

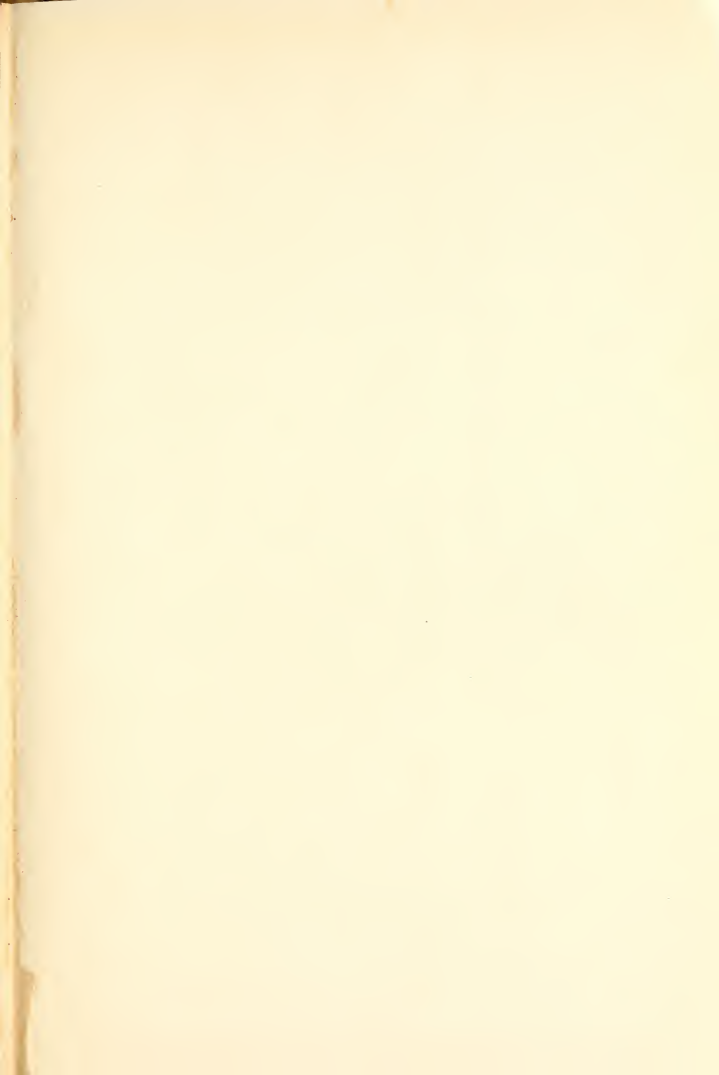
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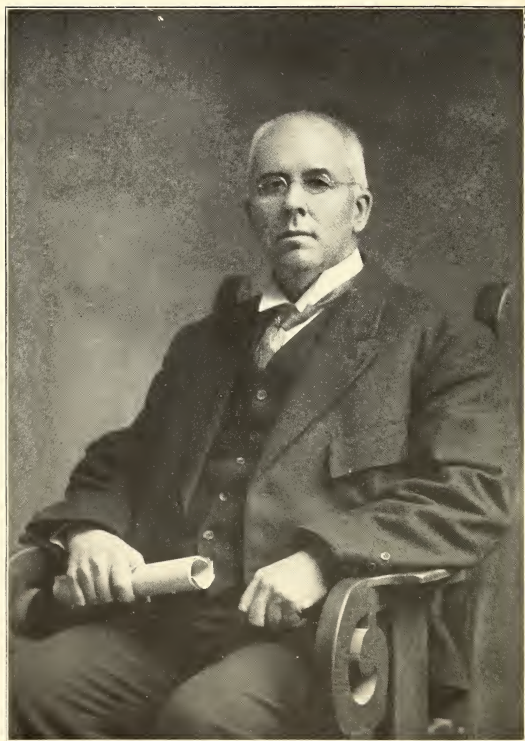


Edgar Rye



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Edgar Ryle.

The Quirt and The Spur

VANISHING SHADOWS
OF THE TEXAS
FRONTIER

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BY
EDGAR RYE

CHICAGO
W. B. CONKEY COMPANY
PUBLISHERS


118269

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WOTABOY
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P R E F A C E

All that has passed on before appear to me as vanishing shadows, into whose hazy depths I now dimly see as in a dream; too far away to grasp the details, yet a vision clear enough to quicken my mind and allow imagination to supply the perspective, and to even incarnate the actors, and bid them come forth from that mystic realm of long ago, and once more give a realistic performance for the mutual pleasure of old friends.

'Tis true, the cycle of time has whirled us along so fast that we have drifted into the broad field of commercialism, and now we can hardly realize that there is a past worth remembering—a time before the flood of immigration set in with its ever increasing population, gradually covering all traces of the Texas frontier.

In these modern days I find it a most difficult task to secure any data, much less to tell the true story; nevertheless, I think it is worth while.

And there is much that is interesting in the telling, too, notwithstanding my friend the critic may not find, in the "warp and woof" of the story, the weaving of a narrative that he can pronounce "all wool and a yard wide." I will be content if the few remaining frontiersmen and their descendants can unravel a thread or two that will prove interesting reading.

In the fire light when the embers glow,
I see the vanishing shadows come and go,
Peopled with the figures I once knew;
Fancy figures now—farewell—adieu!

EDGAR RYE.



NOTICE
Please do not write in this
book or turn down the pages

CHAPTER I

THE "TENDERFOOT"

Tread cautiously as you advance West;
He who observes most will fare best.

Far out into that vast expanse of country known as Northwest Texas, in the early days of the frontier, when unrestrained nature played with the ambitions and passions of men—far out beyond the confines of civilization—beyond the reach of the strong arm of the law—beyond the christianizing influences of the church—beyond the gentle touch of a woman's hand—far out where daring men took possession of the hunting grounds of the Indian and killed herds of buffalo to make a small profit in pelts, leaving the carcasses to putrify and bones to bleach on the prairies—far out where cattlemen disputed over the possession of mavericks, and the branding-iron was the only evidence of ownership—far out where a cool head backed the deadly six-shooter, and the man behind the gun, with a steady aim and a quick trigger, won out in the game where life was staked upon the issue—far out where the distant landscape melted into the blue horizon, and a beautiful mirage was painted on the sky line—far out where the weary, thirsty traveler camped over night near a deep water hole, while near by in the green valley a herd of wild horses grazed unrestrained by man's authority—far out where the coyote wolves yelped in unison as they chased a jack rabbit in a circle of death, then fought over his remains in a

bloody feast—far out where the gray lobo wolf and the mountain lion stalked their prey, killed and gorged their fill until the light in the East warned them to seek cover in their mountain lairs—far out where bands of red warriors raided the lonely ranch houses, killing, burning and pillaging, leaving a trail of blood and ashes behind them as a sad warning to the white man to beware of the Indian's revenge—far out into this wonderful country of great possibilities, where the sun looked down upon a scene of rare beauty, brilliant, gorgeous and fascinating, appealing to sentiment, awakening love of romance and sending man's thoughts soaring on wings of his imagination—far out into this storehouse of nature, where the luxuriant mesquite grass, like an emerald carpet of velvet, covered the hills and valleys, furnishing unlimited pasture for the great herds of cattle turned loose on the open range—far out where the McKinzie trail crossed the Clear Fork of the Brazos river, near the confluence of Collins creek, Maj. George H. Thomas established an army post on the top of a low, flat hill, and named it Fort Griffin.

It was in the month of March in the year 1876, during the last hour of a crisp, bright day, when the twilight shadows were settling over the valley of the Clear Fork, a covered wagon, drawn by a pair of jaded horses, turned from the trail and halted in a grove of pecan trees not far from the crossing. The five occupants jumped out and made preparations for camping over night.

There were four young men who came from the thickly populated districts of Kentucky, Tennessee and Virginia, and the fifth was the guide, who was also the owner and driver of the team, chartered by these young men for this overland trip.

No doubt these four young men, prompted by their

love of adventure, had followed Horace Greeley's advice, "Go West, young man; go West."

Each could have been labeled "Tenderfoot," notwithstanding their "Wild West" costumes.

With one accord they began to gather the dry driftwood and build a fire, while Dick, the guide, tethered the horses and fed them, before he began preparations to cook the evening meal.

When supper was over they filled their pipes and lounged around the smoldering fire. And for a long time they smoked in silence, each busy with his own thoughts.

The darkness slowly enveloped them, like an invisible curtain drawn by an unseen hand. The tall pecan trees, with their festoons of grapevines, shut out the starlit sky, and the undergrowth made the darkness more intense. The flickering flames of the fire, with their bluish tinge, cast fantastic, ghostlike shadows on the dark background and increased the loneliness that oppressed the campers.

Those mysterious sounds of woodland nature that come forth at night played a medley up and down the river valley, accentuated by the sharp barking of a coyote wolf and the hooting of an owl from the upland.

Civilization, with all of its attendant comforts, was 200 miles east. It first began to fade from their view when they departed from the town of Dallas, on the banks of the Trinity river, the western terminal of the Texas & Pacific railway, where the wagon traffic of the frontier connected with the iron rails. And when they began the journey across the open prairie on the trail to Fort Worth, the scattered houses became fewer and the distance between them greater, until the vast expanse of treeless country on either side was devoid of houses or improvements. The indistinct evidence of a distant

East merged into the free and easy West when they arrived in the village of Fort Worth, where wagon trains loaded with buffalo hides traded their cargo for camp supplies. All traces of the East disappeared when they bade good-by to chance acquaintances at the little hamlet of Weatherford and rolled out on the buffalo trail toward the setting sun; and all social pleasures and commercial advantages of the East were forgotten during the ten days' slow, plodding journey westward, hunting and fishing by the wayside.

But tonight they seemed to have awakened to a realization of their lonely surroundings, and through the seductive vapor of tobacco smoke came visions of their homes in the distant States—friends and relatives, beckoning them to return to the business activity and gay social whirl of the cities and towns; perhaps the pretty faces and shining eyes of sweethearts were conspicuous in the mental picture, making the longing more intense, and the weight of depression bore down upon their drooping spirits, suppressing all desire to enliven the evening with song and story.

And the full significance of the thirty graves they passed on their journey west, near the trail in Los Valley, twelve miles northwest of Fort Richardson and the town of Jacksboro, where a caravan of freight wagons was attacked by a bloodthirsty band of Comanches, led by Santanc and Big Tree, came up in retrospect.

The vivid recital of Dick, the guide, as he told the hair-raising story of the massacre of the teamsters after a fierce battle, the burning of the wagons with the wounded tied to the wheels, and the finding of their charred remains after the holocaust, was listened to with all the thrill of viewing the ground made historic by the tragic event. It had been exhilarating excitement at

the time to hear Dick tell of the narrow escape of Gen. Tecumseh Sherman, who was then making a tour of inspection of the frontier army posts of Texas, and was within a few miles of the massacre with a small escort on his way to Fort Richardson, and arrived at General McKinzie's headquarters when a messenger was telling the sad story. It was electrifying to remember that General Sherman became so excited that he ordered General McKinzie to take command of the 7th Cavalry and follow them—"follow them to the reservation and capture them, General—follow them to hell and capture or kill them—don't return without Santanc and Big Tree."

And tonight these four young men remembered that they, too, were within that danger zone where the red warriors resented the white man's invasion, and that they never lost an opportunity to kill, burn and destroy their enemies. And even now there was a possibility that at any moment they might be called on to defend themselves. This was calculated to knock all of the romance out of their previous conception of the West, and leave but little of the buoyant spirit that prompted them to make the journey. And, to judge from appearances, this was to be the beginning of the end of all of their venture into the realm where heroes are made: How different to be face to face with the real West, where real live Indians lived!

Even Dick, the guide, seemed to fall under the spell, and instead of cheerfully whistling as usual while attending to the routine of camp life, used cuss-words while repairing a break in the harness, and made no effort to conceal his irritability over trivial incidents.

The uncertainty of their future movements, no doubt, had much to do with the depression that took possession of the camp, and cast a gloomy shadow over their spirits.

But Kentuck, so nicknamed by his companions, was an optimist of the most pronounced type, and never gave himself up to gloomy thoughts or predicting disaster, and on this occasion resorted to raillery to arouse his companions from their gloomy lethargy.

"Homesick, boys?" he inquired, as he looked around the circle of dejected countenances.

"Well, I'm not particularly stuck on the situation," replied Allen Forts, the youngest member of the group.

"I confess that I just begin to realize that it was not a wise venture to come out into this wild country without any preparation or forethought," said Sam Gazel.

"Oh, we are a set of visionary galoots, carried away on the wings of the 'Wild West' novel stories, and now we have butted up against the facts after a flight of a few hundred miles in search of ideals. I guess it is about time to hold a consultation," remarked Bill James.

"Cheer up!" exclaimed Kentuck. "You remind me of a bunch of kids, afraid of being spanked. We will hold a council in the morning and determine on a plan of action. For myself, I am well pleased with the prospects, and have made up my mind to remain and grow up with the country. I did not expect to occupy a seat in the grand stand and listen to the band play, while the cowboys and Indians did their stunts in the arena. Perhaps you kids want the peanuts and the lemonade passed around?"

"Oh, dry up, Kentuck," said Sam Gazel; "it is bad enough to have the blues, without listening to your 'joshing.' It sounds like a lecture from my father when I used to stump my toe and was nursing my foot with both hands. You darned ninnies make me sick, commiserating over imaginary ills. You remind me very much of an old maid in the mountains of Kentucky, sit-

ting in the door of her cabin one bright day in the springtime, when the robin redbreast was picking up worms in the furrow behind the plowman, and the martins circling around the 'cat and clay' chimney, looking for an opening to build their nests; this poor, dejected lady was weeping aloud in her distress. Fortunately, a good neighborly matron came in time to offer condolence. 'What, in the world is the matter, Cynthia?'

"'Oh, Mrs. Kiser,' said the distressed old maid, wringing her hands and rocking to and fro; 'suppose I was married and had a sweet little baby boy—and—and—he was to take sick and die—Oh, wouldn't it be awful? Boo—boohoo—it nearly kills me to think about it.'"

"Well, I'll be damned," said Dick, the guide. "The old gal was powerfully worked up, warn't she?"

"That's right, Kentuck; rub it in. But you are not so lighthearted, I don't think, as you pretend to be," retorted Sam Gazel.

"Oh, yes, I am," said Kentuck; "I never felt better and had less pricks of conscience than at the present moment. 'Tis true we are out in the 'Wild West,' with no well defined ideas or definite object in view. And, perhaps, it is time for sober thought and calm reflection, instead of our usual after supper jollity, before rolling up in our blankets for the night. But I can see no cause for depression. From the view we obtained of the fort from the top of the divide, a few miles back on the trail, I anticipate we will have an interesting time when we cross the river in the morning. So let's have a comfortable rest while we smoke."

No one answered Kentuck's last remarks, and the campers relapsed once more into silence.

In the meantime, while thus preoccupied with their thoughts and oblivious to their surroundings, a band of

Tonkawa Indian scouts arrived at the village of the tribe, situated behind a rocky bluff concealed from the camp at the crossing where the young men were enjoying their quiet smoke. The distance between the camp and the Indian village was about one-half mile around a bend, and their presence was not known to Kentuck and his companions.

Consequently, when the friendly Tonks began to beat their "tom-toms" preparatory to celebrating their victory over the Comanches, it created almost a panic in the camp where these young men were lounging around the fire.

They were not prepared for the "Yip! Yip! Hiyi! Hiyi! Kyaw! Kyeew! Yip! Yip!" of the warwhoop, as it floated out on the night air with blood-curdling distinctness.

"What in the devil is that?" exclaimed Allen Forts, as he jumped to his feet.

The others turned their heads and looked at Dick in mute surprise.

"Don't you all get frisky now, and try to stampede, 'cause that's nothing but them measly old Tonks having a powwow up the creek," remarked Dick. "Been out with a government exhibition after a bunch of Comanches, I guess. 'Twas the same thing the last time I came out here. They always go crazy when they return from a raid, especially if they happen to pot one of their old enemies; they are sure to go bucking around in their outlandish dance like a fellow with a bad case of the 'jim-jams.' Would you like to see 'em play the game, gents?"

"I wouldn't miss it for a great deal," said Kentuck.

"You bet, I sure want to see some real Indians, especially a war-dance," said Sam Gazel.

“Well, if it is a free show you can count me in, too,” remarked Bill James.

“Well, I’m ‘Johnny on the spot,’ too,” said Allen Forts.

“All right, gents; wait until I throw the ‘grub’ into the wagon, to keep the coyotes from carrying it off; then we will climb the rocky bluff, where we can look down on the racket.”

It required only a few minutes to secure the provisions, and, taking the precaution to carry their arms, they ascended the bluff that hid the Tonkawa village from their view.

From this vantage ground they were given the rare opportunity of witnessing a genuine Indian war dance without embarrassing the situation with their presence.

It was a wild, picturesque scene, and required no embellishing to make it intensely interesting to the spectators.

In the center of a grove of cottonwood, pecan and elm trees, an Indian village of about twenty-five tepees surrounded an open plot of ground, perhaps one-half acre, in the shape of an arena.

Occupying the center of this space was a large bonfire burning brightly, revealing all the surrounding objects within the radius of the circle of firelight, making an excellent background of scenic display, whose natural beauty was grand, beyond the conception of the most eminent artist that ever attempted to place on canvas the delicate lights and shades that hide within the depths of the leafy bowers, where the swinging branches cast moving shadows upon the ground, in harmony with the forms of the youths and maidens of the tribe, who lingered in the subdued light near the tepees, and watched the exciting scenes in which they were forbidden to participate. Looking down from the heights above the view

was so fascinating, that the young men were spellbound, and not even Kentuck could find voice to break the spell. From out the shadow young squaws came laden with fuel to the fire, and from time to time replenished it with limbs of dead mesquite trees and rosin weeds, causing the flames to flash up with a sudden glare, producing a weird appearance, like a scene in the play of "Faust."

The red warriors, decked out in all the gaudy ornaments that their savage ingenuity could devise, and resplendent with feather-crested war bonnets, beaded and fringed hunting shirts and leggins, brandishing their tomahawks as they maneuvered in a circle with the fire as a pivot, were the star actors in the realistic drama demonstrating the force of Indian enthusiasm.

The squaws of mature age formed an outer circle at a safe distance from the active performance of the warriors, where they kept up a crooning song, clapping their hands and marking time with their feet to the monotonous thumping of the "tom-toms" by the old warriors in the background.

Chief Johnson's imposing figure led the young braves through the figures of the dance.

Fast and furious grew the exciting sport as the dancing figures hopped and skipped around the blazing fire, pausing a moment at the end of certain maneuvers, to shout, "Yip! Yip! Hiyi! Hyki! Kyaw! Kyeew! Yip! Yip!"

Fascinated and spellbound, these young men looked down from their elevated position on a scene equal to a passion play, and presenting all the striking features of an Indian scouting party, trailing, fighting and killing their enemies.

Could this real Indian war dance have been staged, with all the true features of these earnest warriors,

giving vent to their fiery hatred of their enemies (not the Wild West show imitations), it would make an audience sit up and take notice.

Chief Johnson would stoop down and point to the ground to indicate the discovery of moccasin tracks; then he would run forward on the trail, followed by the young warriors, in hot pursuit of the enemy. Now and then they would stop for a moment and shade their eyes with their hands as they looked into the distance for signs of their foes; then off again on the trail with untiring energy; pausing a moment, they gather around the chief for consultation, and point to some distant object as though their foe was now in sight; again on the trail, exhibiting caution and strategy as they advance to engage in battle; the warwhoop is given as they dash forward to charge the ranks of the enemy; fighting at close range with the long-bow; charging forward with spear and tomahawk; hand to hand with hunting-knife; a stroke in the heart and stooping to tear off the fallen foe's scalp—acted with all the fiery passion of their savage natures.

There, under the canopy of the star-sprinkled sky, in a natural theater with tree-lined walls, was presented a drama, crudely but faithfully portrayed in the flickering light of a camp fire.

It was midnight before the spectators on the bluff were content to retire to their camp; and even then they were not tired of watching the Indians. But remembering that they were nearing their journey's end, and that the morrow promised greater possibilities, they agreed to retire.

"Do you know that what I have witnessed tonight, boys, has repaid me for the time and expense of my journey west? It was a revelation that knocked all my

previous conceptions of Indians in the head. I have always believed them to be a cold, impassive people, incapable of expressing emotion, or exhibiting human characteristics. But now I am free to admit that the red man possesses like passions with his white brother," said Kentuck.

"I would not have missed the show for a great deal. Whether I decide to remain in the West or return to my home, I will always remember the war dance on the banks of the Clear Fork of the Brazos river in Texas," said Allen Forts.

"Well, I'll admit there is no more comparison between the real war dance and the novel writer's description than there is between a papoose and a negro baby," remarked Bill James.

"It was an excellent entertainment, all right, and I would have paid an admission fee rather than miss it," said Sam Gazel.

"You will soon git used to that kind of a racket if you stay out here," remarked Dick.

"The more I see of this country, the more determined I am to remain. There is a great future full of bright promises in store for the people who build homes and till the rich soil of these broad prairies," said Kentuck.

"Maybe," said Dick, "but I am gitting too sleepy to talk about the future. Let's all roll in and take a snooze."

Securing Dick's promise to awaken them at "peep o' day," they were soon enjoying that refreshing slumber that comes to those who spread their blankets in the open air, where the life-giving ozone comes with each gentle respiration.

And, respected reader, by reason of the fact that only one of these four young men remained on the frontier

of Texas to become identified with passing events, it is unnecessary to give a description of the three who returned with Dick the second day after their arrival. But for a better understanding of what follows in the rapid course of events during the development of Northwest Texas, it becomes necessary to introduce the one who remained, to live and work out his destiny among the hardy settlers, who successfully met and bravely overcame the difficulties that attend the settlement of a new country.

