as a very success-

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ful revivalist. The trouble with Mayfield was that he would never stick where he was put. He would go to his circuit all right after Conference, and set the whole country afire with his magnetic personality and seemingly overflowing earnestness. But the first thing anybody knew, he was gathering up a band of horses to drive off to California or some place else on a speculation, and that would be the last that would be seen of him until about the next Conference, when he would turn up, make a pathetic exhortation that would melt the brethren to tears, and, as preachers were scarce, he would be forgiven and sent out again, to do the same thing over another year. Indeed, one of the greatest temptations that a travelling preacher had in those days was to fall before the fascinations of the horse-trader. A preacher had to have a horse, and he was usually a good judge of a horse, and many of them hurt their influence very much by getting a sort of horse-jockey reputation.

One of the younger men of that time, and one of the purest and noblest, was Uncle Wallace Hurlburt. He had come to Oregon a boy, and began his ministry there on those great frontier circuits. He was a natural orator. He had as a birthright the gift of graceful, persuasive speech. But his greatest power was not in his eloquence

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so much as in a genial soul, which gave him a personality at once so gentle and cheerful that he brought sunshine with him into every farmhouse he entered. Uncle Wallace knew how to do a lot of things besides preaching. He could make the best willow whistles of any man in the country, and he could take the stalk of an elderberry tree and make a squirt-gun that would throw water on the roof of the house. The preacher who could do those things on the frontier was regarded there, as the modern college boy would put it now, as a "regular Jim-dandy of a fellow." Uncle Wallace's religion was not stilted, but seemed to fit him as though he was born to it. When he read the Bible, he did it in such a natural way that it seemed as if he were reading a letter, and when he led at family prayers, we felt that the Lord was not very far away.

After all, I owe these early circuit-riders more than any one else after my parents. They brought in a little breath of the larger world, and most of them brought with them a flavor of new books and a certain love of books, which cropped out in their conversation and helped to give the wide-awake boy or girl a hope and an ambition for the best things. Blessings on the memory of the old circuit-rider and his saddle-bags!

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XVII

LEGEND AND BARBECUE

DURING all my boyhood and early manhood, I saw a great deal of the Indians. Our farm was not far away from the Siletz Indian Reservation, and many of those Indians frequently came through the settlements with fresh salmon for sale, at the opening of the fishing season, or to trade off their moccasins and baskets. Fish-spears and all that sort of things they made a specialty of in traffic with the whites. The little babies, called pappooses, which the mothers carried on their backs, done up in little baskets that looked like mummy cases, were always a source of interest. Nearly every stream in the country, as well as mountain or waterfall or cañon, had its Indian name in the early times, and some legend or tradition in connection with it.

I remember many of these legends, but one of the most interesting of all the mythic tales among the Northwest Indians is one connected with the origin of the echo. According to the Indians, this

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is how it happened. I-o-wi (the turtle dove) was gathering seeds in the valley, and her little babe slept. Wearied with carrying it on her back, she laid it under the Ti-ho-pi (sage bush) in care of its sister, O-ho-ton (the summer yellowbird). Engaged in her labors, the mother wandered away to a distance, when a Tso-a-vwits (a witch) came and said to the little girl, "Is that your brother?" And O-ho-ton answered, "This is my sister," for she had heard that witches preferred to steal little boys and did not care for girls. Then the witch was angry and chided her, saying that it was very naughty for girls to lie; and she put on a strange and horrid appearance, so that poor little O-ho-ton was stupefied with fright; then the witch ran away with the boy, carrying him to her home on a distant mountain. Arriving there, she laid him down on the ground, and, taking hold of his right foot, stretched the baby's leg until it was as long as that of a man, and she did the same to his other leg; then his body was stretched out; then his arms; and, behold, the baby was as large as a man. Then the Tso-a-vwits married him and had a husband, which she had long desired. But though he had the body of a man he had the heart of a babe, and knew no better than to marry the witch.

Now when I-o-wi came back and found not her babe under the sage bush, but learned of O-ho-ton

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that it had been stolen by a witch, she was very angry and punished her daughter severely. Then she went in search of her babe for a long time, mourning as she went, and crying and still crying and refusing to be comforted, though all her friends joined in the search and promised to revenge her wrongs.