Proud of his nickname, "Kentuck," and possessing all the activity and keen interest of a healthy young man, he displayed a love for adventure so characteristic of one born in the northeastern part of the Old Commonwealth, where the Ohio river winds its way through beautiful mountain scenery, and the inhabitants are the descendants of the Scotch-Irish immigrants who came from the mountain homes across the sea to build new homes in the mountains of Kentucky, where the great forests, overhanging cliffs and bubbling springs invited them to congenial surroundings. Here among his native hills, Kentuck grew to young manhood, under the guiding care of a noble father and a pious mother, who were too practical to understand the artistic and poetic nature of their son when he wasted much valuable time with pen and pencil instead of following some useful trade or occupation. Consequently that longing desire, ever present, never satisfied, to exercise freedom of choice, led Kentuck to escape parental restraint and journey to Texas. Of medium height and slender build, his buoyant spirits and optimistic views, and the possession of common sense to practice tact and adaptability in harmony with his environments, proved a valuable passport to the friendship of the frontier people.

As per agreement, Dick aroused the four young men from their slumbers when the first streaks of dawn began to tinge the eastern sky.

After a brief consultation they decided to climb the hill near the fort before sunrise, that they might catch all the effects of the lights and shades of the new-born day, as it emerged from the mysterious depths of the night.

Leaving Dick to care for the camp and cook breakfast, Kentuck and his companions crossed the Clear Fork on a causeway of rocks that afforded facilities for pedestrians when the water was low, and walked up Griffin avenue to Government Hill, before any of the inhabitants of the Flat were awake. The jumble of houses on either side of the street could not be dignified by the name of town, but should more properly be designated as a temporary group of houses to meet the emergency of a demand for shelter for the men who made the Flat a resort. These people cared nothing for their personal appearance, much less for the art of town building.

Instead of following the approach to the fort, Kentuck and his companions ascended the hill to a point of observation to the left of the military reservation, where an unobstructed view was presented of the fort, the Flat and the valley of the Clear Fork.

And now, reader, if you have any curiosity that will lead you to investigate, take a map of Texas and trace a due west line from Dallas county until you find the county of Shackelford, then the last organized county in the tier, and to which all unorganized counties were attached for judicial purposes. Near the center of Shackelford is located the county seat town of Albany. Due north from Albany is located Fort Griffin, on the banks of the Clear Fork, the central supply point of the great cattle range that furnished the ranchmen 300 miles distant. Here,

too, the "chuck" wagons on the overland trail from Southern Texas replenished their stores, and the buffalo hunters loaded their wagons with ammunition and provisions.

The importance of the position was recognized by the United States government and the State of Texas, both quartering troops here.

Consequently it can easily be recognized what an important part Fort Griffin played in the history of Texas during the '70s and '80s, and that the reminiscences of those days have a value far beyond their recital in this volume.

Fort Griffin, during this period of its existence, quartered seven companies of United States troops commanded by General Buell.

The town known as the Flat surrounded the base of Government Hill and was the central trading point for the cattlemen 200 miles west. It was also headquarters for an army of buffalo hunters and the intermediate supply point on the overland cattle trail between Southern Texas and the Kansas feeding pens, before offering them for sale in the St. Louis and Chicago markets.

Situated sixty miles from any other settlement, the fort formed a nucleus around which flourished the most notorious town in the "Wild West."

To these four young men, who for the first time had ventured beyond the confines of civilization, it was like entering a new world.

From their position on the top of the hill they secured an excellent view of the surrounding country, and also looked down upon the irregular mass of business houses, restaurants, saloons, dance halls, wagon yards, and all other kinds of habitations growing out of the necessities of the situation. And this place had the reputation of being the fastest town on the frontier.

Outside of the town in every direction the country was uninhabited. Off to the south and southeast bunches of cattle were grazing on last year's crop of grass that retained some of its nutritious virtues, and was the only provender that sustained animal life during the winter months on the range.

Near a water hole in the valley at the foot of the hill a trail wagon outfit loaded with buffalo hides was camped—three wagons coupled together and drawn by fifteen pair of oxen when in motion, but now leisurely grazing near camp while the teamster and his help were cooking their breakfast.

When they had come in sight of Fort Griffin the evening before, Dick had informed them that this was the last white man's habitation going west toward the New Mexico line, but they had not realized the significance of the announcement until now, as they stood there in the early morning light, and saw the gray curtain of dawn pushed aside by the first rays of the sun.

They were now in the center of that great open range that belonged to the cattle barons by right of possession. All of this vast country was the spoils of conquest from the Indians and Mexicans. The ranchman could ride over his free range, whose imaginary boundaries were always respected by his neighbors, who demanded a like privilege for themselves. Primitive and rough, but an ideal life they lived in the pure open air on the prairie, camping wherever night overtook them.

No wonder that they were happy and grew rich under the healthy conditions surrounding them. With a bracing atmosphere and feasting on a choice buffalo hump or the roasted ribs of a fat maverick, the physical man developed all his animal strength, notwithstanding he smoked quantities of strong tobacco. And, then to roll



FORT GRIFFIN IN 1876.

up in their blankets with their heads upon their saddles for a pillow, dream strange dreams of another life, where smiling faces with rosy cheeks and sparkling eyes beckoned them on to domestic bliss. Yes, it was an ideal life, and he who would molest or make them afraid must needs have more men and better guns.

And now the fort awoke from its all night slumber, and Old Glory unfolded its bright colors as the sunrise gun boomed forth on the crisp air. Soldiers rushed from their quarters to the parade ground as the bugler sounded the call.

By this time the Flat at the foot of the hill showed signs of a busy day, and a confusion of sounds left no doubt that even in this oasis of the Texas frontier commercialism was the dominant power that ruled.

Yes, their walk from camp to Government Hill had been worth while, and Kentuck and his companions found that there was something doing in the Flat.

The one long street, from the foot of the hill through the town to the crossing of the Clear Fork, was alive with men and horses and in many places near the supply stores wagons were jammed together in a way that almost stopped travel.

As these four young men, standing there in the early morning of their first day on the extreme frontier of Texas, looked down upon this wonderful picture, it required a great effort to realize their surroundings.

The sun was mounting a clear sky and his effulgent rays lighted up a scene never to be forgotten.

Off to the right of the town they could see their own camp, and a half mile below the Tonkawa tepees in an irregular group under the pecan trees, and their gaunt, wiry ponies grazing near by. This was Chief Johnson's camp, the leader of the government scouts, always called

into service when a detachment of troops were sent out after hostile bands of Comanches, whose moonlight raids terrorized the white settlements.

On this particular morning while the young men were near the fort, the chief and a band of painted warriors passed by, to respond to a summons from the "White Chief." They were decked out in all the gaudy trappings that their savage pride could devise.

Not far behind the Indians came a bunch of cowboys from a near-by ranch who had spent a night of carousal in the dance halls and saloons and were now making an early start for home before the range boss sent in a courier to round them up. They rode in that careless, bravado style that belongs to the plainsmen who make their home in the saddle. There was a devil-may-care expression on their countenances as they passed by and shouted:

"Howdy, tenderfoot! When did you stray from the home range?"

After this interruption the young men again turned their attention to the increasing activity in the Flat.

All the space not occupied by houses was covered with ricks of buffalo hides, representing the winter's hunt, ready to be transported to Dallas, Denison or Fort Worth, 150 to 200 miles distant.

By reason of the condition that brought Fort Griffin into existence it formed an attraction for all kinds and character of men, each in his own way striving to make money; some honestly, many dishonestly.

The jolly buffalo hunter and the festive cowboy were fleeced of their last dollar by the gamblers and sharpers, and saw their wages "go glimmering like a schoolboy's dream," leaving nothing but an uncomfortable feeling and empty pockets.

It was the palmy days of Fort Griffin, when money flowed like water through the avenues of business, and men handled it with the same careless indifference that merchants handled bacon, flour and potatoes. Not hundreds but thousands of dollars changed hands each day. And one day spent in the Flat, and one night among the denizens who frequented the resorts, would convince any man that it was not a question of price, but whether the supply would hold out.

"Well," said Kentuck, as he looked down at the motley throng, "if I were searching the universe to verify the characters represented in dime novels, I would go no farther."

After lingering until the sun was three hours above the eastern horizon, on his way toward the noonday division of time, Kentuck led the way down the hill on the journey back to camp.

As they passed along the avenue, here and there were Uncle Sam's boys in blue, loitering among the throng with that *sang-froid* of the trained soldier, who cares little for the conventionalities of civil life.

Dick was in a bad humor over the delay and had everything packed into the wagon and the horses harnessed ready to drive into the town.

"You are a nice set of jays, ar'n't you? I call it real shabby treatment to ask a gent to cook a warm breakfast and then go snoozing around until everything is as cold as a dog's nose. Oh, you'll get a breakfast here, I don't think! So jump right in and we are off. No back talk, if you please. I'm as mad as a wet hen."

And there was no back talk, for what's the use trying to argue with a man when he has made up his mind not to hear you? The boys jumped in and Dick cracked his whip viciously as they forded the Clear Fork. Covered

wagons being the means of transportation in those days, the four young men and their guide were given but little attention as they drove through this busy mart to the supply store at the foot of Government Hill.

After seven days overland from Fort Worth they had arrived at the end of their journey, and the contract with Dick for his services and the use of his wagon and team was complete. They had now arrived at their destination. Two weeks of jolly comradeship, with the wagon performing the double service of shelter and transportation, had cemented a bond of friendship that made them give more than a passing thought to the future. Not a word had been spoken by a member of the party during their long journey, looking ahead beyond their point of destination. Dick having fulfilled his contract, proposed to rest over a day and return East. This decision necessitated a hurried consultation of the four young men, and, from the vexed expression on each face, it appeared a difficult problem to solve. Finally they agreed to leave it an open question until the next morning, when Dick was directed to call for an answer, whether they would remain or return the route they came.

When Dick pulled up in front of Conrad & Rath's big supply store, an obliging clerk, dressed in a blue flannel shirt, ducking overalls, top boots and a broad-brimmed hat, introducing himself as George Wilhelm, kindly directed Kentuck and his companions to a low, rambling picket house, where he informed them they could be accommodated with "chuck" (something to eat) and a place to spread their blankets upon the floor. Following directions, they secured lodgings; then, giving way to natural curiosity, they started out on a tour of observation, notwithstanding Hank Smith, the obliging landlord, told them that it was the time of the day when there was nothing doing.

Consequently, beyond the novelty and newness of the situation, they discovered nothing very exciting in their rounds, and, becoming weary walking, they returned to the platform in front of the supply store and stood watching the cowboys and buffalo hunters going in and out, buying the necessaries for ranch and camp.

While thus peacefully occupied, with no thought or premonition of danger, there came a sudden interruption, like the swoop of a Kansas cyclone, and these four "tenderfeet" were treated to a Western transformation scene that made each particular hair on their heads rise up in protest.

Out of a near-by saloon door there came staggering into the street a heavy-set, bow-legged terror of the most approved "Wild West" type, with all of his beastly, savage nature predominating. His Mexican sombrero rested upon the back of his head, revealing his vicious face, over which locks of his unkempt hair straggled, giving him the appearance of a bull on a rampage. He was enveloped in the disorder of a mixed costume, that in comparison, would put "Buffalo Bill's" cowboys out of commission. The high pointed heels of his cowboy boots were ornamented with Mexican spurs, the rowels two inches in diameter, that rolled along the ground with a clatter that always attracted attention. And, as he sham-bled along, he rocked like a ship in a choppy sea. It would have been difficult to have poised upon those stilted heels when duly sober, much less with a full load of "booze."

But the most disquieting thing to these four young men was the belt of cartridges and two six-shooters around his waist. And he was not long in putting his artillery into action.

Pirouetting into the middle of the street he gave a

piercing yell, resembling a combination warwhoop and steam whistle.

"I'm the 'Bad Man from Bitter creek.' Higher up the creek you go, the bigger they grow, and I'm right off the head waters—(bang!—bang—bang—bang!!!) Turn your wolf loose—(bang—bang—bang!!!)" The roar of his six-shooters was almost drowned by a series of savage yells.

The effect on the "tenderfeet" was startling indeed. In fact, they stampeded, in anticipation of the wholesale slaughter of all who were within range of those deadly-looking guns. It was sure a nerve-racking situation for strangers, and proved too much for Kentuck and his companions, who made a dash for the door of the supply store, where they hoped to escape from this savage ogre. But the obliging clerk, who stepped aside to permit them to enter, did not in the least seem excited over the affair, nor did it disturb the routine of business in the store, notwithstanding these inexperienced young men had never seen so much unadulterated cussedness compressed into a human tornado.

This episode proved a crucial moment in the lives of these four young men, who unconsciously made a decision that controlled their destinies the rest of their lives.

"There comes marshal Bill Gilson," some one remarked when the strangers recovered from their astonishment.

"That fellow," pointing to the Terror of the West, "will soon be playing checkers with his nose through the bars of the calaboose."

"You don't mean to say," said Kentuck, "that one man will capture so ferocious an animal as that without assistance?"

"Wait and see," said George Wilhelm, pointing to

where a man came leisurely up the sidewalk, making his way toward the scene of the disturbance.

Proceedings were growing very interesting to Kentuck and his friends, who were watching the maneuvers of the marshal and this "ring-tailed tooter" from Bitter creek.

Judge of their surprise when the marshal walked up to this wild man, and instead of a bloody encounter he grasped him by the collar with one hand and shoved a pistol in his face with the other.

"Give up those shooting-irons, Bud, and come along with me to the calaboose."

The change that came over the countenance of the Terror of the West would have been a credit to Alf. Burnett, or any facial showman. His underjaw appeared to unhinge from its socket, while his eyes rolled up in amazement, and his six-shooters slipped from his grasp as if his hands were paralyzed.

Turning to Wilhelm, Kentuck remarked, "Can such things be, and overcome us like a summer cloud, without our special wonder?"

"Yes," he replied, "he is one of those toughs escaped from justice in the older States, who assume the role of a cowboy and bring disgrace on the calling. If you decide to remain and become a citizen of this part of Texas, you will soon learn that a few bad men in any community are sufficient to damn all its citizens in the eyes of the people in the East. You will also learn that, with these few exceptions, you have never lived among a braver and more kind-hearted people."

Though little was said during the remainder of the day relative to the incident at the supply store, it was evident that it had made a deep impression on Kentuck's three companions, for it required only the additional ex-

perience of the night to decide them to return with Dick on the morrow.

But Kentuck, who came from the mountain region of his native State, loved the freedom of frontier life, and decided to remain.

As soon as the shades of night began to settle o'er the town, sounds of music were heard in those dens of iniquity where "Mephisto" could not have improved much on the conditions; where "wine and women" reigned supreme. His satanic majesty, when he held high carnival in the region of the damned, could not surpass the scenes in a frontier dance hall.

The ribald sport rarely ended until the streaks of dawn appeared in the East; then like the coyotes that made the night hideous with their yelping, the inmates of these dance halls disappeared, and nothing more was heard or seen of them until night once more threw her sable mantle over mother earth.

Among this conglomerate mass of dare-devil recklessness and cunning viciousness there were a few brave and true men, risking their lives in a determined effort to lay the foundation for legitimate business enterprises. They were largely composed of bright young men from the crowded districts in the old home State, or some unfortunate business man who came to grief in some speculative venture, and came to the frontier to begin to retrieve his losses and make a new home for his family. They were willing to undertake the hardships and brave the dangers of pioneer life that they might secure the reward of increased values. Consequently, the history of ranch and range on the frontier of Texas during the '70s and '80s would be as interesting reading and as voluminous as the stories of those famous days of California in '49.

But pardon this digression and let us not lose sight of

Kentuck and his companions, who were spending their first night in the Flat.

Under the protecting care of Wilhelm and the marshal, they made the rounds of four dance halls, eight saloons and three gambling dens. L.M.D.

It was a revelation that taxed their credulity, notwithstanding their experience of the early evening. In the glare of lamplight half drunk men and abandoned women were whirling around the dingy rooms of the dance halls, while musicians were trying to pound harmony out of broken-down pianos with squeaky fiddle accompaniments.

In each of these halls the bars were near the entrance, to accommodate the spectators, who were given seats in front, that they might see but not interfere with the dancers.

Cowboys, hunters and soldiers, all booted, spurred and armed, waiting their turn to engage in this hilarious sport, for as a matter of business the proprietors required the women to change partners at the end of each dance.

From the raised platform of the musicians the professional caller prompted the dancers:

"Gents, secure your partners for the next dance. All ready when the band begins to play. Now you're lined up, toe the mark and salute your ladies. First and third couples forward and back; forward again and cross over; second and fourth do likewise and never stop until you are all over; gents to the right and ladies to the left; swing your opposite, then swing your partner; now grand right and left; first and second forward and back; forward again and return to your places; side couples follow their lead and return home; balance all, swing your partners and all run away. All waltz to the bar and gents treat your ladies. All ready for the next set."

Fast and furious the sport grew as the stimulating effects of the whisky fired the heated blood of men and women as the hours passed by.

"Come on, boys," said Wilhelm; "the pot is simmering and it may boil over any minute, and we don't want to be scalded."

"What do you mean?" said Kentuck.

✓ "That whisky and shooting-irons make a dangerous combination, and when you throw a lot of women in for good measure there is sure to be serious trouble," replied Wilhelm. "We will have a dead man for breakfast in the morning, tenderfoot, and if you don't want to ornament a coffin, we had better hike out."

It was 10 p. m. when the four returned to Hank Smith's and rolled up in their blankets.

The cocks were crowing for midnight when the storm of passion broke through all restraint, and a shooting bee was opened by the cowboys in the red light district.

Kentuck and his companions were awakened out of a sound slumber by the first shots. And before they fairly realized the import of the disturbance a regular gunshot serenade was being pulled off.

CHAPTER II

BREAKING IN THE "TENDERFOOT"

To have unsophisticated confidence is among the dangerous things ;

The audience will loudly applaud while the fool dances and sings.

The night's performance proved to be the last argument necessary to convince Kentuck's three companions that Fort Griffin was neither a safe or desirable place to live. And when Dick arrived at the hotel in early morning he found them ready to accompany him on his return trip.

But Kentuck decided to remain and cast his lot with the brave men who were gradually transforming the untamed West into a civilized country where men and women could build thrifty homes.

And notwithstanding that it was with a feeling of sincere regret that he parted with these friends, to whom he became attached during their journey west, and that he now experienced a sense of loneliness as he saw them depart on their way east, he braced himself with an effort to face whatever the future had in store for him.

And, oh, if some true prophet could have cast the horoscope of that future, no doubt Kentuck, too, might have weakened at the last moment and returned to his old home on the La Belle river, where the swift current floated the commerce of the mountains to the markets of the world, and where magnificent floating palaces carried travelers on an enjoyable voyage over the blue waters to some distant city.

But the wisdom of the Creator has kindly veiled the evil and the good that lies in the path of the unknown future that every man must explore. Therefore the man from the mountains of Kentucky became a citizen of the prairie country of Texas.

Remembering that about six months before his departure from his native State he had been told that an old schoolmate by the name of Jacobs was somewhere in the vicinity of Fort Griffin, Kentuck hunted up the obliging clerk at Conrad & Rath's store and made inquiry relative to the whereabouts of Jacobs.

"Say, mister—"

✓ "Oh, shucks, my name isn't mister—only plain George, with Wilhelm thrown in for good measure. What might your name be, stranger?"

"Well, the boys who went back east with Dick called me Kentuck, but my real name is—"

"Hold on, pard; there is no necessity of giving yourself away; we don't care what your real name was before you came to Texas, and maybe it is not good policy, for some one might write back to the sheriff."

"But, Wilhelm, you are mistaken, I—"

"Drop it, pard; Kentuck is good enough name to camp out with, and if the society of the Flat wishes to look up your credentials they will not take the trouble until after they string you up to a tree. Now can I be of any service to you?"

"Well—yes, perhaps. Say, do you happen to know a man named Jacobs—Henry Jacobs?"

"Do I know a man named Jacobs? Say, you are not an officer, are you?"

"Of course not. Jacobs and I are old schoolmates from the same town in Kentucky. He came to Texas several years ago, and about six months past some one received a letter from him mailed at this place."

"Well, may I be pitched over the river by a bucking broncho if that don't cinch it. Yes, Jacobs is here as big as life, trying to hold down the job of sheriff, but it seems too big for one man to tackle."

"Where can I find him, Wilhelm?"

"Well, you are a tenderfoot, all right. Find Jacobs? Say, pard, you bunk with me tonight. Jacobs is on the hike somewhere after a bunch of cattle rustlers."

"By himself?"

"Oh, no; there are a dozen cattlemen with him, and if they capture the rustlers they will return soon."

"Who will return?"

"Why, the sheriff and the cattlemen. Now make yourself at home. We will go down to Uncle Billy Wilson's for dinner. If you intend to live out here with the boys it is necessary to start off on the right foot. Now, Uncle Billy runs the swell eating joint in the Flat, and if you are going to be social I'll introduce you to the aristocratic circle of long-horns, who are very particular about the pedigree of a new comer."

Of course this conversation was not calculated to make Kentuck entirely at his ease, for the half jocular manner of Wilhelm was not altogether proof of his sincerity. Nevertheless, he then and there made up his mind to accept the situation, even if his ignorance subjected him to the ridicule of the long-horns.

Uncle Billy's house was not only a popular eating resort, but also the stage stand on the overland trail to El Paso. And be it said to the credit of Uncle Billy and his wife, both man and beast were comfortably quartered and fed, notwithstanding the appearance from the outside was not inviting.