Chief among her friends was her brother Kwi-na (the eagle), who travelled far and wide, over all the land, until one day he heard a strange noise, and coming near he saw the Tso-a-vwits and U-ja (the sage cock) her husband; but he did not know that this tall man was the little baby boy who had been stolen. Yet he returned and related to I-o-wi what he had seen, who said, "If that is indeed my boy, he will know my voice." And so the mother came near to where the Tso-a-vwits and U-ja were living, and climbed into a cedar tree, and mourned and cried continually. Kwi-na placed himself on another tree near by to observe what effect the voice of the mother would have on U-ja, the Tso-a-vwits' husband. When he heard the cry of his mother, U-ja knew the voice and said to the Tso-a-vwits, "I hear my mother, I hear my mother," but she laughed at him and persuaded him to hide.

Now the Tso-a-vwits had taught U-ja to hunt, and a short time before he had killed a mountain sheep, which was lying in the camp. The witch

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emptied the contents of the stomach, and with her husband took refuge therein; for she said to herself, "Surely I-o-wi will never look in the stomach of a mountain sheep for my husband." In this retreat they were safe for a long time, so that they who were searching were sorely puzzled at the strange disappearance. At last Kwi-na said, "They are hid somewhere in the ground, maybe, or under the rocks; after a long time they will be hungry and will search for food; I will put some in a tree so as to tempt them." So he killed a rabbit and put it on the top of a tall pine, from which he trimmed the branches and peeled the bark, so that it would be very difficult to climb; and he said, "When these hungry people come out and try to climb that tree for food, it will take much time, and while the Tso-a-vwits is thus engaged, we will carry U-ja away."

So they watched until the Tso-a-vwits was very hungry, and her baby-hearted husband cried for food; and she came out from her hiding-place and sought for something to eat. The odor of the meat placed on the tree came to her nostrils, and she saw where it was, and tried to climb up, but fell back many times; and while so doing, Kwi-na, who had been sitting on a rock near by, and had seen from whence she came, ran to their hiding-place, and taking the baby-hearted man

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carried him away and laid him down under the same bush from where he had been stolen; and behold! he changed into the same beautiful little babe that I-o-wi had lost.

And Kwi-na went off into the sky and brought back a storm, and caused the wind to blow, and the rain beat upon the ground so that his tracks were covered and the Tso-a-vwits could not follow him. But she saw lying on the ground some eagle feathers and knew well who it was that had deprived her of her husband, and she said to herself, "Well, I know Kwi-na is the brother of I-o-wi; he is a great warrior and a terrible man; I will go to To-go-a (the rattlesnake), my grandfather, who will protect me and kill my enemies."

To-go-a was enjoying his midday sleep on a rock, and as the Tso-a-vwits came near, her grandfather awoke and called out to her, "Go back, go back; you are not wanted here; go back!" But she knew not where to hide, and when he opened his mouth the Tso-a-vwits crawled into his stomach. This made To-go-a very sick, and he entreated her to crawl out; but she refused, for she was in great fear. Then he tried to throw her up but could not, and was sick nigh unto death. At last, in his terrible retchings, he crawled out of his own skin, and left the Tso-a-vwits in it; and she, imprisoned

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there, rolled about and hid in the rocks. When Kwi-na came near he shouted, "Where are you, old Tso-a-vwits? Where are you, old Tso-a-vwits?" And she repeated his words in mockery.

Ever since that day witches have lived in snake skins, and hide among the rocks, and take great delight in repeating the words of passers-by. The white man, who has lost the history of these ancient people, calls those mocking cries of witches hidden in snake skins "echoes," but the Indians know the voices of the old hags. This is the origin of the echo.

It is not a very big jump from the Indian legends to the old-fashioned, political meetings, which were a very interesting feature of frontier life. In the East it is rather a rare thing for candidates for public office to meet each other in joint debate, but in the early Oregon days that was universal, from the candidates for governor down to those for county commissioner and sheriff. These stump speeches abounded in humorous stories and sharp hits. Each candidate was always trying to get the laugh on his competitor.

One of the sharpest wits brought to the front by that species of rough-and tumble debate was J. W. Nesmith, a Yankee boy who went to Oregon about the time my father did, and who, having good natural ability, polished and sharpened his

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wits on the stump platform. Nesmith served Oregon for six years in the United States Senate, and notwithstanding his rude exterior, was an honor to himself and to the state. Among those who took a great fancy to him, because of his genial conversational gifts and ready wit, was the highly cultured and dignified Charles Sumner. Soon after he came to the Senate, a number of senators gathered around him one day, among whom were some of the most famous men of the war period. During the conversation, Mr. Sumner asked:

"What were your impressions, Mr. Nesmith, when you first came to the Senate?"