The name Wilson was misleading, for Uncle Billy was Irish to the core, with all the ready wit that has made the sons of the Emerald Isle famous.

Wilhelm introduced Kentuck as a friend of Sheriff Jacobs.

"A friend of Jacobs, is it, Georgie? Faith and he's as welcome as the flowers in May. Come right in, mister Kentuck, and mother Wilson will be after dropping a grain of coffee into the pot in honor of the occasion. And if the auld hen has been obedient to the laws of nature, you shall have an omelet on the side and a roast buffalo hump in the middle of the table. But don't yez soil the cloth, me boy; 'tis the only one we have, and if the President should arrive on the stage, divil the time would there be washing and ironing it."

"Oh, Billy stop your palavering and carry the grub to the table, for I'm sure the gintlemen are hungry."

"Coming, me dear, like a mountain goat down a California canyon when a grizzly is after him."

Uncle Billy was a '49er, and never lost an opportunity to remind his guests of the fact.

But, with all his faults, he was generous and whole-souled, and a popular character with all classes.

The dining room of the Hotel de Wilson was long, with a low ceiling and dingy walls—no chairs or other modern furniture to add to the comfort or as an apology for ornamentation. Long benches met the demand for seating capacity to the table that occupied the center of the room. Even the customary hatrack was missing. But one soon forgot the rough appearance when seated around the sumptuous display of good things from Mother Wilson's pantry.

The color line alone was drawn at this table, and he who possessed the price of a meal received accommodation. Ranchmen, cowboys, buffalo hunters and soldiers met on a common level. It was a good-natured, free and easy crowd that lined up on either side of the long table when Wilhelm and Kentuck entered.

Naturally all eyes were turned on the stranger, with glances both curious and critical, as if they were sizing him up to determine just where he would fit in. But Wilhelm soon relieved the situation by introducing Kentuck as an old pard of Sheriff Jacobs, just arrived from the "moonshine" district to escape the revenue officers of Uncle Sam.

"Howdy, howdy do, Kentuck?"

"Glad to meet you, gents," replied Kentuck.

"Don't mention it," said several.

"Say, you bronco busters, slide along and give Wilhelm and Kentuck a fair deal; they look empty from their chins to their toes," remarked Mart Gentry.

"I don't see why Conrad hasn't put Wilhelm in a cage and fed him on hay. He would make a drawing card for the Tonks," said Mike Kegan.

"Oh, that's too easy; the old man has caught on to the mutual admiration between Wilhelm and Sallie Washington, and don't propose to give a free exhibition of the Pocahontas and Captain Smith act. *Sabe?*" said Jeff Keenan.

"I'm willing to chip in four bits to see the performance," said Jim Browning.

"So will I, so will I," chorused the crowd.

"Say, you blamed galoots, close your fly-traps," retorted Wilhelm.

A general laugh followed.

Good-natured badinage was kept up during the entire meal, and Kentuck soon learned to make himself easy among his rough-and-ready companions. Many of them were diamonds in the rough, that only required polish and setting to be gems of the first water. Their friendship was not half-hearted, but frank and generous to a fault, ready at all times to extend a helping hand and

a strong arm to support and defend him when adversity threatened or danger menaced.

As the days passed and he became more accustomed to the new conditions, Kentuck lost no opportunity to make friends. Consequently, before ten days had elapsed he gained the confidence of many of the most substantial citizens of the town, as well as forming a bond of comradeship with the better class of cowboys on the near-by ranches, though not without some harrowing experiences at the hands of those rollicking comrades, who took a malicious delight in breaking in the "tenderfoot."

As a sample of their careful attention to the strict rules of frontier etiquette, it is only necessary to relate one Sunday morning's experience.

More through force of habit than any desire to appear different from established custom, Kentuck made the mistake of shaving, adorning his person with a white shirt and blacking his boots, to say nothing of the suit of store clothes that defied precedent. Now if there is anything in this wide world that will amuse the festive cowboy and become a subject of derision at his hands, it is the man who has the hardihood to appear in the range country dressed as above described. And it is doubtful if any one going through the trying ordeal of being made a target of their sarcasm will ever repeat the experiment.

Having no premonition of the rough treatment that awaited the dude "tenderfoot" from the mountains of old Kentucky, after carefully grooming himself the "tenderfoot" walked carelessly out of doors and stood aimlessly looking around, with no definite object in view.

It is true that in a casual way he noticed a bunch of cowboys ride up, throw their bridle reins upon the ground and saunter leisurely in his direction, but not until they opened up the batteries of their sarcasm did Kentuck suspect their motive in surrounding him.

"Say, boys, just cast your optics on this fine-haired cuss. Regular 'jim-dandy,' ain't he? A dude 'tender-foot' from societyville. Look at his boiled shirt and fried collar. Wonder where he keeps his pie-box? He is an imported shorthorn from the East. Say, boss, is that hat a breech-loader? What was your name before you came to Texas? Guess you can get free transportation back home if you write to the sheriff for it, can't you?"

These and a similar string of questions greeted the ears of the bewildered Kentuck as the boys formed a closer circle and began to take too much liberty on short acquaintance. And not without the most severe test of his patience did he manage to control his anger while dirty fingers left their imprint upon his shirt front, changing it from white to a variegated brown, while the shining polish on his boots was covered with tobacco juice. And, not content with these indignities, one of the roisterers stepped up and lifted the derby from his head and, at a given signal, tossed it high in the air, each boy taking a shot at it, and it fell with a dozen bullet holes through it as a proof of excellent marksmanship.

How long Kentuck would have been subjected to this rough sport had not Sheriff Jacobs come to his rescue is a question. But after an introduction all around to each of his tormenters, Kentuck was voted the freedom of the Texas frontier. And from that day until this good hour he has never had occasion to regret his Sunday morning's initiation by the cowboys.

And here let it be understood that, by common consent, there was an unwritten law of the frontier that did not permit innovations in manners or dress, but required strict conformity to established costume, consisting of a broad-brim hat, flannel shirt, ducking overalls and top boots. Consequently, a man dressed in the fashionable

attire of the East attracted as much attention on the frontier as a cowboy would on Broadway, New York.

From this time on, during all the years of the open range life in Northwest Texas, Kentuck was a welcome guest whenever he cared to visit the cowboys' camp. No matter how limited the supply of blankets, there was always room and a chance to be counted in when the cook invited the gents to step up and get their "chuck."

But even this strong bond of friendship did not prevent some mischievous cuss from playing pranks on the "tenderfoot."

Kentuck will not forget, so long as he is permitted to live, his first attempt to ride a bucking broncho.

It was a beautiful May morning, and all the elements of nature seemed to invite him to the exhilarating enjoyment of a ride over the beautiful prairie, richly clad in its springtime garments of green and decked in the bright hues of purple, blue and red flowers.

He was visiting friends at Lynch's ranch and had sauntered out where Tucker and Manning were corralling a bunch of saddle ponies.

Expressing a desire for a gentle pony, Tucker kindly volunteered to rope and saddle an old flea-bitten gray that looked to be innocent of all guile, and a model for all ponies that take kindly to the duty of carrying a man on a journey of business or pleasure. But alas for the shattered confidence of a trusting "tenderfoot," the gentle, sleepy appearance of the old gray proved a "delusion and a snare," for a few moments later, when Kentuck was astride of the saddle and holding the reins of the bridle, Tucker insisted on tightening the flank-girth, and you ought to have seen that old "cayuse" come to life.

Say, pard, that "outlaw" had graduated in the thirty-third degree as a bucker years before Kentuck had ever



A TENDERFOOT'S FIRST RIDE.

dreamed of coming to the Lone Star State. He dropped his head between his fore legs and jumped stiff-legged up in the air, with all four feet off the ground at the same time, with such an impetus that Kentuck vaulted several feet higher, describing a semi-circle as he descended to the ground.

This free performance, involuntarily given by the "tenderfoot," was very much appreciated by the cowboys, who expressed hilarious delight in describing how gracefully he ascended from the saddle and turned a somersault in the air before striking the ground a few feet from old Gray.

This propensity for playing pranks, even on one's best friend, was one of the characteristics of cowboy life. And the only consolation to the victim was to watch his opportunity to pay it back with interest.

It was during this same visit of a few days that Kentuck had the satisfaction of witnessing the breaking in of another tenderfoot, known among the boys as "Tennessee," who was temporarily residing in Albany, with a prospect of locating a drug store, and had been directed to consult with Judge Lynch, who was taking considerable interest in building up the town, at that time consisting of three picket houses and a barnlike structure, by courtesy called a courthouse. The judge being absent from the headquarters ranch on a visit to the line riders' camp on North Prong, Tennessee was given directions where to find him. It was late and the sun was just disappearing behind the western hills when Tennessee arrived, and all hands, including the judge, were making preparations to hold a small herd that they were drifting back to the home range. As was usual on such occasions, arrangements were being made to hold the cattle under loose herd until morning, requiring a relay

of two men on guard, to prevent them drifting back over the divide.

Among the boys around the camp were several old range men who had engaged in many fights with the Indians, who raided the frontier on moonlight nights, carrying off horses and destroying personal property of the settlers.

The stories told by these men were always a fruitful source from which to prepare the mind of a "tenderfoot" for a realistic demonstration of a midnight attack by the red marauders.

The probability of these stories, backed up with current reports on the range, that a roving band of Comanches had passed down the old trail through Mountain pass and the Gap at Leadbetter's Salt Works, as far east as Jacksboro, was well calculated to impress a "tenderfoot" with the gravity of the situation, especially as this band was reported to be headed northwest, killing and scalping scattered families.

Taking advantage of the situation, Manning and Tucker fixed up and played successfully a villainous prank upon Tennessee.

Judge Lynch was a typical Irishman, with an inherent love for sport, and entered into and aided the conspiracy, by relating that on one occasion when in camp on the Clear Fork, the Indians had stampeded the horses and that the whole bunch ran over the boys before they could awake and get out of the way.

As was customary in a cow camp, before turning in for the night, some of the boys circled the outskirts to see if the ponies were all in safe distance of the camp. This furnished the plotters the pretext to report Indian signs, and a probability of an attempt to steal the ponies during the night. Manning and Tucker, ringleaders

and co-conspirators, were detailed by Judge Lynch to stand guard. The others were told to roll up in their blankets and go to sleep, as it would do no good to remain awake and anticipate something that might never happen. And notwithstanding the exciting report brought in by Manning after they had all retired, that an object had been seen moving among the trees along the creek, that he believed was an Indian spying out the situation, it was not long until the drowsy god took possession of the camp.

Then there was something doing on North Prong that will never be forgotten by the man from Tennessee.

As soon as Manning and Tucker became convinced that the boys in camp were all asleep, they got busy and began to carry out the plot by detaching the chains from the chuck wagon and gathering all articles of tinware that would make as much noise as possible. When the preparations were complete they made a run over the sleeping forms of their companions, rattling the chains and tinware, firing their six-shooters and shouting "Whoa! whoa! whoa! Lookout, boys! Here comes the Indians!"

Of course, pandemonium broke loose in that cow camp. Everybody jumped to their feet, and amid the bewildering confusion of the sudden onslaught, those onto the game grasped their six-shooters and began firing, and two fell to the ground, exclaiming, "I'm shot, boys!" In the meantime the "tenderfoot" from Tennessee sprang up like a "jack-in-the-box" and ran like a scared turkey.

It was at least a half-hour before Judge Lynch could quiet the hilarious laughter.

A searching party was sent out and it was more than an hour before the "tenderfoot" was located in a gully covered with undergrowth.

It took all the persuasive powers of the entire outfit to induce Tennessee to return to camp.

Then he was so badly frightened that he would not lie down, but spent the remainder of the night on the alert.

The breaking in of a "tenderfoot" was always a source of unbounded amusement for the cow punchers, and every outfit was dominated by these practical jokers, who rarely hesitated, even at the risk of inflicting injury to the victims.

THE GENUINE COW PUNCHER

The language of the range was made up largely of localisms coined to meet the conditions of ranch life and the peculiarities of buffalo hunting.

Consequently, when Kentuck made his advent as a "tenderfoot" he often found himself sorely puzzled trying to keep in touch with the boys, who had long since graduated in the science of mixing the Spanish and Indian terms with the new-born words of the frontier.

To a man possessed of a keen sense of humor, the conversation carried on by the cowboys or the buffalo hunters furnished no end of amusement, provided you were a good listener and not inclined to butt in.

This was forcibly demonstrated one morning about a week after Kentuck's companions had departed, leaving him alone to face the future.

He was in company with Sheriff Jacobs and his brother John, in a little shanty on a side street leading to Griffin avenue.

The arrival of a buffalo hunter named Joe McCombs, from the camp of Poe & Jacobs far out on the western range, brought forth a series of questions and answers.

"Hello, Joe! give us your paw, old man; here, take a

nip to cut the dust out of your throat. Where is your bronco?"

"Petered out near Phantom Hill, and I hopped him, and I had to huff it in."

"How are the boys in camp?"

"So-so, on an average—plenty of chuck, but no ammunition."

"Any trouble with the renegades and Indians?"

"Nope, not much. Little flurry last month when a bunch of reds broke out of the reservation corral near Fort Sill and came cavorting down into the Panhandle; dropped a few lead pills into our camp one evening and tried to stampede the ponies, but Poe turned loose his 45 and they skedaddled over the sand hills. Then a lieutenant with a bunch of buffalo soldiers rounded them up and drove them back to the reservation."

"Good season, Joe?"

"Sorter, nothing extra. Buffalo getting skittish. Hard to get a stand on 'em now."

"Where is your outfit now?"

"Over the Divide on the Deep creek of the Colorado, not far from Chisholm's Hole on the slant of the mesa. Dandy place; plenty of grass and water; oodles of turkeys and deer."

"Herds drifting?"

"Yep, grazing north along the brakes, but shy at the northers on the plains."

"When will you return?"

"As soon as some outfit gives me a lift back to Phantom, where I can catch on to the bronc again."

"Well, drop in for your chuck and we will furnish you a layout of blankets while you are in town."

"Muy gracias, senior, I'll sure bunk with you."

"All right, Joe; come and go when you please, old man, and no questions asked."

"You are sure sociable boys, and if you ever hit the range there will be a welcome waiting for you."

"Well, I'm off for the fort. So long, Joe; take in the town, old man, but don't eat any dirt."

"You bet your life there will be something doing when Josephus takes in the town."

"Well, if the marshal ropes you and leads you into Justice Steele's court send for me."

"Sure thing, Jacobs."

CHAPTER III

THE LEGEND OF THE TON- KAWA INDIANS

He unbosomed his grief and sorrow to me;
The few that remain, the many that used to be.

Among the many diversions that attracted Kentuck during his first month on the frontier of Texas, none awakened more interest than his visits to the Tonkawa village on the banks of the Clear Fork, where the remnant of a once powerful tribe of Indians lived.

As far back as any of the old settlers on the frontier could remember, the Tonkawas (Toncahuas) had been the friends of the white people and the deadly enemy of the Yaquis, Comanches, Kickapoos, Lapans, Arapahoes, Apaches and Kiowas.

During the early period when might made right among the red warriors, the Tonkawas was the most numerous and powerful tribe in Texas (Tejas) and Old Mexico, and were also known as cannibals, accused of killing and eating their prisoners. For this offense the other tribes allied themselves and waged a war of extermination against them. Very little its known of this long and bloody contest. But that it was carried on with relentless hatred and cruel vengeance is proven by the results. That the allied tribes were finally victorious is within itself evidence that in reducing the powerful Tonkawas to a small band of fugitives, they, too, must have suffered the loss of thousands of warriors.

Like all people when defeated and humiliated, the Tonkawas were very reticent when asked about the past history of the tribe.

And it may be that the old warriors were loth to admit the truth, and purposely avoided telling the younger generation.

Be that as it may, sufficient was known to convince Kentuck that there was a very interesting story connected with this war, dating back beyond the time when the white settlers occupied the Indian country. And, like all information hard to obtain, it made him more determined.

Being convinced, after several visits, that the desired information was stored in the memory of Old Campo, the ancient Medicine Man of the tribe, reported to be 110 years old, Kentuck lost no time making a friend of the centenarian, who was induced to relate the legend.

It was one of those delightful June mornings that made outdoor life so comfortable that nothing but pressing business kept any one from enjoying the sunshine and bracing atmosphere.

Old Campo had crawled out of his tepee and was seated upon a buffalo robe with his back against a pecan tree. The old warrior was enjoying his pipe, and seemed to gather inspiration from the wreaths of smoke that curled and eddied above his head. No doubt the genial warmth of the almost perfect day awakened the dormant faculties of his brain and set in motion a train of thought, carrying him back to the time when he was the great Medicine Man of the tribe, and the brave Chief Placido led the warriors to victory.

The old man was day-dreaming and happily disposed to talk about the past. After relating a few reminiscences of the pale face chiefs who commanded at Forts

Belknap and Phantom Hill, his mind started out on the trail of memory, and his voice grew strong and eyes bright, as he related the following legend:

"Many, many moons have come and gone since there was born in the wigwam of the Great Chief a boy papoose. They called him Placido, and he grew up to be a mighty hunter and led the young braves when they chased the wild horse and the buffalo on the Llano Estacado.

"And, when the winter's snow like a great white blanket covered the valleys and mountains of Tejas, my people crossed the Rio Grande and followed where the birds took their flight on their way to the warm valleys and bright sun spots in Mejico. But the young Chief Placido was not content to march with the tribe on the trail day after day, and one morning dashed away at the head of his braves into the Sierra Madre mountains, where the black bear and cougars made their dens. And with their long spears and bows and arrows killed many, and returned with bear meat and skins to decorate the tepees.

"The Tonkawas were like the leaves in autumn; their squaws beautiful and papooses many; their ponies swift as the wind and their spears long. When they went forth on the warpath the braves took many scalps to celebrate their victories. No single tribe dared to meet them in battle. And my people became a proud people; they determined to conquer the Comanches and drive them out of Tejas.

"But the Comanches were brave and cunning; always fight the small bands of the Tonkawas, but run away when the Big Chief and his braves come in sight. Then my people say that the Yaquis have many ponies and heap rich, and the chief led them down into the valleys

among mountains where the Yaquis live; fight a big battle, kill many braves, carry off squaws, ponies and cattle.

Then my people grow more proud and return to Tejas and drive the Kickapoos into the mountains of the West.

✓ They fought the Lapans and the Apaches until they crossed into the territory.

✓ "But the Great Spirit was not pleased with my people.

"By and by he whispered vengeance into the ear of the Comanches, and they sent swift messengers down to the council fires of the Yaquis, and they called a powwow. And the Yaquis say, 'Yes, the Tonkawas are the enemy of all the other tribes in Tejas and Mejico.'

✓ Then the council of chiefs agree to send many warriors to help the allied tribes to fight the Tonkawas and sweep them off the face of the earth.

✓ "And the Comanche messenger said, 'That is very good, and I will return to my chief, tell him to call a great council meeting and invite the Apaches, the Kiowas, the Kickapoos and the Lapans to come to one great powwow.' Then for three moons the swift messengers of the Comanches like wings of the wind went from tribe to tribe, until the chiefs all agreed to meet in the valley of the upper Rio Grande, where the Guadalupe mountains lift their heads high above the plains.

✓ "But the Tonkawas no listen to the voice of the Great Spirit that talks in the lightning and thunder. Chief Placido and the war chiefs no hear the soft foot of the Comanche messenger, as he carried the pledges of vengeance among the enemies of my people.

✓ "The Tonkawas loved to hunt and fish and to feast; to make merry and enjoy the good things of life. Their papooses played all day under the pecan trees where the clear water reflected their smiling faces. The young squaws gathered the wild flowers on the prairies to weave



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them into garlands for their hair. The old squaws sat near the wigwams in the shade of the trees and made moccasins for the warriors. The old men of the tribe told of the mighty deeds when they used to hunt and fight. All day long the young braves followed the eagle feathers of Chief Placido as he chased the wild horses up the Great Divide to the pass in the mountains, where the cedar trees hang over the high rocks, and far away on the other side the cottonwoods grow by the winding river. Then when the great light of day was painting the western sky in many colors, the Chief turned the head of his pony toward the camp, and led his braves back over the trail as the evening shadows lengthened, and the stars came out one by one from the depth of blue to listen to the mocking birds singing in the tree-tops, as they rode home from the chase. Then the warriors feasted on roast buffalo meat and smoked their pipes around the fire, while the young boys and maidens played at making war, and told how they would kill and scalp all the bad Indians that dared to dispute the Tonkawas' right to hunt and fish in Tejas.

"But very soon the season was growing old and the winter not far away, and Placido called a council of his wise men who smoked and talked many hours, and when they arose to go to their tepees, Placido say it will be a cold winter and the Tonkawas must have heap big store of dried buffalo meat before they cross the Rio Grande and go down into the land where the sun shines and the water never freezes.

"So one bright morning when the dew was sparkling on the grass my people folded up their tepees, packed their ponies and marched away with their heads turned toward the northwest, where many thousand buffalo eat the grass and grow fat on the Llano Estacado, near the Palo Duró Canyon.

“Two moons had come and gone when my people came in sight of the great canyon of the north, where the plains drop down into the valley and the water runs through the big rocks.

“Within a sheltered cove near the canyon’s walls my people camped. The braves went forth and killed many buffalo and the squaws cut the meat into long strips and hung it on poles to dry. But now the hosts of Diablo hovered over the canyon, waiting to devour the Tonkawa tribe. And the Great Spirit hid his face and would not warn them, and my people marched down into the peaceful valley with light hearts, glad to come to the end of their long journey.