He modestly replied that when he first took his seat, and looked about the Senate Chamber, remembering that in that chamber Clay, Webster, Calhoun, Benton, and many of the greatest minds the nation had produced, had fought for mastery in the great problems of statesmanship, he could only pinch himself and say, "Nesmith, how in the world did you ever get here?"

"Well," said Sumner, "you have been here some time now, and become used to your surroundings; how do things seem to you?"

"Ah," said Nesmith, with a sly twinkle, "now I wonder how the rest of you got here."

From that day on, he was the recognized wit of

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the Senate, and when his great friend Sumner died, he delivered the most splendid eulogy that was pronounced in the Senate Chamber.

An interesting feature of many of the great political meetings in Western backwoods times was the *barbecue*, which usually went with it. Instead of taking up a collection of money for campaign purposes, the political committees would go about through the neighborhood and get donations of fat steers and sheep and hogs. These would be brought the day before the meeting, and slaughtered and hung up to cool. A long trench was dug, in which a big fire was kept burning for many hours, and about midnight before the day of the meeting the animals were put whole in this trench over the glowing coals. They were skewered with long green poles, and very carefully looked after for about twelve hours, until they were thoroughly cooked. By noon on the great day the crowd gathered, from twenty to thirty miles about, and there were often thousands of men and women and children in the big grove, whose nostrils, taking in the savory smell from the barbecue pit, were making their appetites ravenous. An army of men cut up the meat, and served it hot with huge hunks of bread and cucumber pickles. I have never seen such appetites anywhere else on earth as were exhibited at those

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political barbecues. After everybody was full of the roasted meat, the speaking would begin, and go on through the afternoon. Whatever may have been the vote-making power of the barbecue, its magnetism to draw an audience has never been equalled.

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XVIII

NEAR TO NATURE'S HEART

One of the delightful things of frontier life, and one that adds a charm of romance and mystery to every day's experience, is a friendship with nature at first hand, while yet untamed. In my boyhood I knew by sight all the birds and animals of the region, and stored up a fund of knowledge concerning their habits that has been a source of joy and profit to me ever since. It was always a great pleasure to me to seek out the nests of wild birds, for in the springtime on the frontier, before the birds had been scared away from the haunts of men and many species of them exterminated, the whole world seemed one vast bird's nest.

The little swallow builds its nest under the eaves of the old log barn, or up under the split board roof above the hay-mow. Of all the birds, the swallow sticks to mankind the closest, unless it be the English sparrow, which I never saw until I came east of the Rocky Mountains.

The meadow-lark, one of the sweetest of Oregon

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singers, builds out on the open prairie, or in the field, in the early spring, down on the ground in some crack made by the hoof of an ox or a horse when the ground is soft. The quiet colored mother lark is so like the weeds and grass about her that you may step over her without discovering the place of her nest.

The blackbirds build in colonies about some marsh, or where the water eddies back in some lowland beside a running stream where the tall rushes grow. There, many a time, I have waded in among the reeds where there were a hundred nests built close together; nests built of the tough grass lined with hair and lashed on to one of the reed stalks, or perhaps more frequently tied to a stalk on either side and far enough up to be above high water. The old birds would be very much excited when I came wading toward their nesting place, and every anxious mother and red-winged mate would shout to me in shrillest tones to go away about my business.

The wild duck, too, builds close to the water, so that her awkward little brood may soon learn to use their paddles. I made a regular business of hunting for wild ducks' nests every spring, and would take the eggs home and set them under a hen. I do not remember a single season during all my boyhood when we did not have at least one

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brood of Mallard ducks from the wild ducks' eggs. When first hatched out they would be very wild, and were into the water the moment the shell was off their backs, if they had a chance, to the great perplexity and sorrow of the old hen. We had one old hen that brought up three broods of wild ducks, one year after another, and then died of rheumatism from wading in the water so much from her anxiety over her strange flocks. Poor old biddy, she never could get used to their queer ways. A strange thing about it was, that though these little ducks were so wild when they first hatched out, they soon became just as gentle and tame as any other fowl about the place.

The grouse and pheasants and quail build their nests, usually, back in the forests in the uphill pastures. The quail are very lazy about nest-building, and often four or five hen quail will lay together. I have seen fifty quail eggs in a heap before they were ready to try to sit on them. I have tried a great many times to raise grouse and pheasants and quail by the aid of a hen, the same way that we did the ducks, but though they would often hatch out, they all died young. When the quail are trapped full-grown, however, and kept shut up for a while, they soon become very tame, and after a little while can be let out with the

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chickens without any danger of their running away, if they are kindly treated and well fed.

I used to like to hunt for the yellowhammer's nest, and it was not easy to find; for though they often build in a hollow limb, or tree, a plucky old bird is just as likely as not to pick out a stump that looks perfectly sound on the outside, and, beginning about six inches from the top, peck out a hole big enough to let the builder's body in, and then dig down on the inside, cleaning out the wood as he goes, until his nest is from one to two feet below where he enters the stump. His brood is very warm and snug in there out of the storm and the cold.

The kingfisher's nest was also interesting, because so hard to find. I hunted for them many a long day before I found one; but finally discovered one in a hole that ran into a high clay-bank, overlooking a deep fishing-hole in the stream. The kingfisher had dug this hole in the clay as the yellowhammer does in the wooden stump. He lives in a "dug-out," like the early settlers in Nebraska or the Dakotas. He depends for his living, both for himself and his little ones, on diving for fish in the stream that runs under his nest.

The great, long-legged cranes often build their nests on the top of some bald mountain, far away from the farms and the town, in some little pond

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or lake. They are like the blackbirds in seeking for a place where the reeds and the rushes are thick, only they get inside the reeds, where they are beginning to be scarce on account of the deeper water, and selecting a few stout reeds for anchors, or hitching posts, they cut down an abundance of the long tree-like stems of the reeds and rushes, and build there, where the water is as deep as they can wade with their long legs, a big floating raft, on which they put their nest. A nest for a crane must take as much time, or more, than for a frontier settler to build his log-cabin. I found a crane's nest once in a little lake on the mountain top, where the floating raft of reeds on which it was built was two or three feet thick and four or five feet across. The nest was built on top of it. It rode the water as gracefully as a ship.

Crows take a good deal of trouble in building their nests, up in the top of some wide-spreading oak or maple tree, where the branches are thick, and they are likely to clean it up and use it over again a good many times.

Of all the birds I know about, the magpie is the most cunning with regard to its nest. He first gathers a great mass of large limbs, sometimes three or four feet long, for the base work in the crotch of some tree, and then builds a very deli-

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cate little nest of fine twigs and hair or wool, and then covers it over the top with a mass of limbs, still greater than he had for the base of it, leaving it so that he has to come in underneath and go up a crooked route, doubling himself up, in order to get in. He evidently does this to keep other birds from stealing his eggs. It is a case of guilty conscience with the magpie, for he is the shrewdest and most shameless thief in the woods. He is forever stealing the crows' eggs, but is so careful about the building of his nest that the crow never gets a chance to even up with him.

Magpies are very bright birds in every way, and make delightful pets. I have tamed many of them, taking them either from their nests or capturing them when they were first beginning to fly. I kept them in a large cage made of round willow sticks, giving them plenty of room, and they soon became thoroughly adapted to the situation. They are great mimics, and can be taught to talk fully as well as a parrot. They will imitate every sound that is heard about the place, — the dog, the cat, chickens, turkeys, ducks; you will hear the magpie getting over the whole list of sounds in the morning before the rest of the ranch is awake.

I once had a little magpie that was not very well feathered out; and, as the nights were pretty cold, he was put every evening into an old stock-

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ing, and he would snuggle contentedly in that till morning, and enjoyed it so long as he was alone in the cage. One day I brought home three other young magpies who were well feathered out and just beginning to fly. When roosting-time came, they settled themselves upon the perch, and little Bob was put in his stocking as usual, but rebelled at once, and would back out as fast as he could be put in. He had found out he was a magpie, and his soul loathed stocking legs. Poor fellow! his pride was his undoing. He took a severe cold from which he never recovered.