“Here they hoped to rest, sleep and be happy. They had seen no signs of an enemy and no cause to fear one. The Chief and all his warriors were lulled into lazy security and dreamed not of the avenger that hid in the sand hills beyond the canyon walls, waiting until the night bird sang to the moon.

“The sun had traveled his path across the heavens and was sending his last golden rays to paint the tops of the mountains. One by one the warriors came straggling through the narrow opening at the top of the canyon, and made their way to the camp in the valley below.

“With no thought of danger hanging over the edge of the canyon walls, the whole tribe began preparations for the night. Ponies were unpacked, tepees set up and camp fires lighted.

“One by one the stars came forth, and the dying moon lifted her head above the horizon, lingered a while, then dropped out of sight.

“The fatigue of the last days of the journey had its effect, and the god of sleep touched the eyelids of the

warriors, squaws and papooses, and the whole camp was soon lost in that mysterious land of dreams.

“Not a single watchman was placed on guard that night, and the Tonkawa camp was left to the vengeance of the foe.

“The blue blaze of the dying fires flickered as the starlit darkness settled o’er the whole scene. The Tonkawas were sleeping—the allied foe was awake.

“It was past midnight when ghostly figures began to appear at the mouth of the pass that led to the valley below. One—three—ten—twenty—one hundred—five hundred—one thousand silent warriors, followed by as many more, stole quietly down through the opening in the canyon wall, completely shutting off all avenues of escape. Up where the sky line defined the canyon wall hundreds of feathered heads could be seen taking position where they could send a shower of arrows into the Tonkawa camp.

“Not a sound broke the stillness of the night, and my people slumbered on, unconscious of the dreadful awakening in the dawning of a new day.

“The hours dragged on and the gray streaks began to appear in the East, broadening each moment as the sun approached the horizon.

“Objects began to be seen, at first indistinctly, then assuming shape until the whole camp came into view.

“A Tonkawa warrior arose unsteadily from his blankets and yawned, as he tried to shake off the stupor of sleep. He looked out over the silent camp, then his gaze wandered to the steep trail down the canyon wall—something unnatural appeared in the opening. He rubbed his eyes, then shaded them with his hand. He saw a mass of feathered heads and bristling spears. He looked to the top of the steep walls—was he dreaming? No, there

was a fringe of feathers behind a row of drawn bows—the shadow of death hung o'er the Tonkawa camp.

“As he realized the truth the warrior threw his head back and uttered the well-known warwhoop of his tribe.

“This proved to be the signal for the attack from the allied foe.

“A flight of arrows came from the canyon walls, and many a sleeping warrior and his squaw were pierced through before they could respond to the brave's warwhoop.

“Surprise turned the camp into confusion, and hundreds were killed before Chief Placido could rally a band of faithful warriors.

“The battle of extermination was being fought, and nothing could save my people.

“Many times the brave Placido led his warriors in a dashing charge against the massed enemy at the foot of the pass, but they were repulsed with great slaughter. In the meantime the never-ceasing shower of arrows from the canyon's wall was covering the ground with the dead and wounded.

“The brave Placido saw his people hopelessly defeated and being slaughtered without mercy. He knew no quarter would be shown. His enemies had entrapped him. The last hope of defending them was gone. He called a hasty council and selected 300 of his bravest warriors to make the last dash for freedom. He also selected 100 squaws and placed them in the center of the little band. Then putting his little son, Peta Nocona, on his war horse behind him, he formed his band in the shape of a wedge, and charged down the canyon like a thunderbolt. The force of the charge drove the wedge-shaped band through the enemy's lines, and Placido, 200 warriors and fifty squaws escaped on their ponies and fled

across the plains to Blanco canyon. The remainder of the tribe was slaughtered, and not one escaped to tell of the terrible massacre."

This battle ground where over 2,000 Tonkawas were killed was what might be termed a pocket in the side of the Palo Duro canyon, admirably adapted by nature for an ambushade.

The canyon proper is a large chasm nearly 100 miles long, and from one-half to two miles wide. The precipices are, in many places, from 300 to 1,500 feet deep. For sixty miles there is only one crossing for wagons, and this proved to be the tragic key to the Tonkawa battle of extermination.

A stranger can travel over that treeless stretch of the Staked Plains, among the sand hills and soft buffalo grass and never suspect the existence of this great canyon. The break would not be seen until his horses were within a few feet of the edge. Then when he looked over he would view a most wonderful scene. He would see between the walls, a river, a meadow and a pine forest in this wonderland.

No doubt some writers of Texas history have mixed the data of the slaughter of the Tonkawas in Palo Duro canyon with the massacre of the Apaches by the Pueblos in a cavern in the Waco mountains.

After the slaughter of the Tonkawas in Palo Duro canyon, Placido and his little band fled to the government posts for protection, and thereafter remained true to the white settlers. In the year 1876, when Kentuck and his companions arrived at Fort Griffin, the tribe numbered about 150, all told. All the young men under the command of Chief Johnson were employed by the government as scouts. No expedition sent out after the hostile Comanches was complete without Chief Johnson and his

scouts. The remainder of the tribe, made up of the old men and the squaws, camped under the protecting guns of the fort. As a rule, the members of the tribe were lousy and filthy, content to beg and steal. The men drank fire water when they could get it, and the squaws were low down in the moral scale. Of course, there were a few individual exceptions, and two were Jenne and Louita, the granddaughters of the old Chief Placido.

Jenne was a comely squaw, and always went decked out in all the Indian finery appropriate to her position as belle of the tribe.

There also lived in Fort Griffin a romantic youth named John Black, a druggist's clerk, who was not only romantic by nature, but had read ten-cent novels until his mind was fertile ground for the cultivation of wild ideas. And the first seed that found lodgment in his brain was an infatuation for the squaw Jenne.

After a brief courtship of two or three weeks young Black and Jenne were married according to the Indian rites, and Black degenerated into a blanket Indian, dropping as low in the scale of humanity as possible, even to the extent of being shunned by the tribe.

When the government post was abandoned at Fort Griffin in the year of 1883, the Tonkawas were removed to a reservation in the Indian Territory, Black and Jenne going with them, the family having increased by the birth of three children.

The Tonkawas, like all Indians, depended upon signs and omens to direct them in all the affairs of life, attributing success and defeat to the manifestations of the Great Spirit, in the changes of the elements and actions of animals. And, the writer believes, that the greatest mistake the government ever made in its Indian policy was, to consider the traditions, beliefs and customs of



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the North American Indian of too little consequence. Those who have come in contact with our red brother know that he is a zealot in belief and a fanatic in practice. Living close to nature, and relying upon the signs, omens and warnings of the sky, sea and forest, he, was intensely emotional and could be won or offended by what we consider trivial matters.

A convincing illustration of this trait of the Indian character was given the first week in June, 1876, when the Tonkawas broke up their camp near the crossing in the valley of the Clear Fork and moved to the table land on the high rocky hills. White men noticing the change of base, asked Old Charley why the Tonks moved. ✓

His reply was characteristic: "Heap big water coming; cover all the valley for many miles; Indian no like heap big water; Indian move."

The white man laughed and the Indian shrugged his shoulders, but the flood came on the 26th day of the month, and all the valleys of that section became roaring torrents, sweeping the debris of half a century down the river toward the sea.

The water ran four feet deep through the streets of the Flat and washed the base of Government Hill, melting down adobe houses and carrying off shanties along the banks of Collin's creek. *M. B.*

So sudden was the rise that a great wall of water came sweeping around the bend, north of the fort and engulfed a six-mule team, drowning the driver and General Burn's son, together with all the mules harnessed to the wagon. ✓

Many people, forced to leave their houses, climbed trees, and in these uncomfortable positions were compelled to remain through a dark, stormy night.

Never before or since, within the knowledge of white men, has so great a flood of water visited the Fort Griffin country.

It was several weeks before the sun and wind dried the valleys sufficient to permit the Tonkawas to return to the site of their village and pitch their tepees.

When the country was once more in its normal conditions, and all the avenues of business prospering, the forecast of Old Charley was remembered, and Kentuck asked him how he knew that "heap big water" was coming.

The old warrior replied that when the prairie dogs ran from hole to hole barking, and all came out and scampered away to the hills, and the rabbits and snakes deserted their holes and vamoosed, that it was time for the Indians to pull up their tepees and move to higher ground.

There are a few white men, who live in the wilds close to nature, who can determine important issues, and even shape their own destinies, by watching the movements of the lower animals. Especially was this true in the early history of mankind, before philosophers and scientists discredited nature.

And may it not be that while we have gained much, we have lost many a simple truth that was a surer guide to health and happiness than arguments of learned professors?

CHAPTER IV

THE "WILD AND WOOLLY" CITIZENS

Low down cussedness, adulterated with the essence of the devil, Brings all "wild and woolly" citizens to the same low down level.

Bill Hitson was cinching up his pony one morning in front of the old Adobe saloon, preparatory to returning to his ranch in Palo Pinto county.

"I'll be durned if I can sabe where all these galoots come from who hang around the Flat."

Though his remark was more forcible than elegant, he voiced a condition of mystery hard to solve.

No one knew, and few cared to know, the antecedents of the hundred or more worthless characters around the saloons and dance halls, that seemed to be nothing more than human driftwood. Their mission in life seemed to be confined to begging and stealing, when not employed by bolder rascals.

But it was not the sneaking hangers-on to the ragged edge that Hitson referred to. His remarks designated the bold, dashing, reckless gambler, and the all-around sportsman who plunged into the vortex of dissipation, lived like a lord and generally died with his boots on.

This class was known as the "wild and woolly" denizens of the Flat, and in company with reckless cow punchers could raise more hell in a single night than the sheriff and the coroner were able to attend to the next day.

The prodigal liberality of these men made them general favorites, especially among the tradesmen, saloon-

men and keepers of resorts. And they generally had free right-of-way, except when they ran counter to the reckless cow punchers, who liked nothing better than a shooting bee when they were loaded with bad whisky.

Each one of these local characters had a paramour as wild and reckless as her consort, ready and willing to aid him in any desperate scheme that promised excitement and profit.

To better understand the situation that confronted Kentuck when he made his advent on the frontier and took up his temporary abode in the Flat, it will be necessary to give the readers a brief sketch of a few notorious characters who lived and flourished off the proceeds of their wits, and boasted of their skill in the art of deception. The reckless boldness of these individuals brought them under discussion, even among the denizens of the Flat, who considered such eccentricities as drinking to excess, cussing with vehemence and shooting on slight provocation, personal privileges not subject to criticism.

But notwithstanding this general acceptance of personal freedom, there were some who were glaring exceptions, transcending all right granted by common consent.

LOTTIE DENO

Prominent among the wild, dare-devil, reckless characters who frequented the resorts in the Flat, was a female monstrosity known by the name of Lottie Deno. Lottie exhibited all the traits of a refined, educated woman, who had been nurtured in high society and was a gentlewoman by birth, yet an associate member of the gambling fraternity, who, night after night, assembled in the rooms over a saloon and played for high stakes.

Otherwise, Lottie held herself aloof from the revel and debauchery that surrounded her.

This woman was one of Fort Griffin's mysteries. She arrived one evening on the Jacksboro stage, sitting upon the driver's seat beside Dick Wheeler. And from the day of her advent to the time of her departure three years later, she hid her identity in the seclusion of a little shanty on the outskirts of the town, refusing to receive any visitors, male or female, and only appearing in public when she desired to enter the gambling rooms.

Strange stories were told about Lottie by those who knew the least, but some credence attached to the report that this strange woman lived a dual life of a saint in the East and a desperate character in the West.

It was said that money was sent to aid an invalid mother in her New England home and to pay the tuition of a sister at a fashionable boarding school, who never dreamed that it was tainted.

Lottie Deno was an attractive, medium-sized woman, with an abundance of dark, red hair and black, sparkling eyes. She always appeared well dressed and walked with the air of a perfect lady.

And, strange to relate, she was present during many a rough house, saw the flash of the deadly six-shooters and heard the oaths of the men in desperate conflict, but it did not drive her from the scene, though when the smoke cleared away there were dead men lying in pools of blood near the card tables.

Kentuck was told that there was a shooting affray over Wilson & Matthews' saloon one October night.

The gambling hall was crowded with the local sports, who were attracted by the announcement of a poker game between "Monte Bill," the Arizona sharp, and "Smoky Joe," the Texas expert.

Lottie occupied a seat at a near-by table, playing in a game with a fifty-dollar limit.

All interest centered around the game where "Monta Bill" and "Smoky Joe" were pitted against each other. Five hundred dollars was in the pot and the other players dropped out. "Monta" challenged "Smoky" to raise the limit. "Smoky" agreed and bet his last dollar on the results.

"Monta" called his hand and laid down three aces and a pair of queens.

"Smoky" dropped his hand to the handle of his six-shooter and yelled, "Bunkoed by a sneaking coyote from the 'Bad Lands,' who rings in a 'cold deck' and marked cards when he plays with a gentleman! Take that pot, John," he yelled to the negro porter.

"No, you can't play that game of 'bluff' on me," shouted "Monta" in defiance, as he jerked his gun from its scabbard.

Both guns flashed at the same time, and the crowd rushed for the stairway.

Lottie pushed back from the table and ran to the corner of the room out of range of the bullets, where she remained until the shooting was over, and was the first to greet the sheriff when he entered, and found both men stretched upon the floor in pools of blood.

"Why didn't you 'vamoose' when they pulled their 'barkers,' Lottie?"

"Oh, it was too late, sheriff; and I was safe out of range in the corner."

"Well, you have your nerve on, all right, old girl. I don't believe I would have cared to take my chances in that scrimmage."

"Perhaps not, sheriff, but you are not a desperate woman."

"That's true, but you had better clear out now, before the coroner comes to view these 'stiffs'."

"All right, sheriff; so long; I'm sleepy." And this remarkable woman left the gambling hall for her lonely shack in the outskirts of the Flat.

Subsequent events gave some color to a rumor that Lottie had known a blasé character by name of Johnny Golden, previous to her arrival in the Flat, but this rumor could not be traced to any reliable source. But one day Marshal Bill Gilson and Deputy Sheriff Jim Draper arrested Johnny Golden for an infraction of the law. On their way to the guard house, where they intended to confine him over night, the officers claim that Golden's pal tried to rescue him and a fight took place, but the only visible evidence was the dead body of Golden found beside the trail leading to the fort.

Whether there existed a bond of friendship between Johnny Golden and Lottie Deno will never be known, but when informed of the affair, it was said that Lottie lost her nerve and came near fainting. And the gossips around the saloons and dance halls claimed that if she was not his wife, there was some kind of a relationship.

Letters found on Golden proved him to be the scion of a rich Boston family, and a dissolute castaway.

Shortly after this occurrence Lottie quit frequenting the gambling rooms and was rarely seen in public, having all her necessary supplies sent to her shanty.

It was about a month later when the eastbound stage drove to her shanty and this mysterious woman departed, never more to return.

Her rent having been paid in advance, no one felt at liberty to open the shanty and investigate until Sheriff Cruger arrived from the county seat at Albany.

But when the sheriff received the key from George

Matthews and opened the door, he and the crowd that followed from curiosity beheld a richly appointed bedroom and a fireplace intact. On examination a note was found pinned to the bedclothes with these words: "Sell this outfit and give the money to some one in need of assistance."

There was no telltale scrap of information among the articles that she abandoned to throw any light on the past career or future of this remarkable woman.

HURRICANE BILL

Hurricane Bill was as slick a rascal as ever escaped justice. He came to the fort with a detachment of government troops from Arizona, in the fall of 1875. He had been employed in the northwest territories by Uncle Sam as an Indian scout. Hurricane was one of the high rollers, traveling all the gaits in the whirlwind of crime so fast and furious that he was given the sobriquet of "Hurricane."

He played the winning hand in a game with cards, whether he held the trumps or was compelled to run a bluff with his six-shooter and scoop in the stakes without showing his hand.

Bill and his paramour, Hurricane Minnie, gave the officers no end of trouble. They were mixed up in all the questionable affairs that even frontier license would not tolerate. But by some "hook or crook" they managed to escape the strong arm of the law, though by the "skin of their teeth," and the threats of their victims.

It was always a question in the minds of those who knew Bill, whether he was a brave man or a coward. Sometimes, when confronted in an emergency, he showed the "white feather," but when acting as scout in an Indian country he led the advance guard, and had been

known to fight two Indians single-handed until the soldiers came to his relief.

Bill possessed some of the traits of a polar bear, inasmuch as he was always in motion, and continuously bobbing up where trouble was brewing.

One morning Bill went into the Bee Hive saloon, owned by Mike O'Brien and Pat Casey. The firm also ran a buffalo hunting outfit, and Mike was the boss hunter.

When Mike visited the fort he helped to make things lively around the saloon. For some reason there was bad blood between Mike and Hurricane Bill, and when one or both were loaded with bad whisky there were indications of trouble.

At this particular time Bill was laboring under a top-heavy cargo as he entered the saloon, and Mike was far gone in his cups and cursing the negro porter.

Conditions were ripe for an open rupture, and Bill supplied the cause by making uncomplimentary remarks about the Irish and "niggers."

It so happened that neither carried a six-shooter at the time, and it was necessary to secure some kind of a weapon before hostilities could begin. Realizing the situation, both men rushed to procure arms, Bill to his picket shanty across the street, and Mike into the back room of the saloon after his buffalo gun. He returned to fire a shot at Bill as the latter turned the corner of the picket house.

With that deliberation born of familiarity with danger Mike walked to the middle of the road, and seating himself in the dust, began to systematically pump lead into Bill's shanty. In the meantime, Bill got busy with his Winchester rifle, returning Mike's fire from the window. But the superior penetrating powers of the buffalo gun

bored holes through the picket house, making it extremely dangerous for Bill and Minnie to remain inside, much less expose themselves a target for Mike's marksmanship. Therefore, to keep up his side of the duel, Bill was compelled to follow the report of Mike's gun by raising his own gun at arm's length above his head and firing out of the window, being careful not to expose his body in the act.

While the denizens of the Flat were watching the exchange of leaden compliments, a wild Irishman named Bill Campbell, staggering under the influence of liquor, came from the saloon, laden with a bottle of whisky and a glass, approached Mike and said, "Here, me boy, take somethin' to stiddy yez nerve and be after holding on to yez job 'til the blackguard shakes a white rag."

Without the least hesitation Mike laid his gun down and accepted the bottle and glass and poured out a generous portion, while Bill continued firing from his window. After drinking and returning the bottle and glass, Mike took up his gun and resumed the bombardment.

Finally, after shooting away all of his cartridges, Mike retired to the saloon in disgust, remarking that Hurricane was a white-livered coward, not worth the ammunition that it would take to kill him.

There was a rollicking time in Dick Jones' saloon one night when Hurricane Bill was making a gun play. Some one passed the word to marshal Bill Gilson and he started in to pinch the Hurricane and run him in.

The marshal was armed with a sawed-off shotgun mounted on a pistol handle. The gun was loaded with buckshot and capable of deadly execution at short range. As the marshal approached the door, Bill was given the tip by a comrade and made an attempt to escape that brought him in collision in the doorway with the mar-

shal. Both men held their guns in their hands, and in the mixup that followed, Bill's pistol was discharged so close to the marshal's face that the flash powder-burned his eyes, and "Old Betsey," the marshal's gun, tore a big hole in the ceiling of the saloon. Before the marshal could recover, Bill escaped and joined a trail outfit camp over night, and in the morning started for the buffalo range with Henry Palm's wagon train, where he remained six months before returning to the Flat.

THE CHIEF OF RED MUD

Any man who lived on the frontier in the early days will tell you that it was no test of courage to be compelled to perform stunts under duress, and that "discretion is the better part of valor" when the other fellow has the drop on you. Many a brave man was forced to abide his time, that he might get even with a desperado who took advantage of an opportunity to play the bully.

An illustration of this was exemplified on one occasion when the "Chief of Red Mud," the self-constituted leader of a gang of cowardly cut-throats that rendezvoused in Blanco canyon, came to Griffin with the avowed intention of making good his boast of being a bad man.

After taking on a cargo of firewater he sailed in to capture the Flat. At the time, all the officers, including the marshal, were on the trail of a band of horse thieves, and no one of authority was in town.

Whether the chief had been informed of the situation and took advantage of it, will never be known, but circumstances led many to believe that he did. The chief, not content with the usual armament of a six-shooter and camp knife, carried two "45s" and a hawkbill knife twelve inches long.

When he emerged from the Beehive saloon and started

up Griffin avenue, his appearance was enough to strike terror into the hearts of the uninitiated.

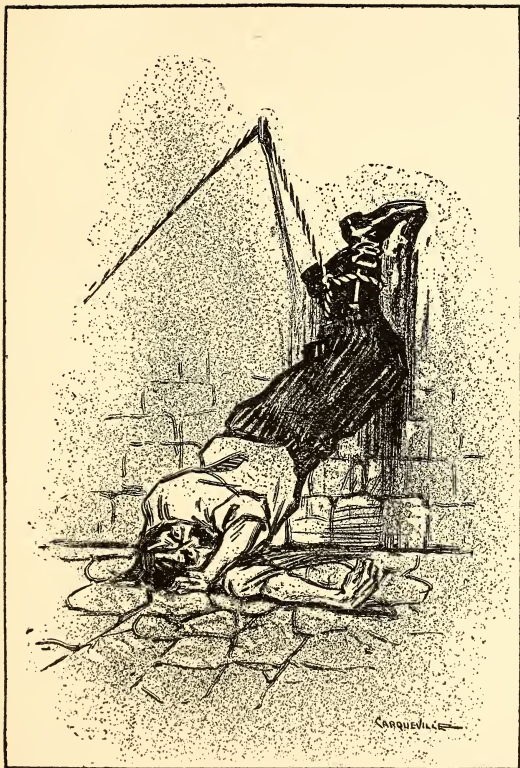
He evidently had "blood in his eyes" and determined to start a graveyard of his own and furnish the corpses, and his actions bore out his threats.