However, of all the pets I ever had, a sand-hill crane was the most dignified and interesting. It had been hurt some way when about half-grown, and captured and kept on a ranch. I came to own it when it was full-grown, and it was a very large and splendid specimen. It was as gentle as a kitten and very partial to human fellowship. If allowed to be in the front yard, it would peck holes in the wire screen to indicate its desire to come in and be with the folks. Once when tied by one leg to a tree to keep it away from the screen-door, it carefully eyed the knot for some time, and, discovering that it was a slip-noose, it ran its long bill down next its leg and, working the noose loose, deliberately lifted its foot out, and went stalking back to the door in triumph. Its

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faculty of imitation often led it into mischief. The small articles of the laundry were often spread on some currant bushes near the house; and the crane had noticed that when they were gathered up they were spread on top of each other, one by one, and were sometimes patted down to make them lie well in the pile. The next time they were put out, the crane was noticed to march over to the bushes, and, taking the pieces, one after another, in his bill, he laid them down in a pile, and then bestowed upon them a decided slap with his foot, leaving much more than "hens' tracks" on each article.

In connection with this crane was a striking illustration of the strange friendships that will often be formed between birds of differing species. We had among the turkeys a very fine young bronze gobbler, who took a great fancy to the crane and followed him about with the devotion of Ruth for her mother-in-law. It seemed to annoy the crane very much at first, but after a while he became accustomed to it, and seemed to even reciprocate the young gobbler's affection. After a little, the turkey refused to be separated from his long-legged friend at night, and, instead of roosting in a tree with the other turkeys, would stand out on a little elevation of ground where the crane always took his place for the night.

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After that, they were inseparable companions either day or night; and when the crane would go down the yard stretching his wings to shoo the chickens, imitating a girl shaking her apron at them, the gobbler would clumsily attempt the same performance.

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"Stretching His Wings to Shoo the Chickens." *Page* 156.

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XIX

FRONTIER COLLEGE LIFE

When I reached the mature age of eleven years, my father and mother decided, after a long and serious family council, to remove to the newly started town of Philomath — some twenty miles from our farm — in order that I might have a chance to prosecute my studies. Although the district schools had held but six or eight months in the year, and were often of an inferior quality, my parents had so determinedly kept me at my books, between my hunting and fishing spells, that I was ready to enter the collegiate department in my twelfth year, and had the honor to be the youngest student in the department throughout my connection with the school.

While this school lacked of being a college everything except students and teachers, it had yet many advantages to a vigorous mind that was really inquisitive to know things. There was no college library at first, no laboratory, — absolutely nothing but a blackboard, — and it was a battle

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royal between the student, the text-book, and the professors. The teachers were good in the main; and among the students those who were determined to get an education at all hazards made rapid progress. There was great freedom of movement, and the quick, wide-awake youth was not held back by the slow ones.

I had three fellow-students who interested me very much. One of them was fully twice my age, and it was a very odd friendship that sprang up between us. It was absolutely impossible for him to learn languages, nor could he learn anything else very well. I think he had the most sluggish mind I have ever seen in a man who really was determined to make something of himself. I used to do my best to help him out. Week after week, I would write out his translations for him; and I think I was comparatively innocent, for I do not remember that it ever occurred to me as an unfair sort of thing to do. We were not put on our honor about those things as they are in the best colleges now, and a boy's conscience was not likely to hurt him much because he had outwitted the teacher, unless his sin was emphasized by his being caught at it and punished for it. This young man managed to push his way through by such help until examination days, and then he was always in dis-

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grace, for it was impossible to help him much on such occasions. It was the general opinion of the teachers and the students that when he left school, after four years' attendance, he was the dullest scholar that had been seen there.

His future career, however, was quite suggestive. He attended a medical college for two years, and, failing to pass, went back for a third year. Then, failing to pass, he went away and practised medicine for two years, and as he made a decided success as a practising physician, the medical faculty finally gave him his diploma. As soon as he secured this he removed to another section of country, where he was entirely unknown, and set up as a full-fledged physician. His success was instantaneous. There was no starving period for him, and yet there were none of the elements of the ordinary quack about him. He was altogether too slow to advertise himself, but he had a wonderful faculty of being silent, and looking wise, and the added advantage of having a large and imposing physical make-up. His practice grew and spread until he was in demand for forty miles around. He was in his buggy day and night, and literally wore his life out in his remarkable popular success as a physician. He died before he was thirty-five, a martyr to his prosperity, having made a respectable fortune out of his business, and leav-

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ing behind him a most enviable reputation as a great and good physician. Anybody can point the moral who wants to: I simply record the facts without malice toward any of my friends in the medical fraternity.

Another young fellow who greatly interested me had the most remarkable mathematical mind I have ever known. It seems to have been a natural gift to him. Within six months from the time he began the study of algebra he could master any problem given in the text-books. Within a year he was superior as a mathematician to any of the teachers in the school. He grasped a mathematical problem at once with a clearness of perception that I have never witnessed in any one else. The strange thing about it was that he did not know anything else at all. He was a nonentity in all his other studies. He cared for nothing except mathematics; there he revelled like an eagle in the upper sunshine. I have always believed that with a proper environment and opportunity he would have made one of the most famous mathematicians of the time. He has been a fairly successful business man in a small way, and has never had any chance to use the great gift that was bestowed upon him.

The other youth that made the greatest impression of the three was my special chum and bosom

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companion. Oftentimes we spent our Saturday vacation together, with our guns, in the foot-hills near by, hunting for grouse and pheasants. One Saturday we started out in this way for an afternoon together, but paused on the outskirts of the town, where some men were moving a dwelling-house by means of a horse and block and tackle. My friend stepped up into the doorway of the house while it was stationary, and set the butt of his gun down on the doorsill in front of him. Suddenly the horse was started up, and the building gave a quick lurch forward. His gun was jarred off the sill, striking the hammer, and the load of shot was discharged at short range into his body. I never shall forget his scream or the look on his face, "My God, I am shot! I will die!" We managed to get him home to his mother, one of the gentlest and sweetest of women, and he died in her arms a few hours later. The incident made a terrible impression on my mind, from which I doubt if I have entirely recovered after all the years that have gone between; for sometimes, even now, in the quiet of the night, I see the face of my old chum, and hear his heart-breaking cry. It was months before I could take down my gun again, and for a long time I thought I never should care for it any more.

It may have been the deep solemnity with which

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this sad happening impressed me, that made me the more easily susceptible to the religious teaching of a series of revival meetings in the college chapel the following winter. At any rate the great event of my boyhood, and that which has had more to do with my after life than anything else, occurred on "watch-night" after my fourteenth birthday. As those who have read these pages will understand, I had been reared from babyhood under the most positive Christian influences, and had never fallen into outbreaking wicked habits; yet I felt that some deeper religious experience was possible, and desirable, and had many times had a great longing to experience what I was accustomed to hear people call "religion."

My conversion finally came about in this way: There was a watch-night service in the chapel, and the young president of the college, the Rev. Albert L. Biddle, who is, if I mistake not, a Congregational pastor somewhere in Connecticut at the present time, had preached a very striking and earnest discourse on the subject of "Eternity." At the close of the sermon, and in that solemn hour before midnight, an invitation was given for all those whose desired to begin the New Year with a new confidence in God, and a new hope and trust in Christ, to come forward and kneel at the altar for prayers. I very much desired to go, but did

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not have the courage to make the start, until an old class-leader, a carpenter, with one leg a little shorter than the other, which gave him a very decided limp in his walk, came down the aisle from behind me. I stood at the end of the seat, and as the old man came up he laid his hand on my shoulder and said, "Louis, isn't this a good time for you to start?" As he uttered the words, the weight of his body came down on his short leg, and the emphasis of his limp was felt in the pressure of his hand on my shoulder, pushing me a step out into the aisle. Once started, I walked right on until I reached the altar. I have often said it was the weight of the old man's limp that turned the balance in my case.

I did not find the peace I desired that evening, and returned home a little after midnight in a very perplexed and sorrowful state of mind. I retired to my own room, but not to sleep. In the dark hours of the night I fought out the greatest battle of my life, and just before dawn I made up my mind that for all my future life, whatever else happened, I was to be a Christian boy and man. Then there came a great peace and comfort into my heart. It so filled me with joy and delight that I was carried away with its ecstasy, and following out my impulsive temperament, I ran into the room where my father and mother were

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sound asleep, and roused them from their slumbers by my joyous exclamations, "I've got religion, I've got religion!"

The joy of my parents at this new experience that had come to me was unbounded, and they were wise enough, and spiritual-minded enough, to enter with the fullest sympathy into my gladness. The experiences of life since then have been varied, but amid all the perplexities and mysteries of my soul, many of them still unsolved, I have never doubted the genuineness of the fellowship into which I entered with Jesus Christ in the dawning of that New Year's morning.