A red Mexican sash beneath his cartridge belt gave the requisite color to his warlike appearance, and he would have made a striking figure on the deck of a pirate ship.

"Coyotes, hunt your holes! The biggest wolf on the range is coming down the trail!" Bang! bang! bang! and the bullets from his "45" whizzed along the street.

While every one doubted the courage of this bully, very few cared to dispute his assertion, and to avoid the stray bullets all went indoors and gave him a clear trail. But in his attempt to make good he was not satisfied to parade the street, but concluded to capture Charley Meyers' saloon. The barkeeper on the day shift was one Jule Hurvey, an ex-acrobat and all-around circus man. And when this human tornado swooped odwn upon him, Hurvey grabbed a lasso that hung on a peg and threw the open loop on the floor in front of the door, then stepped aside, holding onto the other end of the rope, and waited the onslaught. John Lewis, the negro porter, ran out of the rear door as the Chief charged in at the front, and Hurvey was left alone to face the situation. And subsequent proceedings showed that he was equal to the emergency.

When the "wild and woolly" entered the door and stepped into the loop, Hurvey pulled the lasso taut and caught the Chief around both legs, causing him to pitch forward with so much force that his "45s" were knocked from his grasp and fell beyond his reach, and before he could recover from the shock, Hurvey had him trussed



"Had him trussed up like a chicken." (Page 78.)

up like a chicken prepared for market. One end of the lasso was thrust through a ring in the wall, used for swinging a hammock, and as the Chief struggled to free himself, Hurvey pulled on the lasso until the victim began to ascend the wall feet foremost. In the meantime the bold "Chief of Red Mud" was roaring like an enraged bull.

Having elevated the Chief to where he was compelled to keep both hands on the floor to protect his head, Hurvey picked up the "45s" and began the juggling feat of throwing them in the air and catching them by the handles ready for action. People on the outside, curious to know what was going on, began to arrive, and it was not long before the Chief and Hurvey had a large audience.

"Come right in, gents," said Hurvey; "this is a free exhibition, circus and menagerie all under one canvas. Don't go too close to the animals, especially those tied inside the ropes and outside the cages to give them exercise. Now that specimen over by the wall is a hybrid; half wolf and half hyena; was captured on Red Mud in Blanco canyon."

"Oh, no, Hurvey; you must be mistaken; it looks like a Gila monster," remarked John Hammond.

"Ain't he a 'ring-tail tooter,' boys? I've seen 'em up in the mountains of Montana, where they grow big ones; but he's a jim-dandy, and no mistake," said Hurricane Bill.

"The way he pulls that rope and growls he must be a cougar," said Lewis Hill.

"Oh, that's only a badger," declared Dick Jones. "Don't you see the way he shows his teeth and scratches with his claws?"

"And will yez be after telling me what yez feed the monster on, Hurvey?" inquired Mike O'Brien.

"A tenderfoot at each meal," replied Hurvey.

"Oh, then, bedad, and he must be hungry now," remarked O'Brien.

During this running comment the Chief kept up a continuous flow of profanity, and looked unutterable words of defiance at his tormentors.

But the physical strain proved too much for his bravado, and gradually he subsided into an inert mass of humanity and was forced to beg for mercy. All the fight had oozed out of him and he became an abject coward, with no thought but escape from his captor. Sobered and humiliated, he appealed to Hurvey's sense of sympathy, and with the remark that the performance was over, he loosened the lasso and the Chief arose unsteadily to his feet.

"Now, if you are not satisfied with the treatment, Chief," said Hurvey, "here are your guns, and you shall have an equal chance and a fair fight."

But the Chief declined the courtesy with thanks and left the Flat and took the trail going west.

But not content to profit by his humiliation in the Flat, and, no doubt, desiring revenge on somebody to ease the painful remembrance, he decided to terrorize the inhabitants of the little town of Albany, sixteen miles from the fort in the center of the county.

It may have been his desire to redeem himself from the charge of cowardice, in hope of retaining his prestige as leader of the gang at Red Mud. Be that as it may, after a night's rest he arose early the next morning and proceeded to fill up on "bug juice." It was not long until the liquor fired his brain and he became reckless and defied everything, living or dead. With loud-mouthed vaporings he started in to bulldoze the town, repeating his tactics of the day before in the Flat, and as

soon as all the doors of the village were closed and the inhabitants inside, he got busy in the work of intimidation, parading the streets and threatening to shoot if anyone stuck their head out. While thus engaged a jolly Irishman named Pat Casey drove a two-horse wagon into town and halted on the public square. No sooner did the Chief spy the Irishman than he charged down upon him.

"Say, you flannel mouth, tumble out of that old ramshackle wagon and dance a jig. Be lively, now, or I'll punch a hole through your shoe leather," and to emphasize the threat, fired a shot into the bed of the wagon. But instead of jumping out on the opposite side from the Chief, Pat landed directly in front of him, and before the bad man could realize it and bring his guns into action, the Irishman dealt him a blow over the head with the pecan handle of his driving whip, and the Chief tumbled over in a heap. Securing his guns and throwing them into the wagon, Pat began to belabor the Chief with the lash until he howled with pain. But the Irishman did not let up, and proceeded to give him a cruel thrashing, until the Chief jumped to his feet and began to run away. Round and round the square they raced, the Chief in the lead and the Irishman a close second, while the citizens came out of their houses and shouted their approval. But the Chief soon outdistanced his pursuer and took to the open prairie. And the last seen of the "Chief of Red Mud" he was headed for the McKinzie trail, two miles distant.

And so far as the writer knows, the "Chief of Red Mud" never figured in the role of a bad man again, either in Griffin or Albany, though he was heard from in the vicinity of Blanco and Yellow House canyons, where he had a gang of bullies and thieves, who annoyed the settlers and ranchmen by rustling cattle and stealing horses.

With few exceptions, men like the Chief were arrant cowards when confronted by brave men on equal footing. They always took the "drop" on the other man before abusing him.

ED. FORREST

Ed. Forrest was an all-around sport. He dressed well and loafed in the dance halls, gambling rooms and the saloons; played billiards, pool, and was a card sharp; always had a pocket full of money and was generous to a fault in spending it.

He dropped into the Flat one day without previous announcement and seemed to fit into the mixed society like a charter member. No one asked him any questions and he volunteered no information about himself. The women pronounced him good-looking and the men voted him a jolly good fellow.

And time rolled on for about six months, when marshal Dave Barker opened his mail one morning and was astonished to receive a warrant from a sheriff in Louisiana, commanding him to arrest one Dick Millington, alias Ed. Forrest, charged with forging a check for \$5,000.

The letter informed the marshal that the sheriff held requisition papers for Forrest, and that he would start for Fort Griffin as soon as he was informed of his arrest.

After a consultation with Justice Steel, Barker proceeded to hunt up the erstwhile sport. But as was usual with gents of his cloth, he bunked up during the day and prowled at night. Therefore, it was after dark before he located Ed. When he did find him he was engaged in playing a game of billiards with a butcher named Huff, in Dick Jones' saloon.

Entering the saloon through the front door, Barker drew his gun and commanded:

"Throw up your hands, Ed; I want you, my boy!"

But instead of obeying, Forrest pulled his own gun, and the shooting commenced.

Whether by accident or design, the lights went out, and the duel was continued in the dark, each firing at the flash of his antagonist's gun.

Both emptied their pistols and Forrest exclaimed, "Shut off your 'barker,' Dave; I'm wounded in the side."

Lights were procured and Forrest was discovered lying upon the floor beside the table.

"I'm sorry, Ed.," said the Marshal, "but you should have used better judgment than to resist."

"That's the way it turned out, Dave; but it is the first time my old '45' went back on me—I rarely miss what I shoot at."

"And from the marks on the table, you would not have missed this time if I had not ducked below the rail every time that I fired at the flash of your gun. But say, Ed., you were not at this end of the table, where Huff was holding his cue at the time the racket commenced, were you?"

"No. Why do you ask?"

"Because there is a pool of blood here."

"Huff must have been wounded in the fracas, too," said Dick Jones, holding a lighted lamp near the floor, "Better hunt him up, for he was bleeding like a stuck pig when he went out the door, from the trail he left behind."

They found him in his butcher shop, lying across his chopping block. A stray bullet had severed an artery in his leg, and he died from the loss of blood.

Forrest was removed to the Government hospital for treatment, where he remained until his wound had sufficiently healed to permit the authorities to put him in jail, awaiting the arrival of the Louisiana sheriff.

Several months after his return to Louisiana he was tried in the courts and was exonerated from the charge of forgery, and returned to his old haunts in the Flat.

But though mixed up in several shooting scrapes at various times in his subsequent career, he escaped being killed or wounded.

SMOKY JOE

Joe was a nondescript of mixed blood, dark and swarthy, and was given the sobriquet of "Smoky Joe."

He followed what was known as a "capper" around the gambling rooms; led the unwary cowboys to buck up against a "brace game" by pretending to win large sums from the dealer, and encourage his companion to bet.

When he succeeded in roping in a novice he received a certain per cent. of the winnings taken from the victim. Consequently, Joe was looked on as an outlaw by those who knew his occupation, and it was a mystery how he kept from being killed before he was hung.

Joe was suspected of thievery, though never caught with the goods on him. But like the pitcher carried once too often to the well, Joe was broken over the wheel of fate.

His avarice got the better of his judgment when an enterprising Jew pedler, named "Cheap John," came to the Flat one day, and for a week engaged in selling his wares.

When the Jew departed, driving an old horse to a dilapidated hack, he was supposed to possess considerable money. And Joe, believing that no one cared for the Jew, claimed that the pedler borrowed money from him and never paid it back, and he started out to overtake the unfortunate man and force the collection of his mythical debt.

The next day Joe returned, and some one detected that he was wearing the Jew's boots.

When confronted with the accusation, he admitted that there had been trouble, and that he was forced to kill the Jew in self-defense, justifying his appropriation of the boots and other articles found in his possession, on the ground that if he had not taken them some unprincipled person would have stolen them.

But Smoky Joe did not reckon with the temperament of the denizens of the Flat on this occasion, and a select crowd of masked men visited his shack about the hour of midnight and invited him to take a walk down the avenue to the Clear Fork bottom, where the limbs of the trees seemed to grow especially convenient for a necktie party.

The next morning his body was found swinging beside the trail, and some freighters coming in with buffalo hides reported it to Justice Steele, and a negro was sent down to dig a hole, cut the rope and let the body drop into it.

This was considered equal and exact justice for such a crime as Joe had committed.

If he had put up a neat job, with some semblance of fair play, he would have been forgiven, and perhaps praised. But to become a highway robber and a cold-blooded murderer, could not be tolerated.

KILLING A BUFFALO SOLDIER

When the white soldiers were transferred to other posts the garrison was filled with seven companies of negroes, or, as the Tonkawa Indians called them, "buffalo soldiers," and the white people generally showed their disapproval. This brought about friction that developed into hatred and resentment, and occasionally open rupture between the two races. And this notwithstand-

ing the peace officers coöperated with the military officers in an effort to prevent open hostilities. The "buffalo soldiers" dared not venture into the Flat unless there were at least half a dozen in the crowd, carrying their side arms. Even then they were only suffered to patronize the low dives that pandered to their trade.

One evening a drunken negro soldier separated from his pals and staggered into the street and started up the sidewalk. He had not gone far until he collided with a buffalo hunter and began to dispute the right of way. The negro was killed, and his comrades carried him to the post under the surveillance of the populace.

When the cortege arrived it created the greatest excitement, and almost a mutiny followed the announcement of the soldier's death. The negroes ran to the parade ground and bunched in a mass, and began to gesticulate in a wild, frenzied manner, while the officers endeavored to quiet them. It required a great deal of persuasion and a promise to investigate to prevent a rush to arms and a charge down the hill among the denizens of the Flat.

In the meantime the sheriff and the marshal were trying to subdue the demonstrations of hostilities at the foot of the hill.

Bad blood was boiling and danger of a conflict imminent. Business was suspended and buffalo guns and Winchester rifles were in evidence. Preparations to meet a grave emergency were going on.

Fortunately, Captain Arrington and his company of State rangers rode into town by the way of Jackson's store.

The addition of these bronzed veteran troopers gave power to the sheriff, and the argument of persuasion changed to one of command to disperse and let the law take its course. But after taps, when near the hour of

midnight, the negroes left their quarters about one hundred strong, and securing their guns from the arsenal, moved silently to a position within easy range of the Flat.

It was a starlight night, and the bars of light from the saloons and dance halls presented a dazzling mark.

The sounds of ribald laughter, mingled with the music that floated up from these dens of immorality, told the sad story of lewd women and besotted men. The incident of the evening had been forgotten. So trivial a thing as the death of any man, much less a negro soldier, was not allowed to disturb the gaiety of the Flat. But there came a crashing report of firearms, and the bullets flew fast and thick. The music ceased, the laughter died away and the lights went out. And for a brief space silence reigned.

Then there was a flash and a sharp report of a buffalo gun in the Flat. The bullet sang its way up the hill and over the fort. There was another report, and another, then the firing became faster and faster, as one after another joined in, until the whole Flat seemed to have gone into action against the fort. But after the first volley the soldiers had retired to their quarters to escape detection by the officers.

Receiving no response the buffalo hunters soon tired of wasting ammunition. And for once in its history the Flat was silent the remainder of the night.

Strange to say, by reason of the soldiers' aim being too high in the dark, only one child was slightly wounded during this fusillade.

The occasion of sending these negro troops to Fort Griffin to relieve the white troops ordered to Fort Clark had a tragic beginning.

While the officers were turning over the commissary

department and checking in the new command, a squad of white soldiers escaped to the Flat and loaded up on bad whisky. Captain Lincoln, in command of the negro troops, with the brevet of Colonel, had occasion to visit the Flat and discovered the drunken soldiers. He immediately ordered them to their quarters. One, too far gone in inebriation to respect his rank, told the Captain to go to a warmer climate than Texas. The Captain pulled his revolver and killed the soldier.

For a few moments it looked like the Captain would be mobbed by infuriated cowboys and buffalo hunters, but the marshal and a dozen State rangers took the officer in charge and protected him from personal violence.

After a preliminary hearing before a justice of the peace, Captain Lincoln was released on bond. By request of the department at Washington, he was turned over to the military and tried by court martial and acquitted.

LESS SENSE THAN JUDGMENT

An Italian gunsmith, who did a thriving business by reason of the fact that all men carried guns in those days, also possessed an inherent love for music and made the mistake of ordering an E-flat horn with one of his consignments of supplies.

It arrived one day on a freight wagon, much to the delight of the little gunsmith, who, as eager as a child with a new toy, closed the door of his shack and began to test his lungs by trying to fill the horn with his breath, and succeeded in producing some unearthly screeches. This aroused a spirit of resentment among his neighbors, who voiced their disapproval by firing a few shots into his shack. The gunsmith, taking the hint, waited until night and went out into the mesquite brush, about a half-mile

from the Flat, and opened up with a series of sounds that even made the coyotes sit up and take notice.

This innovation brought forth a vigorous protest from several directions, with a few well directed shots that caused the noise to abate with a spasmodic quack of a wounded duck.

The little gunsmith was as mad as a wet hen when he came running into Charley Meyer's saloon, where a jolly crowd of cowboys were having a levee.

Holding up his horn to exhibit its battered condition, the gunsmith fairly stormed in his rage.

"Zay, why you no like ze music, eh? Sacre, da American is—is der, what you call him, der big ass dat have the long ears? Why ze devil you shoot my horn, eh? Zat horn he cost me twenty dollars."

"What is the matter, Dago? Been eating something that don't agree with you?"

"Oh, sacre! I feel me disgusted and I don't care for the old town some more, I tell youz!" And he departed amid a shout of laughter.

RUNNING A BLUFF ON THE OFFICERS

Mike Kegan, a cow puncher from Sam Ward's ranch, was in the habit of coming to the Flat and getting on a protracted spree. He delighted in going into a saloon and making a rough house. Time and again he was pulled by the marshal and compelled to pay a fine. But this seemed only to encourage him to greater efforts in cussedness. Consequently, the friction between him and the officers became so tense that a shooting scrape was imminent.

One Saturday morning Mike and his brother John hitched their bronchos in front of Dick Jones' saloon and began to tank up. It did not take long before Mike was on a dangerous jag, while John, the more conservative

of the two, was trying to mollify Mike and induce him to return to the ranch, but this only caused him to talk louder and curse viciously. Then breaking through all restraint, he mounted his pony and dashed up the avenue at full speed, whooping and shooting at every jump.

Marshal Barker, standing in front of Culp Bros.' hardware store, stepped inside and secured a shotgun, threw two cartridges of buckshot into the barrels and ran outside in time to head off the reckless Mike.

"Drop your six-shooter, Mike, and roll off that bronc, or I will fill you full of holes."

Mike pulled his pony back upon its haunches and looked down the muzzle of the marshal's gun.

"Drop your gun, quick, Mike, if you want to live long enough to make your will."

"Well, Dave, you have the drop on me, and I guess there is no chance for a stand-off. Here is the shooting-iron and I'm a candidate for the lockup. But if I had an even break there would be a mixup sure as you live, Dave."

The marshal picked up the six-shooter and compelled Mike to march in front of him to Justice Steele's office, and answer a charge of disturbing the peace.

"Bring out your branding-iron, Judge, I'm ready to take my medicine."

"Wait until the county attorney writes the complaint," said his Honor, and then I will give you a hearing, Mr. Kegan."

"Oh, come off with your legal palaver, Judge, and tell me the price of the hold up."

"It will be \$5 and the costs if you shut that fly trap, and \$10 more if you don't keep quiet."

"There is \$50, Judge; just keep the change, for I'll be in contempt again before leaving the Flat." And without

another word Mike left the office before the astonished justice could call him back.

In less time than it takes to relate the occurrence, Kegan was astride of his pony speeding down the avenue once more. Meeting his brother John, he snatched the pistol from his belt and began another fusillade.

The marshal grabbed his gun and rushed out to intercept the "wild and woolly" Mike. No sooner did he emerge from the office than Mike charged down upon him.

There was a flash from the marshal's gun and the broncho tumbled to his knees, throwing the doughty knight of the prairie over his head, and before he could recover he was again under arrest.

"Guilty or not guilty?" said the judge.

"Not guilty," said Mike.

"Want a jury?"

"No, I have already paid the price of my contempt for this court."

"Shut up, or I will have you bound and gagged."

"All right, Judge; start the mill to grinding; the grist is ready."

"Introduce the evidence, Mr. Attorney."

Two witnesses were introduced for the State.

"Any witnesses, Mr. Kegan?"

"No; what the devil do I want with witnesses, Judge?"

"The State closes," said the attorney. And may it please your honor, as the defendant has no attorney, I have nothing to say, and submit the case without argument."

"Have you anything to say, Mr. Kegan?" said the Judge.

"No, replied Kegan; "as the State has no attorney, I have nothing to say, either."

"One hundred dollars and the costs," said the judge.

The laugh was on the county attorney, and it cost him \$5 to set up the drinks to the boys.

But neither the fine nor the dangerous experience had any effect on Kegan, who several years afterward was killed in a duel with officers in a western county.

And in this connection it is appropriate to give a brief description of the man who dispensed justice in those days.

JUSTICE STEELE

Justice Steele was an ex-army officer, who held the rank of colonel during the Civil War, but in the reorganization at the close of hostilities, was slated as a lieutenant, and came to Fort Griffin with his command. When he resigned he donned civilians' attire, and settled down near the fort to make a home.

The Colonel's popularity was so great among the denizens of the Flat, that he was elected justice of the peace without opposition, and held the office until the fort was abandoned and the Flat became a country village.

During the heyday of his career as justice, Colonel Steele was one of the boys, always ready to take part in a game of chance and go the rounds of the dance halls and the saloons. Often did he appear on the bench with black eyes and a swollen countenance, after a night's debauch. But this in nowise interfered with his administration of justice. Sitting back in his arm chair, hands raised in front of him and finger tips touching, he would assess a fine on his comrades of the night before, without the slightest hesitation, notwithstanding their looks of astonishment and muttered cussing. Yet Colonel Steele was not a contradiction of himself, but only a product of the times, that gave to every man the freedom of conduct and keeper of his own conscience.

Whether Colonel Steele's love of the curious prompted him to display a brass-barrel horse-pistol and a long-blade Turkish knife in the pigeonholes of his office desk, was a question of conjecture. But the dare-devil cow punchers who were arraigned in his court for misdemeanors called them the Colonel's peacemakers. And when the effects of too much firewater made them obstreperous, and inclined to find fault with the court's rulings, he emphasized his decisions by letting his right hand rest near the handle of the pistol. This movement of his honor had the desired effect, and the belligerent boys generally quieted down, with an aside remark about the "old rooster's" arsenal.

"Say, Pete," said a cow puncher, one day, "do you reckon the old galoot would use the blunderbuss?"

"Sure thing, Bill; they say that he trims the trees in his orchard with that gun—keeps it loaded with twelve buckshot when he holds court."

"Joe McCombs says that the Colonel mows prairie grass for his hens' nests with that gun."

"Whew! You don't say? How does he do it, cully?"

"Oh, dead easy. Just fills it to the muzzle with bird-shot, then steps down into a gulch, so that his arm comes on a level with the grass, gives a sweeping motion and turns it loose. Joe says the Colonel raked up an armful of grass from one discharge."

"Think I'm dead easy, to believe a yarn like that, don't you?"

"Please yourself, Pete; but if you think the Colonel will not put that pistol into action, you are plumb locoed, pard."