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XX

OUT OF BOYHOOD INTO MANHOOD

During the last year in college, the summer before my sixteenth birthday, I became ambitious to help on with my own expenses, and secured a small district school to teach, about six miles away from the college town. It seems remarkable to me, as I think back over it, that the directors ever should have been inveigled into letting me have the school. I was very small for my age at that time, and gave no promise whatever of the stalwart physical proportions to which I was afterward to attain. But my teachers and the county superintendent were partial enough to give me such flattering letters of commendation that I captured the very first school I undertook.

It was not a very ambitious academy. The building was made of hewed logs, and had seats and rude desks to accommodate about forty children. I was to receive the munificent sum of twenty dollars a month, and had the privilege of boarding around among the pupils. I did not,

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however, avail myself of that very much, for I never before had been away from home except with my father, and though I was a pedagogue I had yet a boyish heart, and I think that on full forty-five of the sixty evenings I walked the six miles home, footing it back again next morning, rather than stay among strangers. Quite a number of the boys and girls were older than I, and several of them as large again, but I succeeded in having very good discipline, and I think closed the term with the affections of my pupils.

I never shall forget one afternoon, when the county school superintendent, who had been my teacher at one time, and his wife, who had been my classmate, came to visit my school. Their attempts to suppress their amusement at the pretentious dignity with which I ruled over the boys and girls so much older and larger than myself were exceedingly annoying to me at the time, though very funny to think of afterwards. The young wife had a quick eye for the humorous, anyhow, and she spent most of the afternoon stuffing her handkerchief into her mouth to keep from disgracing her husband by bursts of laughter. He was kind enough, however, to give me a good recommendation to all inquiring friends.

My school days closed with the spring after I was sixteen. My mother had been ill for some

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months, and my father, hoping that the change would restore her health, determined on removing to Eastern Oregon. Here was a great plateau tract of country over which he had come when a boy, and had not then regarded it as worth settling, but now it was filling up with settlers, and the soil was found to be very rich and fertile. He sold his farm and sheep and other stock, except his horses, and one rainy morning our wagon and teams, my saddle horse, and the family were put aboard a little steamer at Corvallis, and we were afloat on the Willamette River.

It was only a hundred miles to Portland, but we were two whole days and a part of a third making the journey. There was plenty of water in the river at that season of the year, but the little steamer was a traffic boat, and the captain would stick its nose into a sand-bank anywhere any one waved a handkerchief, either to put aboard a passenger or a tub of butter. Every few miles we had to stop and load on wood for fuel. There were no railroads in the country then, and no coal mines had been opened. The fir timber was cut into cord wood and hauled and stacked upon the river bank for the steamer's use. Whenever we came to one of these wood depots, the steamer would stop and the deck hands would scramble off and pitch four or five cords of the wood over on to the deck.

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At Oregon City, ten miles above Portland, we had to stop and change to another boat below the falls in the river, and then at Portland we changed again to the steamer going to the Cascades of the Columbia. We left Portland early in the morning, and the day up the Columbia was one long to be remembered. Although I have been over it a great many times since, its splendors of natural scenery — the deep dark cañons, the rugged cliffs, towering mountains, and glorious waterfalls — never seemed so wonderful as on that first day when I brought to them my fresh, boyish enthusiasm.

At the Cascades we changed to a little railroad, seven miles in length, that carried us about the great falls in the Columbia. Making this railroad trip we passed close to the old block house that once was the scene of some very sharp Indian fighting, where General Phil. Sheridan, then a lieutenant, earned his first laurels as a fighter. We took steamer again above the Cascades, and landed forty miles above at the Dalles just at sunset. Father had everything in readiness, and with the family in the great covered wagon drove off the steamer and up through the town.

I rode behind on a splendid, high-spirited mare which my father had given me, and with which I had been unwilling to part. The animal was tired of the cramped position on the steamer, and res-

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tive from not having any exercise for several days, and she arched her pretty neck and pranced up the street in great style. I was very proud of her. On our way to the outskirts of the town where we were going to camp for the night, a man with whom we had been slightly acquainted at home stepped out from the loungers and spoke to us. He seemed overjoyed to see us, and I noticed that he paid a great deal of attention to my horse and seemed to admire her very much. He inquired where we were going to camp, and while we were eating supper by the camp-fire that evening he called on us and spent an hour in conversation. In the night my father was awakened by a disturbance among the horses, and stepping quickly but silently to the other side of the wagon, where they were tied, he was astonished to find our whilom guest unloosing my mare. He was just in time to save her, for the scoundrel, seeing he was discovered, darted away into the darkness and we never saw him again.