"'Course I'm not going to take chances, Bill; 'alee samee,' I think it is a big bluff."

"Order in court," said his Honor, as he picked his teeth with the sharp point of the Turkish knife.

"Well, he's a game old sport, and he's backed up by the law, too, Bill. I guess I'll take my medicine straight, instead of trying to clean out the court, and pay the doctor to pick out the shot after the fracas is over."

"Keep order in court! The next case on the docket is the State of Texas versus Pete Haverty."

The abandonment of Fort Griffin and the extermination of the buffalo in 1882 deprived the denizens of the Flat of their revenue, and they scattered to the four corners of the earth, and Colonel Steele returned to his old home at Concord, N. H.

STOVEPIPE JOE

Stovepipe Joe was a regular rounder, with a slippery record for crookedness, and suspicion rested on him for many crimes not proven.

One day he picked a quarrel with a discharged soldier known as Scotty. He armed himself and followed Scotty to his home. The soldier was unarmed, and when he saw his desperate assailant, tried to escape by running around the house to where his wife was washing clothes.

The woman fell upon her knees and begged for the life of her husband, but Joe killed him before her eyes.

The next morning Joe was found hanging to a tree on Collin's creek.

THE CATTLE RUSTLERS AND HORSE THIEVES

Another band of desperadoes, led by Andy Brownlee, Bill Townsend, Charley McBride and Jim English, operated in the surrounding range and made Griffin their headquarters. No effort was made by members of the gang to disguise their identity. In fact, they were in the habit of boasting of their achievements and defying the officers to arrest them.

The gang numbered about thirty, and their operations

did more to bring into existence the Vigilance Committee for the protection of life and property than all other causes combined.

Until the Vigilance Committee made it too unhealthy for them, horse thieves and cattle rustlers were very bold and daring in their operations.

A striking demonstration of this lawlessness was exhibited on the avenue one evening.

Jack Masterson, a quartermaster's sergeant at the fort, rode down the hill to the corner store, where he was a silent partner with Sam Stinson in a general merchandise business.

The animal that he was riding, an iron-gray cavalry horse, about sixteen hands high, was a fine specimen of the equine breed.

Dismounting at the door, Masterson unwound his lasso from the pommel of his saddle, and holding on to the end walked within the store to talk with Stinson. While thus engaged, a notorious character who traveled under the sobriquet of "Snaky Jim" came sauntering along the walk, and without the least hesitation, cut the lasso, mounted the horse and rode away, leaving Masterson holding the detached end of the lasso.

Masterson was an Englishman and a soldier of fortune, having served in the Crimean war, the Civil war on the side of the Confederacy, with Maximilian in Mexico, and then enlisted in the Regulars with Uncle Sam, and from varied experience was not easily disturbed. But as he contemplated the situation he seemed to be nonplussed.

"Well; I call that a scurvy trick to take a sneaking advantage of a gentleman when his back is turned. Especially when it will be difficult to explain to the Colonel how I came to lose one of the best cavalry horses in the service."

When last seen, "Snaky Jim" was speeding the horse down Griffin avenue to the crossing of the Clear Fork.

Masterson received a severe reprimand from the post commander and the government was minus a good horse. And, beyond its humorous side, very little attention was paid to the incident.

Names and incidents could be multiplied almost indefinitely to prove the reckless indifference to the law before the regime of the Vigilance Committee. But sufficient has been told to impress the readers of the gravity of the situation in and around Fort Griffin.

How easily men can become accustomed to such a situation was demonstrated by the commercial relations that existed between the merchants and this class of custom. An illegitimately acquired dollar purchased a desperado all the accommodations that legitimate trade could command.

CHAPTER V

THE VIGILANCE COMMITTEE

They came at midnight, carrying vengeance and death in their hands,
And, without either judge or jury, tried men of those lawless bands.

From observations from day to day, in his rounds of the fort and the Flat, it did not take Kentuck long to come to the conclusion that there was trouble brewing between the unlawful denizens and the better element of the people.

The sheriff and his deputies and the marshal had long known that an organized gang of cut-throats, robbers and cattle rustlers, with a stronghold in the Wichita mountains, near Fort Sill in the Indian Territory, operated in and around Fort Griffin, under the leadership of Charley McBride, Bill English and Jim Townsend, and that the gang was too large for the officers to tackle single-handed. They were also aware that unless they could organize a posse strong enough to follow the robbers to their stronghold and give them battle, it would be useless to try to execute a warrant against a member of the gang.

So well organized was this band that they could muster from twenty-five to thirty desperate men, well armed and ready to fight. Then there were at least double that number of sympathizers who lived off their bounty, and furnished them information that enabled them to successfully operate and conceal the evidence of their crime.

And whenever a member of the band was caught napping and arrested, his pals would either rescue him or come into court and swear him out of limbo.

Therefore, it was no great surprise to Kentuck a few months later when he heard it whispered in confidence that a Vigilance Committee was being organized, and, that sooner or later, those who did not respect life or property would come to grief.

From his knowledge of the history of California and other frontiers, Kentuck was certain that the Griffin community must go through a similar experience before the law-abiding citizens could enjoy the fruits of their labor. Consequently, Kentuck "sawed wood" and waited developments. And while he deplored the necessity for summary justice, recognized that "silence is golden" at this juncture.

One not a member of the Vigilance Committee could not know whether his neighbor belonged to the society or not, but one thing he did learn—that there was a concentrated and determined effort to rid the community of thieves and murderers.

That the Vigilance Committee's work proved eminently successful was demonstrated in less than six months from the time the trees began to bear human fruit.

The McBride-English-Townsend gang rendezvoused in a shanty at the end of the avenue on the bank of the Clear Fork. Indian Kate and her daughter Mag lived there. Kate was half Indian and half Mexican, and possessed all the cunning treachery of both. Mag was the offspring of Kate and a renegade negro, named Cato, who joined the Comanches in their raids on the white settlers.

In this shanty the gang would meet and lay their plans, and many queer stories were told of their plotting in the dark hours of the night.

But one frosty morning a cowboy riding in from the Matthews ranch, leisurely following the trail through the Clear Fork bottom, discovered the bodies of McBride, Townsend and Brownlee hanging from the same limb. It was learned later that English had escaped from the committee and was seen on the trail to Kansas.

About this time Kentuck was offered the position and accepted the office of Justice of the Peace of Precinct No. 1, including the county seat, the embryo town of Albany, in the center of the county, sixteen miles from the fort. And his first call to official duty was a request to hold an inquest over the bodies of two men hung by the Vigilantes.

The two men found hanging to the tree that morning had paid the penalty of a most revolting crime.

When the news came to Albany that a foul murder and robbery had been committed on a ranch near old Fort Phantom Hill in Jones county, attached to Shackelford for judicial purposes, a warrant was placed in the hands of Sheriff John M. Laren, and he summoned a posse and started in pursuit of the murderers. After a diligent search near the scene of the crime it was learned that the criminals were hurrying along the trail to Kansas. Securing the necessary requisition papers Sheriff Laren followed them, and nothing more was seen of him until one morning two months later, when he arrived in Albany with the two men accused of the crime.

And notwithstanding a guard of four men was put in charge of the prisoners, the Vigilance Committee came in the night, and the next morning they were turned over to Kentuck for inquest and burial.

For the greater portion of the next two years following this inquest Kentuck's official duties of the office of justice of the peace were confined to inquests and marriages.

The willful cussedness of those desperadoes who operated in and around both Griffin and Albany made it necessary for the Vigilance Committee to furnish the corpses to plant a graveyard outside the limits of both towns. And it was surprising how fast these silent cities of the dead grew in proportion to the population of the towns and the surrounding country.

During this period street duels between the officers and lawless men, especially in the Flat around the fort, was almost a daily occurrence. But the local authorities, aided by Captain Arrington and a company of Texas rangers, made it a losing game for the vicious characters, but space forbids the writer going into details.

One of the most startling developments during the reign of the Vigilance Committee, that cast a gloom over the whole community, was the discovery that a well planned system of cunning thievery and red-handed murder was carried on by ex-Sheriff John M. Laren and his pal, John Sillman.

The confidence of the people in Laren when they elected him sheriff, and his subsequent stability as a prominent ranchman, could not be shaken by anything short of positive evidence of his guilt.

Consequently, notwithstanding persistent rumors during his term of office, it was several months after his successor, Bill Cruger, was sworn in before the rumors were run down and the facts unearthed.

Even then his connection by marriage with a prominent family caused the authorities to hesitate before taking any legal steps to accuse him of crime. But like all successful criminals, Laren and Sillman became bolder and bolder in their operations, until their acts could no longer escape notice.

But when the officers had matured plans for their ar-

rest they were informed that they were members of the McBride-English-Townsend gang, and it would be wisdom to go slow.

SHERIFF JOHN M. LAREN AND HIS DEPUTY, JOHN
SILLMAN

No place on this earth did circumstances and conditions develop more queer characters and marshal together more desperate men and women than the Flat surrounding the foot of Government Hill.

Among those who were attracted to Fort Griffin by the hustle and bustle incident to the rush of business, and the wild life of vice in the "Flat," were two men by name of John M. Laren and John Sillman.

No one knew and very few cared about their antecedents. Laren drifted down the trail from Fort Dodge, Kan., and Sillman came from nowhere in particular. Within a week of their arrival they became companions and fast friends, and continued these relations until the Vigilance Committee killed Laren and chased Sillman off the range.

The career of these two men was meteoric in its flight and startling in its details.

Laren secured employment on a near-by ranch, with headquarters on the banks of the Clear Fork a few miles southeast of the fort. He soon proved to be a careful, experienced cow puncher, and won the confidence of the ranchman, who advanced him to the important position of "range boss."

In this capacity he became the associate of the members of the family, whose confidence he gained by exemplary conduct and clean personal habits. And being unusually bright and intelligent, he gained the confidence and the affection of Mary, one of the ranchman's daughters, and

after a brief courtship married her, notwithstanding there was some opposition from her parents, who protested because their daughter knew little or nothing about Laren.

The young couple selected old Camp Cooper as a satisfactory place for a home, and built one of the most substantial two-story stone ranch houses in Throckmorton county.

With the assistance of his father-in-law, Laren purchased a small herd of cattle, and to all appearances led the life of a young ranchman who desired to succeed and prosper in his line of business.

In the meantime his duties as "range boss" brought him in contact with all the cattlemen and cowboys on the Griffin range, with whom he soon became a general favorite.

Sheriff Henry Jacobs' term of office was about to expire, and considerable opposition to his reelection developed, especially among the citizens of the Flat and the reckless cow punchers, who resented any interference with their wild sport when they desired to shoot up the town.

The opposition to Jacobs proposed Laren's name for his successor, and he was elected to the office the following November.

True to the bond of friendship between them, Laren appointed his old comrade, Sillman, deputy sheriff.

Local conditions demanded brave officers, and Sheriff Laren and his deputy, Sillman, proved to be the men of the hour.

The ink was hardly dry where he subscribed to the oath of office, until a warrant was placed in his hands for the arrest of "Shorty" Collins, an all-around horse thief, crook and murderer.

"Shorty" was at that moment taking in the town under

the protecting wing of a bunch of Southern Texas cow-punchers. "Shorty" was both desperate and brave, and when loaded with bad whisky and backed up with reckless companions was a dangerous proposition to tackle.

Laren and Sillman confronted "Shorty" and his companions on the avenue in front of E. Frankle's store. It was a lively bunch of reckless dare-devils, bent on mischief and prepared to fight any opposition. "Shorty" was leading the gang when Sheriff Laren pulled out the warrant and commanded him to throw up his hands and consider himself under arrest. Like a flash, "Shorty's" hand dropped to the handle of his gun; at the same second Sillman sent a bullet crashing through "Shorty's" left breast, and he fell dead at the sheriff's feet.

For a moment it looked like the sheriff and his deputy would be shot to pieces by "Shorty's" infuriated companions, but a quick, determined stand with their six-shooters in the face of the enraged cow punchers gave time for parley.

"This is not your funeral, boys," said Laren. "This man 'Shorty' is a hardened criminal, and only got what is coming to him. He threw in with your bunch to escape being arrested. It is all right for you to stay with a friend, and I would consider that you were 'white-livered' curs if you deserted a friend. But I know you do not wish to shield a horse thief and a murderer."

"No," said Heck Thomas, the trail boss, "we don't want to line up with any horse thief and murderer, sheriff, but we'll sure stick to a white cuss when he's down on his luck."

"That's right, boys; come in and take a drink on me," said Laren.

This closed the incident, with the exception that Justice Steele held an inquest, and "Shorty's" remains were buried on "Bootleg" hill.

During the first six months of his term Laren did more to quell lawlessness than any man who served the people as sheriff, before or since his time.

During his term of office the government advertised for bids to furnish the garrison with fresh beef, and Laren and Sillman were awarded the contract. This required a supply of three beeves each day.

Sillman, up to the time of his appointment as Laren's deputy, was an all-around sport, horse trader, gambler and three-card man. Consequently, he had an extensive acquaintance with most all the shady tricks practiced in the Flat, and the shady citizens who practiced them.

It was not long after Laren and Sillman secured the beef contract and began to deliver the meat at the post until ranchmen in the vicinity began to lose some of their fat steers. But for some time it was charged to cattle rustlers, who were known to cut out a bunch on the open range and drive them off to some distant market. But by reason of the fact that Laren only owned a small herd and Sillman none, and that they had never purchased any cattle, suspicion was aroused and investigation followed. Of course, this was carried on secretly, but nothing developed to confirm the suspicion except the character of the men employed by Laren and Sillman. But Laren was defeated at the end of his first term of office, and Bill Cruger was elected.

As soon as Cruger qualified, the ranchmen, including Laren's father-in-law and brothers-in-law, began a thorough investigation.

To lend zest to the search for evidence, it was reported that two men who built a mile of stone fence for Laren had mysteriously disappeared without being paid for their labor, and suspicion pointed to foul play.

With the aid of Sheriff Cruger and his deputies some

tangible evidence was secured that led to the dragging of a deep water hole in the Clear Fork, not far from the fort.

To the surprise of every one, about 200 hides were discovered bearing the marks and brands of ranchmen living in the vicinity. Thus the chain of circumstances began to wind, slowly but surely, around Laren and Sillman. About this time a "nester" by the name of Lancaster, who furnished the sheriff with the information leading to the dragging of the deep water hole, disappeared from his home one morning, and as he did not return before night, his frightened wife appealed to the sheriff for assistance. Deputy Jim Draper was sent out with a posse to hunt for Lancaster. It was the morning after his disappearance that Lancaster was discovered, wounded and concealed in the brakes along the river. Lancaster said that Laren and Sillman followed him for several miles, and when he ran, trying to escape, they fired on him as he dashed over the bank, and that he was afraid to return home and endanger his family. Lancaster was carried to his home to pacify his wife, then taken to Albany, where he swore to a complaint before Kentuck, justice of the peace of Precinct No. 1, charging John M. Laren and John Sillman with assault with intent to murder. Kentuck issued the proper warrant and placed it in the hands of Sheriff Cruger, who summoned a posse of twenty-five men, as it had been rumored that Laren could summon to his aid at least twenty well-armed men.

The sheriff and his posse marched across the open prairie during the night and arrived at Laren's ranch an hour before daylight, concealing themselves near the corral. Among the cattlemen Laren was known to be a dead shot with a six-shooter, and Cruger and his men did not care to take any chances on his capture.

Fate seemed to play into the hands of the sheriff's posse, for Laren came out with the milking pail, having forgotten to buckle on his six-shooter. When he came within close range the sheriff and his men covered him with their guns and demanded his surrender.

"Boys, it is the first time you ever caught me without my gun, or any chance to secure it. I'll give you \$500 to allow my wife to bring my gun to me, and I will take my chances with the whole bunch. Oh, I know, you are too big cowards to face me without all the odds in your favor."

"All that reckless talk will do you no good now, Laren. We don't intend to sacrifice any lives to please your desire for a fight," replied Sheriff Cruger.

Three men, at the command of the sheriff, handcuffed Laren and forced him to mount a horse, securely fastening his legs beneath the saddle.

The posse, with their prisoner, then took up their line of march via Griffin for Albany. In Griffin there was an angry demonstration made by Laren's friends, and for a time it looked like there might be a clash between opposing forces, but the State rangers lined up with the sheriff and overawed the lawless element.

The county of Shackelford had not built a jail at that time, and when the posse arrived in Albany with their prisoner it was necessary to place Laren under guard with the other prisoners in a box house.

In the meantime Laren's wife arrived with a young lawyer from Griffin, named John W. Wray. It was near sunset when they arrived, and Wray at once began negotiations to obtain bail for the prisoner.

About the same hour deputy sheriff Jim Draper returned from a scout after Sillman and reported that he had disappeared, but that it was rumored that he was

recruiting a desperate band to attack the guards and rescue Laren.

This information produced considerable excitement and caused the sheriff to double the guards and organize a reserve to come to their assistance in the event of an attack.

The young lawyer, John W. Wray (now a wealthy citizen of Fort Worth), made a brave effort to have Laren released on bond, but Kentuck told him that it was too late in the evening to hold a preliminary trial, and refused to grant bail without a hearing.

"But, your Honor," said Wray, "we will place \$1,200 in gold in your hands if you will give us the privilege of guarding him at the hotel over night."

"Do you understand what that proposition means, Wray?"

"It only means, your Honor, that we guarantee his presence in court to-morrow."

"No, I am sorry to say, Wray, that your proposition spells bribery; and if it were not that the peculiar situation restrains me from giving forcible demonstration of my feelings, I would make it a personal matter with you."

"But I beg your pardon, your Honor; I have good reasons to believe that my client's life is in danger from the Vigilance Committee, and I want to make every effort to protect him."

"On the contrary, Wray, I have the best of reasons to believe that Sillman's gang will try to rescue Laren, and I do not propose to interfere with Sheriff Cruger's arrangements to hold the prisoner. I understand that he has already doubled the guards, and holds ten men in reserve."

"Well, your Honor, if Laren is killed during the night,

I will not be responsible for it; I have tried to do my duty."

"No one can censure you for being true to your client, Wray. And I am also conscious of performing my duty as a State officer."

During this conversation, in the rear of the old picket court room, a representative of the Vigilance Committee had his ear glued to a crack in the wall, and he listened to every word. And years afterward Kentuck was informed by a reliable gentleman that had he yielded to Wray's proposition he, too, would have paid the penalty of indiscretion with his life.

As night approached Sheriff Cruger and the guards ran a chain through the manacles of the prisoners and locked it to a large staple in the wall. Preparations were then made to repel an attack from Sillman's gang. No one seemed to suspect that the Vigilance Committee was rendezvousing about six miles east of town.

In the dusky hours of the twilight, sixteen miles away in the valley of the Clear Fork, twenty-five well-armed men on swift horses, led by John Sillman, rode to the rescue of their comrade, John Laren.

An hour later the tramp of the Vigilance Committee, seventy-five strong, could be heard on the trail approaching the town, determined to visit summary justice on the same man.

Like the calm before the storm, the little village of Albany lay quietly sleeping 'neath the starlit sky, while the converging forces neared a common goal.

John Poe, one of the guards, looked at his watch and announced 11:30 p. m.

On the outskirts of the town the Vigilance Committee halted and sent forward a scout to view the situation. He returned and reported that at that moment the guards

were all within the house except Poe, who was on the opposite side.

At this hour a heavy mist arose and was hanging over the valley. Taking advantage of a grove of mesquite trees, the committee moved slowly forward, and with great caution approached the guardhouse for fear of disturbing the inmates. One light shone from a window in the Shield's hotel, where Laren's wife kept vigil during the lonely hours of the night. Down in the valley of North Prong, west of the town, a body of horsemen were riding to a grove under the bluff, where they could dismount and tie their horses.

Up at the guardhouse Poe turned around and faced the door, preparatory to announcing 12 o'clock and change of guards. Three stalwart masked men emerged from the darkness, pinioned Poe's arms and secured his weapons. Fifteen or twenty more rushed the door and entered the house before the remainder of the guards could resist.

Down in the grove Sillman and his men were tying their horses and holding a hasty consultation, preparatory to an attack to release Laren.

In the guardhouse sharp, quick words of command were uttered by the leader of the committee.

Laren raised himself upon his elbow and with his black, flashing eyes tried to penetrate the masks. The other prisoners rolled as far away from him as the chain would permit, and turning upon their stomachs hid their faces in their arms.

"Laren," said the leader of the committee, "the time has come for you to pass in your checks. You have led a dual life on the range and in resorts of the Flat. You were associated with a gang that did your dirty work. Hundreds of head of beef steers were stolen, butchered

and their hides thrown in a hole in the Clear Fork near your ranch. You are now under arrest for trying to assassinate Lancaster. Suspicion strongly points to you as the murderer of Wilks and Jones, who built your stone fence. Have you anything to say?"

"Nothing in the world to say to your cowardly gang," replied Laren. "You have sneaked up here in the dark, while I am a prisoner, chained and unarmed. If you will free me and hand me a Colt's 45, I'll fight the whole outfit. And I will assure you there will be a new leader to appoint at the head of your gang. But I know there is no use parleying with you; go ahead; I'll take my medicine straight."

"Well, Laren, in recognition of some of your qualities when you were an officer, we have decided not to hang you, but will use our shooting irons. Step up, boys, and perform your duty."

Eleven men filed in front of their leader and leveled their Winchesters at the doomed man.

West of the village, on the edge of the bluff, one of Sillman's men was reconnoitering when the volley from the detail of Vigilantes crashed out on the night air and announced the death of Laren.

At the same moment a piercing scream rang out on the hotel veranda, and Laren's wife ran across the intervening space to the guardhouse, crying, "They have killed him!" She made her way through the crowd and swooned over his dead body.

One of the scouts of the Vigilance Committee sighted Sillman's gang, but before he could report and the committee make a charge on them, the wily leader and his men were in their saddles riding west in the darkness, exchanging shots with their pursuers until they outdistanced them and disappeared.

Kentuck, sleeping in the attic of Jackson's storeroom, was aroused by the sound of the volley that killed Laren, and rushed to the window as John Poe hurried by.

"What is the racket, John?"

"Laren has been killed by the Vigilantes, Kentuck."

"But I thought you expected Sillman to attempt a rescue."

"So we did, but the Vigilantes arrived first, killed Laren and then chased Sillman's gang toward the mountains, but they were too well mounted and escaped."

"Where is the Vigilance Committee now?"

"Gone east."

"Then there is nothing more doing to-night?"

"No; it is all off, Kentuck, and you might as well go back and turn in; we will need your services in the morning to hold the inquest."

But the suppressed excitement was too much to permit sleep, and Kentuck dressed and joined the guard to learn the details of the shooting.

Laren's wife was carried to her room in the hotel and the corpse was laid out upon the guardhouse mess board.

Early the next morning, after Kentuck had viewed the remains of Laren, and rendered a verdict that the deceased came to his death by gunshot wounds inflicted by parties unknown, the body was turned over to his wife, who secured a hack, and in company with Lawyer Wray and an escort of deputies furnished by the sheriff, took the trail for Fort Griffin, where a coffin was procured and arrangements made to conduct the funeral at the Laren ranch, where a tombstone marks the grave to-day.

The day following the funeral Sheriff Cruger summoned a posse and started in pursuit of the Sillman gang. But after trailing them west 100 miles, the gang scattered, Sillman and two others striking out across the country in the direction of El Paso.

Six years after these events Captain Arrington and his rangers captured Sillman on the western cow trail, brought him in and lodged him in the Albany jail, but while under escort of the officers at Fort Griffin trying to secure bail, he again escaped, going to Old Mexico.

Nothing more was seen or heard of him until fifteen years later, when he came into public notice in El Paso as a policeman who killed the notorious John Wesley Harding. A few months later Sillman was killed in conflict with a State ranger.

In this manner came the end of two of the desperate men who made local history at old Fort Griffin.

John Laren was a veritable "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde." He neither drank, swore nor used tobacco, and was a perfect gentleman in the presence of ladies. But there can be no doubt that he took part in some of the most fiendish acts of cruelty in those lawless days. Many things came to light after his death that people were afraid to disclose while he lived.

And now, reader, before we pass on and become interested in other events set forth in this book, and lest we forget to do justice to the brave men of the frontier of Texas, who, in the absence of protection under the law, were forced to band themselves together for the mutual protection of their lives and their property, you and I will do well to stop and take an impartial view of the work of the Vigilance Committee.

The country, at the time of the organization, swarmed with bad men composed largely of renegades fleeing from justice in the older States of the Union, who left a bloody trail behind them and came to Texas hoping to escape, but generally ended, dying with their boots on, resisting the officers, or reaped the vengeance of the Vigilance Committee for atrocious crime.

Outside of the military reservation of Fort Griffin, where the commander of the post reigned supreme, very little authority existed. Nominally, it is true, there were civil officers charged with enforcing the laws, but, in fact, without power to carry them into effect.

When it is understood that the honest, legitimate citizens were in the minority and scattered over a large area, while the thieves, robbers and murderers were banded together and did not hesitate to testify falsely in court or waylay and kill witnesses to prevent conviction, the necessity to organize a Vigilance Committee to rid the community of these lawless characters when the law was impotent, at once becomes apparent.

So far as the memory of Kentuck extended, he did not remember a single instance of the wrongful use of the power of the Vigilance Committee that operated around Fort Griffin.

But on the contrary, whereas before the committee was organized bold depredations were committed and no redress obtained, six months thereafter life and property were as safe as in the most law-abiding community in the East.

Lynch law should only be appealed to in an emergency, when the conditions admit of no choice between suffering the effects of outrages or summarily removing their cause.

CHAPTER VI

LEADBETTER'S SALT WORKS

The report of guns and clash of arms echo from the canyon wall,
And shouts of victory mingle with dying groans as foemen fall.

A CHAPTER OF THRILLING EVENTS AND NARROW ESCAPES
IN THE EARLY DAYS

Leadbetter's Salt Works was for ten years the outpost, or, more properly speaking, the point farthest west between the white settlements and the wild Indian country of Northwest Texas.

The works were located on the head of Salt creek, eight miles west of the town of Albany, on an old military trail that ran through a gap in the mountain range, used as a common highway by both the white settlers and the Indians traveling to and fro to the open prairie in the direction of Old Phantom hill.

The works were in a small valley, surrounded by rugged mountain scenery, near a deep water hole, fed by a strong saline spring, where the water was raised by a force pump into large iron kettles and boiled until crystallized into salt.

The discovery of this spring was traditional among the Indians, and by reason of it being a resort for the wild animals, became the favorite hunting ground for the Comanche tribe.

The scarcity of the necessaries of life during the Civil war, and especially salt, that was transported a long distance, made the discovery of this spring by the white

settlers a source of much importance to the Confederate forces in North Texas, and a company of rangers were stationed at the works.

Several families took advantage of this arrangement and settled in the little valley and made a profit manufacturing salt for the market. During the closing year of the war all the families returned to their homes except the Leadbetters.

Consequently, there was almost a continuous warfare between the Leadbetter men and the roving bands of Comanches. This necessitated the building of three blockhouses within easy range of the big kettles.

The importance of this supply of salt was so great that the commander at Fort Griffin loaned Leadbetter a "six-pounder" cannon to defend the works.

But it is not the intention of the author of this volume to give a history of the series of conflicts that took place during the twelve years from 1865 to 1878 at the salt works.

Following up the thread of this narrative, it will be interesting to know that the details were told by W. H. Leadbetter and his wife to Kentuck during his visits to the scene.

It will be remembered that in a previous chapter describing the operations of the Vigilance Committee, mention was made of Cato, the renegade negro husband of Indian Kate.

Therefore, contemporaneous with events heretofore related, a band of twenty-five Comanches, led by Cato, attacked the salt works one bright moonlight night.

When attacked on this occasion Leadbetter and his wife and their children were in the blockhouse used as the family residence.

Mrs. Leadbetter loaded the guns while the Judge fired

through the loopholes at the Indians, who were making an effort to break into the storehouse where the supplies were kept. But by the aid of a crossfire from the bunkhouse where the men slept, the Indians, after a determined attack, were compelled to retreat, carrying off their wounded, including the negro Cato.

The next morning, while Leadbetter and his men were burying the four dead Indians, Lieutenant Turner, in command of a squad of cavalry and a band of Tonkawa scouts, arrived from Fort Griffin on the trail of the Indians. Halting long enough to prepare a hasty breakfast, and feed and water their horses, the troops pushed on after the Comanches.

It was the second day after the salt works fight, when Lieutenant Turner's scouts discovered smoke ascending from an arroyo near Mountain pass. Chief Johnson and two of his scouts pushed on to reconnoiter. The sun had disappeared, and a few of the brighter stars were twinkling in the sky when the Chief returned.

"Comanches heap tired; him squaws put tepees close to water hole; young warriors herd ponies under bluff; old warriors around council fire; no look back and see white soldiers on trail; white chief can crawl up; wait till the moon come up; go down upon the Comanches like mighty wind—shoot—heap kill—Tonkawa scalp bad Indians—ugh!"

Lieutenant Turner listened to Chief Johnson's brief report in silence while he smoked his pipe, then arose and sent for the sergeant.

"Sergeant Jones, put three men on guard and quietly pass the word to the men to roll up in their blankets and take a few hours' rest.

"Johnson, send Crowfoot up on the mountain to keep a sharp lookout in the direction of the Comanches.

"No fires to-night, Sergeant. Tell the boys to eat hard-tack and jerked beef and wash it down with water from their canteens; have the guard call me two hours before day. Good-night."

The only sound that followed this command was a low murmur as the word was passed among the soldiers.

Promptly at the appointed hour the lieutenant and his men were awakened and the order given to saddle, mount and fall in.

With dispatch born of discipline, these well-trained soldiers were soon ready for their silent march. Like specters in the weird starlight, the Tonkawa scouts led the way across the open prairie, carefully avoiding the high, rocky ground that would give forth sounds to alarm the enemy's camp.

Arriving near where the ground sloped to the arroyo, Chief Johnson held up his hand as a signal to halt. The Chief and the lieutenant held a brief consultation and determined to send an Indian scout to reconnoiter before advancing. If the scout reported the Comanches still sleeping, the command would move on quietly until discovered, then make a dash on the camp, and kill and capture the entire band if possible.

Tonkawa Charley was sent forward to spy out the situation. He was absent perhaps twenty minutes and returned to report all quiet.

So many phantom figures they seemed, floating down the gentle slope to the edge of the arroyo overlooking the silent scene below. Almost incredible to relate, Turner's scouts and soldiers approached so near without causing alarm that it seemed that even the dogs failed to scent their approach.

The gray streaks of dawn were tinging the eastern sky when the decisive moment arrived. Advancing in open

formation, the command encircled as near as possible the Indian camp to minimize their chances of escape.

“Charge, double quick!”

Like an avenging spirit riding on the wings of a storm, the soldiers and Tonkawas charged down the side of the arroyo, shooting, yelling and riding down the surprised Comanches before they could secure their arms and ponies. Those not shot down in the first onslaught rallied around their chief, and with the courage of desperation fought their way to the mouth of the canyon and escaped southwest. The fight at the camp did not last over ten minutes, the Indians leaving nine dead and three wounded on the field, including the negro Cato. Lieutenant Turner and the soldiers dashed on after the fleeing Comanches, keeping up a running fight for an hour longer. The Tonkawas remained behind, killed the wounded and scalped those left on the field.

This severe punishment broke up those moonlight raids for about twelve months, giving Leadbetter and his good wife a respite.

Not only is “eternal vigilance the price of liberty,” but in an Indian country it is the price the settlers pay for safety.

Consequently, notwithstanding Judge Leadbetter’s vivid realization from experience, of the necessity of always being on guard against attack from his predatory visitors, he allowed himself to be lulled into security and relaxed many of the ordinary precautions that he had always taken in defense of his family and property.

The months rolled by and there was every indication that the Indians had abandoned the Salt creek trail, and Leadbetter and his wife allowed their family more liberty.

Time ran smoothly along without any unusual event

until November. With the help of other ranchmen Judge J. C. Lynch had established a school at his home ranch on Hubbard's creek, and those living too far away to ride to and fro during the day boarded their children with the Judge's family. Among the little fellows that made up the boarders was Johnny Leadbetter, a shy child who did not take kindly to restraint. He had a peculiar habit of wandering off by himself, notwithstanding the admonitions of his teacher and Mrs. Lynch.

One evening he slipped away so quietly that he was not missed until twilight and when searched for, no traces of the missing lad could be found. A courier was dispatched immediately to inform Judge Leadbetter and his family of the sad occurrence, and Judge Lynch summoned all men on the ranch to circle the home range in hope of finding the lost boy. It was about midnight when the courier arrived at the salt works with the sad news. And if anything could have added to the sorrow of the bereaved parents it was the discovery by the Judge late in the evening of Indian signs down by the creek. The probability that their son would be captured or killed by the redskins added a load of grief they could hardly bear. But there was no time for tears and lamentations, for there was a remote possibility of finding him wandering on the prairie.

The courier sent out from Lynch's ranch was sent on to the Clear Fork to notify the Reynolds and Matthews ranch people to join in the search for the lost boy and notify the commander at Fort Griffin to send out a scouting party.

After the departure of the messenger for the Clear Fork, hasty preparations were made for an early start to join the Lynch party at the rendezvous in Cow valley. And, notwithstanding the anxiety of the Judge to be off,

essential necessities must be prepared: Guns, ammunition and horses for the outfit; blankets, frying-pan, coffee pot, tin cups and a supply of grub. There were only three available men at the salt works—Leadbetter, Thornton and Reynolds. It was agreed that Leadbetter and Thornton would take the trail at daylight and Reynolds would remain and guard the women and children. There was a hasty consultation between Leadbetter and his wife, then he and Thornton started out in the uncertain light to secure horses for the search on the morrow. The fact that they were familiar with the range and that the ponies were hobbled out obviated the necessity of waiting until morning to find them. In the meantime, Mrs. Leadbetter, weeping silent tears, moved listlessly around her humble home, making the necessary preparations for the journey.

The streaks of dawn were appearing in the eastern sky when Leadbetter and Thornton returned with the ponies. The light broadened and a red-purple hue cast a halo of glory along the horizon and the first rays of the sun made the pearly drops of dew scintillate like diamonds.

It was an ideal morning, but the beauties of nature appealed not to the parents as they stood on the thresh-old to say good-by.

There was a hasty embrace and a smothered sigh as the husband parted from his faithful wife to go forth on his sad journey.

The sun in his course had risen above Kiowa peak, when Leadbetter and Thornton struck out in a beeline for the ford on Hubbard's creek at the crossing on the old McKinzie trail. The ponies being fresh, they urged them on in a brisk trot over the undulating surface of the open prairie until they arrived at the brakes of Hubbard valley. Here the safety of both ponies and riders

required care in making their way through the underbrush of the foothills leading to the valley below.

So preoccupied was Leadbetter with his thoughts that he and Thornton had ridden ten miles in silence, and perhaps the silence would have continued but for the startling report of firearms in the ring of trees that bordered the stream. "Listen," said the Judge, as he tightened the reins and forced his pony to halt. Thornton also reined in his pony and the two kept a sharp look-out in the direction from whence the sounds came. Intermittent firing was kept up for a few minutes, then a man was seen to break cover and dash across a small open space to a liveoak surrounded by a thicket. As he gained the shelter of the thicket three puffs of smoke arose from the trees and three painted warriors dashed into the opening and began to circle the thicket. The fight was on in earnest now, and Leadbetter and Thornton forced their ponies into a run, and at the risk of their lives dashed down the steep hillside to the rescue. When within range they began to shoot at the Indians, who took alarm and escaped up the valley. Hearing nothing and seeing no movement in the thicket, Leadbetter and Thornton dismounted and entered the thicket, where they found George Hazlewood dying from a wound in the breast. He did not gain consciousness after their arrival, and in a few moments drew his last breath, and one more name was added to the long list of victims who blazed the path of civilization and made it possible to build thousands of happy homes in Northwest Texas.

Having no instrument with which to dig a grave, Hazlewood's body was tied to Thornton's pony, which he led, and they moved slowly up the valley to the McKinzie crossing, where they arrived in time for the noonday meal which Lynch and his cowboys were cooking over a campfire.

While sitting on the ground partaking of the frugal meal, Leadbetter and Thornton related the details, so far as they knew, of the last stand of Hazlewood in the liveoak thicket. At that time no one seemed to have an idea of how he came to be in the valley, but after canvassing the situation they came to the conclusion that he was hunting horses. But later, it was found that Ed. Tucker, who carried the news of Johnny Leadbetter's disappearance to the salt works and, by request of the parents, rode on to the Clear Fork, had met Hazlewood returning from the fort and informed him about the lost boy. Hazlewood expressed a determination to join Lynch and the cowboys at the crossing, and was on his way when attacked.

With a mattock and shovel carried with the utensils on the pack mule for a like emergency in case they found the remains of the boy mutilated by the Indians, Hazlewood's body was buried.

This sad occurrence made every one in the outfit recognize the necessity of moving with more caution, and to keep a sharp lookout for an ambush. If Tucker went through to the Clear Fork in safety, they could reasonably expect the men from the Matthews and Reynolds ranches to camp with them in Cow valley at sunset.

It was the close of the evening, and the sun's fiery crest was sinking behind dark clouds when the outfit broke camp in Cow valley.

They were now on an elevated plateau where they could see the surrounding country for miles in all directions, and it was the part of good judgment to halt long enough to take observations.

It did not take these experienced plainsmen long to convince themselves that nothing suspicious presented itself, and that they must hasten if they wished to ar-

rive at the deep water hole at the old Gonzolas ranch before darkness set in. The unspoken question uppermost in each man's mind as they began to descend into the valley was, Would the Matthews and Reynolds outfit arrive on time?

Judge Leadbetter, always in the lead, eager and alert, halted on a knoll and beckoned Lynch to his side.

"Lynch, is that not a bunch of horses across Dry branch, near the old bed-ground, just to the left of the rocky ledge? Your eyes are better than mine—take a look. What do you see?"

"You are right, Judge, and if my eyes do not deceive me, they are hopped out. I'm certain they are not Indian ponies or they would be loose herded by a warrior."

"Then Joe Matthews and Ben Reynolds are already in camp and we must hasten on."

Gathering up the reins they spurred on their tired ponies down the gentle slope through the broom weeds, in a straight line for the camping place.

The last streaks of daylight were fading and the stars were sparkling in the sky when they reined in their ponies and dismounted near the Matthews-Reynolds camp.

There were greetings all around, the ponies unsaddled and hopped, and turned loose on the grass. Abundance to supply the wants of the inner man was set before the hungry men. When all were satisfied and pipes lighted for the evening's smoke, the probability of the boy being still alive and captured by the Indians seemed to be the most reasonable conclusion of the disappearance of Johnny Leadbetter.

Accepting this as a basis, plans were discussed for his rescue. In the meantime Lieutenant Turner and five Tonkawas, including Chief Johnson, accompanied by Ed. Tucker and Luke McCabe, arrived in camp.

Being the dark of the moon, it was useless to attempt to continue the search during the night. Consequently, arrangements were perfected by which a guard of four men were selected to loose herd the ponies and keep a sharp lookout for Indians. These men would be relieved at midnight. By unanimous consent Lieutenant Turner took command of the outfit.

The pipes had been refilled and an animated discussion indulged in around the camp fire relative to the best way to protect life and property against the marauding bands that were continually preying on the settlers. Some suggested that the killing off of the buffalo, that had been so long the Indian's commissary, would end the raids. Others favored the government's plan of keeping them on a reservation, and, in addition to the present restrictions, to deprive them of the privilege of sending out hunting parties.

During the conversation indulged in by the white men, that bronze-faced old Indian warrior, Chief Johnson, sat in silence with the rings of smoke curling up from his long-stem pipe, without any indication that he heard, much less followed, the argument. He was leaning against the gnarled trunk of a liveoak tree. A leader of men, a brave and daring scout, Johnson was one of those noble red men who had withstood the temptations of civilization and retained all the manly vigor of his primitive race. He was more than six feet tall, with all the easy grace of an athlete. It was said that his mother was a Comanche squaw, captured during one of the early battles between the tribes, who became the wife of the Tonkawa medicine man Campo. Be that as it may, when Johnson was a young warrior he distinguished himself in a fight at the Adobe Walls and was made war chief of the Tonkawa tribes.



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The camp fire had burned low, a faint breeze from the south was stirring the leaves, when Leadbetter, who had the greatest respect for the chief's judgment, turned to Johnson and said:

"Johnson, tell me what Indian think?"

Taking his pipe from his mouth and tapping it lightly upon the stock of his gun, Johnson slowly arose to his feet and said:

"White man, he make heap chin music—Indian no much talk, him trail, him go ahead—white man him great mind, heap powwow, make medicine—Indian scout see bad Indian moccasin tracks, him follow, white man come behind—scout see many bad Indians over hill, crawl up, hear heap bad powwow, come back tell white man—bad Indians him not see—white man him come in night—heap noise, heap big fight."

The circle around the camp fire now broke up, and all save the guard rolled up in their blankets and were soon asleep.

Midnight, change of the guards, and the camp was in profound silence, except for that indescribable hum of nature that pervades the night air in a prairie country; 3 o'clock, streaks of the morning light—once more the camp was filled with the noise of awakened men preparing for a strenuous day of activity.

Breakfast over, a hasty consultation between Turner, Leadbetter and Chief Johnson, then a hurrying to and fro, saddling ponies, packing the camp equipment and they were ready to go.

On over the prairie, led by Johnson, they moved along and at each crossing of the buffalo trail they paused to examine for Indian signs, and it was noon again when they came in sight of Uncle George Greer's ranch at the crossing of the old Overland trail on Hubbard's creek.

For years this had been one of the stage stands where the horses were changed and passengers enjoyed such accommodations as the meager supplies afforded.

The stage stand was kept by Uncle George Greer, more as a convenience for himself and neighboring ranchmen than with any expectation of a profit. Through this medium they received their mail and such supplies in the way of medicine and such articles as could be conveniently carried by the driver.

This gave Uncle George a wide reputation for hospitality, which he never failed to carry out.

Consequently, when the outfit halted for the noonday meal, Uncle George insisted on killing a fat yearling for the occasion.

He reported that he had discovered fresh Indian tracks that morning at the crossing, but so many cattle had been there since that no trace was now visible.

After comparing notes, all agreed that the Indians had scattered into small prowling bands, over the Hubbard, North and South Prong valleys, with the intention of rounding up at some central point with a bunch of stolen horses. Therefore, it became necessary for Lieutenant Turner to divide his men into scouting parties, and if they did not overtake any of the Comanches, they were to follow the trails to the Indian rendezvous. This seemed to be the only plan to find traces of the lost boy, provided that he had been captured. Jim and Cal Greer, sons of Uncle George, joined the little band led by Judge Leadbetter, numbering five, including Chief Johnson and Sub-Chief Charley.

As the Judge was anxious about the safety of his wife, he was given the privilege of pushing on to the Salt Creek valley.