The next day we began our long journey overland to the high plateau country between the Umatilla River and Walla Walla where my father had determined on settling. This journey was a very delightful one in every way. The weather was beautiful, the air clear and bracing, and the long sweeps of bunch grass, fresh and green with

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their springtime covering, were very pleasing to the eye. Here I saw my first jack-rabbits and cayotes. A cayote is a small and rather disreputable sort of wolf. He goes about with a hang-dog expression, and is exceedingly disappointing to a dog who has a high opinion of his speed qualities. We had with us a half-blood hound that thought he could catch almost anything that ran. At first he would start out after every cayote that came in sight, and would gain on it very fast, but when he came pretty close up, the skulking wolf would suddenly tear away from him and leave the dog utterly discouraged. The first two or three he chased, he followed for a mile or more; but after that he never chased one more than a hundred yards.

My mare, however, was more than a match for them, and I could run her right over a cayote wherever I had a fair chance. I once got a terrible jolting this way, which might have cost me my life. These wide bunch grass prairies were covered with badger holes. I usually rode with a rein so tight that even if the mare put her foot in one of these holes I would be able to save her from falling; but one day, chasing a cayote, I became careless, and her foot sinking into a badger hole, she turned a complete somersault, hurling me two or three rods ahead. Luckily my feet

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went clear of the stirrups, and I landed in such a way as not to seriously hurt me, though it knocked the breath out of my body for a few minutes. The mare also was uninjured — the cayote likewise. Many a young fellow out in that region would lasso a cayote with a horse going at full run in chase. I came to it too late in life, or did not stick to it long enough, and never got so that I could throw a lasso with sufficient skill.

Of all the lonesome and grewsome noises I have ever listened to, the howling of a cayote at night is the worst. If there are two in the band, a stranger to their habits would be willing to swear that there were at least a hundred. Soon after my father settled in his new home, I got belated out in the bunch grass hills where I had been hunting cattle, and as night came on, there being no landmarks or trail of any kind, it was impossible to proceed with safety, and there was nothing for me to do but to lay by until morning. I took off the saddle and bridle, and took the long stake rope which the cow-boy always carries on his saddle, and not having any pin with which to fasten it, I held one end of it in my hand, the other being tied around the horse's neck. I lay down on the ground, wrapping myself in the saddle-blanket with my head in the saddle for a pillow, and after

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a little, fell into a very sound sleep. I do not know how long I slept, but in the night I awoke with a start. My horse was standing beside me, and I could hear a most awful howling from what I imagined to be packs of prairie wolves. The great varieties of tone seemed to make it sure that there were at least thirty or forty of the bloodthirsty animals. I thought over all the hideous stories I had read. Sleighing parties besieged by wolves in the forests of Russia and many other such pleasant subjects for meditation pursued each other through my mind. There was no more sleep for me that night. I never welcomed the morning with greater joy. As the gray dawn stole over the hills there, seated on his hunkers, on a little knoll, a couple of hundred yards away, was a single lone cayote, who had been the sole disturber of my dreams. I have found in later life that usually when I have been tempted to give way to panic the enemy was about as real as that.

This great plateau region in which we had settled is called over there the "Inland Empire," and stretches from the Cascades on the west to the Blue Hills of Oregon and Washington on the east. It is an empire indeed, and in that unsettled period it was impossible to stand on any one of its ten thousand hillocks and gaze away through the clearest atmosphere imaginable over vast reaches of

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fertile soil ready for the plough without touch of the hand of man in preparation, without exclaiming with Oregon's poet:

> "Room! room to turn round in, to breathe and be free,
> And to grow to be a giant, to sail as at sea
> With the speed of the wind on a steed with his mane
> To the wind, without pathway, or route, or a rein.
>
> "Room! room to be free where the white-bordered sea
> Blows a kiss to a brother as boundless as he;
> And to East and to West, to the North and the Sun,
> Blue skies and brown grasses are welded as one."

Breathing the air of that wide freedom, I crossed the frontier of my own boyhood, and manhood's hopes beckoned me onward.

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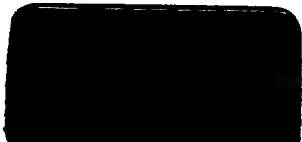
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