Two miles from the Greer ranch Johnson found pony

tracks that he declared were Comanche signs. With Johnson and Charley in the lead, they followed the trail to the mouth of North Prong, where it emptied into Salt Prong. Here the accumulation of pony tracks indicated that the band Johnson had followed was joined by another band coming from the direction of where Hazlewood was killed, making a strong force for Leadbetter and his companions to attack.

A brief consultation was held, and although it required a detour from the original route marked out, Leadbetter determined to follow this trail up North Prong to see what new devilry the raiders were up to. At that time none of the cattlemen had established a home ranch on North Prong, although there were a few dugouts at the most convenient water holes along the stream occupied by the line riders during bad weather. The Comanches left a plain trail behind them, consequently, Leadbetter's outfit moved rapidly up the stream to a bend near where the town of Albany now stands. One of the deepest and longest water holes on North Prong was located at this bend. A low, flat mountain range ran from east to west and came within a quarter of a mile of a dense grove of trees and undergrowth of bushes on both banks of the water hole. Necessary caution was exercised in approaching this grove to avoid a possible ambush. Concealed from observation by the mesquite trees growing in the flat, Johnson and Charley were sent ahead to see if the Indians were in the grove. While waiting their return, Joe Batts and negro Andy, from the Snalum dugout, came in sight and soon joined the outfit. Within fifteen minutes Johnson and Charley returned and reported that the Comanches had watered their ponies at the hole and had gone on up the creek toward the divide between North Prong and Salt creek. On this assurance

Leadbetter's outfit rode into the grove. Evidently the Indians had ridden around the bluff and doubled on their trail, for when Leadbetter's outfit had watered, and rode on to the edge of the thicket facing the mountains, the Comanches came charging down the valley, yelling and shooting. Taken by surprise and entangled among the catclaws and bushes, Leadbetter's men were thrown into confusion, and each man broke for cover and shielded himself as best he could. Negro Andy was shot through the left arm, but fortunately no one was killed. Instead of returning to the attack, the Comanches galloped on down the valley, and swinging to the right passed out of sight in the direction of the salt works. As soon as Leadbetter and his companions could clear the thicket, they rode up a steep cow trail to the top of the mountain and dashed at full speed across the divide, hoping to arrive before the Indians could attack the almost defenseless works.

When they mounted to the level on the table land, the Comanches were in sight two miles to the left, gradually circling toward the works. By making a dash in a straight line, Leadbetter had the advantage by one-half mile.

The importance of being first to arrive at the cut through the rock ledge leading into the salt works canyon seemed to be equally as well understood by the Indians as it was by the white men in this wild race across the flat top of the mountain. Once over the brow of the mountain among the shelving rocks, "one could hold ten, and ten put a hundred to flight."

As the converging lines of the Indians and the whites were drawing near the goal it became evident that a running fight could not be avoided.

Already the Comanches were within shooting distance

of the Spencer carbines of the Leadbetter party, but they did not care to take chances on wasting ammunition. The Indians, too, although they unslung their rifles and were prepared to give the white men a warm reception, were loth to begin the fight.

Johnson, knowing the great odds against the Leadbetter party, said, "Leadbetter, me shoot, kill him Comanche Chief. Bad Indians all stop and powwow; white man he go over mountain; bad Indian he no follow."

"All right, Johnson, shoot!"

The old chief raised his rifle to his shoulder and fired, but the distance being greater than his calculations, the bullet ranged down and killed the chief's horse. But this had the desired effect, for, during the confusion among the Comanches that followed, the white men reached the cut through the rock bluff and dashed over the edge of the steep decline, amid a harmless shower of bullets.

The Comanches gave up any further attempt and detoured farther west, where the ground was more favorable for descent, and did not return in the vicinity of the salt works, preferring to strike the trail higher up the canyon. In the meantime, Leadbetter and his men arrived at the ranch and found everything safe.

Mrs. Leadbetter had lived too long on the frontier to ask useless questions, and merely shook her head when asked if there were any tidings from the other searching parties.

After a brief rest Leadbetter and his men pushed on to the head of the canyon to the final rendezvous of the searching parties.

It was noon again the third day after Johnny Leadbetter's disappearance, when Lieutenant Turner, the Tonkawas and the friends and neighbors of Judge Leadbetter, assembled on the open prairie where the trail passed out of Salt Creek canyon.

No traces of the boy had been found, and all agreed that the Comanches had passed out of the valley into the open country, and, as the outfit was not prepared for a long journey, the search was abandoned.

The rocks at the head of the canyon were casting long shadows down the trail when Bill Leadbetter came in sight of his humble home, in the valley of Salt creek, where for the past ten years he had braved the hardships of frontier life. He could see his wife's figure in front of the door, with her hand shading her eyes as she looked up the trail, and his heart sank within him when he contemplated the sorrowful greeting of his home-coming.

The years passed by, but no tidings ever came to the parents from their lost boy, and his fate is a sealed mystery to this day, notwithstanding that on one occasion, several years afterward, a strange young man tried to establish his claim to being the lost Johnny Leadbetter.

Some time during the year 1879 Judge Leadbetter abandoned the salt works and moved to his ranch on the Clear Fork above Fort Griffin, where his descendants still live.

CHAPTER VII

THE ADVENT OF "TEXAS"

He came from the South like a knight of old,
This native-born Texan so noble and so bold.

After remaining six months in Fort Griffin, Kentuck was offered and accepted the position of justice of the peace of Precinct No. 1, including the county seat, the embryo town of Albany, near the center of the county.

This was a town by name only, consisting of three picket houses with dirt tops, and a long, rambling barn constructed with pickets, by courtesy called the courthouse.

It was July, the midsummer of Northwest Texas, when Kentuck took charge of the office and settled down to the humdrum life foreshadowed by a lack of legal business.

About this time there arrived in Albany a young man nicknamed "Texas," by reason of the fact that he came from a town in Southern Texas, where he was born, raised and graduated. Texas and Kentuck became fast friends and boon companions, and for ten years active participants in passing events.

Texas was a whole-souled young man, generous to a fault; brave and true, always ready to back up a friend or face an enemy.

Soon after his arrival on the frontier he secured employment as a cowboy on Lyle's ranch, where he made a host of friends and a few bitter enemies.

A few months after he began work it became generally known that he had fallen in love with the ranchman's pretty daughter, Mollie, and that she showed her preference for this bold, dashing cow puncher, who accompanied her on many a wild race over the prairie. But their courtship proved the truth of the old adage, "that the course of true love never runs smooth." For not only did Texas have rivals for the fair hand of the vivacious Mollie, but her parents, especially her father, objected to his attentions. But Texas was made of a nature as true as steel. And notwithstanding he was discharged and told that he could serve a better purpose by leaving the range, he remained in Albany in defiance of the irate father and threatening rivals.

On more than one occasion a casual remark made him drop his hand upon the handle of his six-shooter and face his enemy with the cold glitter of steel in his eyes, but the kindly intervention of a mutual friend always smoothed over the quarrel that only needed a spark to burst into a flame.

The greater the effort of the ranchman to break the attachment of Texas and Mollie, the more determined were the lovers to overcome the difficulties thrown in their way. Many were their trysting places, and the hollow of an old liveoak on the open prairie did duty as post office.

One of Texas' most bitter enemies was Sam O'Carry, Ranchman Lyle's range boss, who foresaw in a marriage between Texas and Mollie a chance of being superseded. Consequently, he never lost an opportunity of throwing out a covert insult when Texas formed one of a group of men.

O'Carry had the name of being a bad man, and it was reported that he had more than one notch on the handle of his gun to remember the demise of those who opposed

him. One condition of the game was in Texas' favor, and that was that the majority of Lyle's cowboys were his personal friends, and were sure to warn him of O'Carry's threats. Of course, instead of pacifying matters, the good intentions of these friends only aggravated the situation. In the meantime O'Carry came to the conclusion that Texas was afraid of him, and began to push his hatred on to the point of action, no doubt encouraged by Lyle with the hope of being rid of this determined young man.

The climax came one bright day in the fall of the year. Texas and Kentuck were returning from a ride up the valley of Salt Prong, where they had been shooting prairie chickens. As they approached the old Indian trail they saw one of Lyle's outfit, led by O'Carry, coming across the mesa. Ed. Zucker, one of the "flying buzzard" cowboys, had informed Texas the day before that O'Carry had boasted that both of them could not remain on the same range—one would be compelled to make tracks—there was not room for both.

Before they came within speaking distance Texas turned sideways in his saddle and remarked:

"Kentuck, I'm tired of this everlasting wrangle with old man Lyle. And especially I am tired of the threats of this man O'Carry, who talks and acts the part of a cowardly bully. I haven't any doubt that if he had the 'drop' on me he would not hesitate to kill me in cold blood. Men like O'Carry generally get their reputation that way. But I don't believe that he will stand up, man to man, and take an even chance. Therefore, Kentuck, I'm going to call his hand to-day, and if he antes, one of us will leave this range. If it should be me, old man, send this package of letters to Mollie; tell her how it happened, then write to the old folks in Southern Texas.

Now, here they come—No, not one word of protest, Kentuck; my mind is made up.”

Shifting his six-shooter to an easy position for quick action, Texas rode deliberately up to O’Carry, who, though surprised, dropped his hand to the handle of his six-shooter, pulled his horse to one side and stopped.

Texas looked him square in the eye, and said, “O’Carry, I have an account of long standing to settle with you. The longer it runs the bigger it seems to grow. I have come to the conclusion that now is a good time to close that account. You have made your boast that there is not room for both of us on this range. Of course, you must be prepared to make good, for you have a ‘rep’ to sustain. The question is, Are you ready?” Then, addressing Kentuck and Lyle’s cowboys, he continued: “Boys, this is not your quarrel; hands off and see fair play.”

O’Carry had not spoken a word, or even moved a muscle, except to blink his eyes, as though he did not understand.

In the meantime Texas had dismounted, and was untying a silk kerchief from around his neck. The cowboys and Kentuck pulled their ponies to one side and watched the two with anxious suspense, for the unwritten law of the frontier forbade them to interfere.

After removing his kerchief, Texas once more addressed O’Carry, in a cool, deliberate voice that seemed to carry a deadly message in every word:

“O’Carry, dismount if you are going to back up your ‘rep’ as a killer. Pull out your shooting iron and take hold of this kerchief. I’ll count three and we will begin to shoot and keep it up till one of us quits the range forever.”

It was the tragic moment, and all eyes were turned on

O'Carry, but he did not move. His ruddy countenance became ashen-gray. The silence became painful, but O'Carry seemed glued to his saddle and helpless as an infant.

Once more Texas' voice broke the stillness. This time it was one of contempt. And as he looked with scorn at the collapsed figure of O'Carry, he said, "O'Carry, I'm not going to crow over a coward. Your conduct will reap its own reward. You know what it is to show the 'white feather' on this range." Then, with the easy grace of the skilled rider, Texas remounted his pony, waved a farewell to the outfit and joined Kentuck and the two rode on to town.

The situation had been so tense that neither was inclined to talk and they rode the entire distance in silence.

News like this travels fast, even in a sparsely settled district on the frontier of Texas, and in an incredibly short time it was the one subject of conversation whenever two or more cowboys met on the range.

It was not long before it was known at Lyle's headquarters ranch on Hubbard creek. There was something of a scene when Mollie's admiration broke over all bounds and she openly defied parental authority and declared her intention of marrying Texas. Her mother, who had secretly encouraged her daughter from the start, now joined in the rebellion. Old man Lyle, an ex-soldier and scout, was a fine old Irish gentleman, and though he openly spluttered and fumed, secretly admired the bravery of his prospective son-in-law.

O'Carry only stopped long enough on his return to settle up, then joined a trail herd for Kansas.

From this time on Texas began to grow in grace and favor, not only among the cattlemen and cowboys, but with the county officials, and was appointed deputy county clerk.

The legitimate population of Albany was not more than twenty, all told, though on court days and gala occasions it was augmented into the hundreds. Texas had become very popular and a leading promoter of all kinds of amusements for the entertainment of the surrounding country. As soon as he became installed as deputy clerk, he began an active campaign for a three-days tournament.

This sport is peculiarly suited to frontier life and always appeals to the cowboy. To him it has all the charm of chivalry that induced the knights of old to break a lance in the arena, and he thinks nothing of riding hundreds of miles to be present on these occasions.

It was Kentuck's good fortune to be placed on the committee of arrangements, and for two months in advance the different committees were busy making preparations for the coming event. In the meantime, on every ranch within 200 miles of Albany the boys who desired to enter the contest had erected poles and were practicing and training their ponies.

The star riders of each outfit went into training for the coming contest. At least an hour each day was devoted to riding at full speed over a straight 150-yard track, and with a long wooden lance picking a ring each from five dangling wires, the rules requiring the contestant to ride over the course three times and secure five rings each time to make a perfect record.

By common consent Texas was chosen a free lance, to represent Albany. And almost every evening Kentuck watched him mount his favorite pony, a wiry little mustang that had a record in local races. Texas and Buckskin made an attractive picture, as they raced over the 150-yard course. With the rare skill of a born rider, Texas never failed to take three, frequently four, and sometimes five rings.

One evening when Texas had mounted his pony preparatory to an hour's practice, the overland stage carrying the weekly mail came in sight. In anticipation of this event, a crowd of ranchmen and cowboys were lounging around Papa Barre's hotel. When the jaded team drew up before the door, a tall, gray-haired stranger opened the stage door and with rapid strides entered the picket house. And though the arrival of a stranger was an unusual sight in those days, beyond a casual glance no one seemed to notice him. It was only when the driver whipped up his tired horses and started to the shack known as the store and post office, that Texas spurred his pony alongside of the driver and said:

"Say, Bill, who is that guy you brought over this trip?"

"That's no guy, Texas. Why, that's Colonel Tolbert, from Fort Worth; owns part of the Lytle herd that ranges west of Phantom hill. He's going to stay here until the 'chuck' wagon comes over from the ranch next week. Then he is going out there to rough it for a while. Oh, he's a jim-dandy, Texas—do to tie to, sure; plumb sociable all the way over—ain't stuck up—carries a bottle of firewater in his little dinky satchel, and it is loaded with pison, good truck, too."

"Well, if you say so, Bill, I guess he's all right. He looks like the right sort to me."

Texas then wheeled his pony around and rode slowly back to the hotel, where Dave Gardner was doing the agreeable by introducing the Colonel to all hands and the cook.

Nothing wins the confidence of the free and easy cowboy so quick as a responsive spirit. Consequently, no sooner had Colonel Tolbert acknowledged the introduction than he dropped into the conversation without a moment's delay. He neither took the lead nor waited for an

opening, but always said the right thing at the proper time, and with agreeable manner and smiling countenance.

There were at least twenty present when the Colonel capped the climax and forged a bond of friendship with the whole outfit by inviting them over to Alex Laslie's to take a drink.

"It is my set 'em up, boys," he said as he led the way.

And from that time hence for a number of years the annual visit of Colonel Tolbert was an occasion to be celebrated by the cow punchers of the local range.

He entered into all their sports with a hearty good will; often tripping the light fantastic all night, notwithstanding he was old enough to be the grandfather of the sweet sixteen who was his willing partner in the dance.

It was the first week in November when the cowboys from the surrounding ranches began to arrive and camp near the town, preparatory to the grand tournament.

Invitations had been extended to the officers and men at Fort Griffin, and several officers and their wives had accepted. A bugler was sent from the post to call the contestants together each morning and noon and to signal the start of each over the track.

The ranchmen with their wives and children came in covered wagons prepared to camp. The evening before the first day there were 300 on the ground. Negro Andy and a half-dozen other negroes were barbecuing five beeves over a long pit of live coals, and the savory smell permeated the whole atmosphere, whetting the appetites of the people for the delicious meat to be served to every one who desired a piece. A large brush arbor had been built in front of the old picket courthouse, and an Italian string band secured from Fort Griffin to make music for the young folks who cared to dance away the hours of

the evening. The weather was perfect and a full moon made the nights lovely.

It was the evening before the first day of the tournament that Kentuck met Texas and Mollie strolling along the outskirts of the town. It was Kentuck's first introduction to Mollie, and he was well pleased to find her all that Texas had painted her in the glowing pictures he presented during their confidential talks.

Mollie was a medium-sized brunette and a perfect specimen of a healthy maiden, frank as a child and as fearless as the most daring spirit that roamed the prairie. No wonder that she captured Texas, heart, body and soul. Kentuck could not help expressing his admiration for this sprightly, vivacious little woman, much to Texas' delight.

But it was the next morning when Kentuck saw her on horseback that he became profuse in his praise. She was riding her favorite bay, a perfect specimen of the descendants of the Arab horses turned loose by the Spanish conquerors in the days of Cortez. The spirited little animal had been groomed until his shining coat reflected the rays of the sun. He fairly danced in his eagerness for a morning's gallop. And while the twitching of his black, pointed ears and the scintillating fire in his black eyes told the nervous tension under restraint, he obeyed the soft spoken words of his mistress with the faithful trust of a child in its mother.

But it was Mollie who captured the eyes of Kentuck and held him spellbound as he watched her movements preparatory to mounting her pony. She was no longer the vivacious little maid of the evening before, but a queenly woman, conscious of her power to command not only the adoration of her cowboy friends but admiration even from her own sex.

Dressed in a neat habit of dark blue, with here and there a dash of red, a red bow on her hat and a narrow red ribbon around her neck, brass buttons and red facing over her bust, furnished the necessary contrast to complete a beautiful riding habit.

Everybody partook of the spirit of the occasion, and the entire camp ground was alive with a merry, jolly crowd of men, women and children.

It was 8 a. m. when the bugler sounded the grand ensemble preparatory to beginning the day's sport.

Messrs. J. C. Lynch, J. A. Matthews and G. W. Greer were selected to decide the contests. George Wilhelm was appointed timekeeper and sheriff Henry Jacobs was master of ceremonies.

There were nine entries, representing the different ranches, and Texas in the capacity of a free lance to challenge the winner.

It was indeed a gala scene, and presented an animated picture on that bright autumn morning. A rarefied atmosphere was tempered by a genial sun, and a gentle breeze laden with all the refreshing purity of the vast expanse of prairie made the nerves tingle and the blood course freely through the veins of young and old. A clear sky, a bright sun, a golden carpet of luxuriant grass, lent a charm to the combination of color that would have tempted the brush of an artist, and all the inspiration was present to call forth the muse from the realm of poetry. Nature had furnished the foreground and background, and it only required the bugler's call to endow the whole scene with that dash of frontier life that might have inspired Frederic Remington to produce the masterpiece of the age.

The scene of the tournament, on a small plateau overlooking the valley of North Prong, possessed all the advantages necessary to the success of the sport.

Five poles were set in the ground thirty yards apart, making a straight run of 150 yards. Six men were appointed by Judge Lynch, three at each end of the line of poles, to keep the time of the starting and ending of each contestant's run, and report to Wilhelm, the score timekeeper. The rules required the horses to be ridden at full speed, the time limit to be not less than thirty seconds. The contestants were dressed in close-fitting jockey suits, with bright sashes representing the colors adopted by each ranch. Texas wore green, in honor of Mollie's Irish ancestors. To make the skill of the knights more difficult to maintain, the horses were unsaddled and the knights required to ride bareback. The lances were seven feet long, tapering to a sharp point, to allow the rings to slide easily over the point and halfway down the lance. The rider grasped the lance near the middle with his right hand and allowed the butt end to rest beneath his elbow to steady his aim. The rings were hung from wires suspended from arms on the posts.

When all was ready the knights grouped near the starting point and waited to be called in the order of their entry.

The spectators were lined along each side of the tournament track, and made a picturesque setting for the sport.

The prize to be awarded on the first day was a silver mounted saddle, valued at \$100.

When all the preparations were completed and the air of expectancy hushed the babble of voices, all eyes were turned to where Judge Lynch, surrounded by the other judges, were in consultation. Near by, to their right, were the guests of honor. Among them were General Buell, commander of the fort, and his wife; several other officers, their wives and accompanying young ladies, and

thirty yards distant an escort of thirty cavalymen. On the opposite side of the starting point were the ladies representing the different ranches and the few ladies of Albany. Groups of ranchmen and cowboys were scattered on either side, betting on their favorites. Near the winning post were Chief Johnson and several braves and squaws of the Tonkawa tribe.

Sheriff Jacobs, as a last precaution, rode along the track and admonished every one to keep a safe distance from the running horses, for fear one might fly the track and run over some one.

Judge Lynch now stepped in front of the judges and, holding up his hand to command silence, announced that Ed. Tucker, representing the "Flying Buzzard" brand, would lead off in the contest.

Tucker, a small, wiry, swarthy young man mounted on a black, prancing broncho, rode to the starting point thirty feet from the first post, amid the cheers from the cowboys of his home ranch.

The bugler, standing a short distance from Judge Lynch, was ready to give the signal.

Tucker discarded his hat and bound a red silk 'kerchief around his head and, with only a blanket and one girth for a saddle adjusted his lance in position.

All was now ready and a hush of expectancy hovered over the scene. Judge Lynch raised a white 'kerchief and dropped it to his side and the bugler gave one sharp, short blast on his horn. The fiery little black sprang forward with an impetus that would have unseated a less skilled rider, but Tucker held the reins loose in his left hand, and seemed to guide his pony with the pressure of his knees clamped to its withers. He missed the first two rings, took the third and fourth and missed the fifth. On his second dash he took four, and on his last run over the track captured all.

Then followed Tom Greer, representing the "Circle G" brand, who made thirteen out of the possible fifteen.

Luke McCabe, representing the "Bar M." ranch followed and only scored ten.

Mike Kegan, of the "Half Circle W.," dropped down to eight.

Bill Johnson, of the "M. J.," scored nine and his pony flew the track.

Glen Reynolds, of the "R. M.," tied Tom Greer at thirteen.

Zeno Hemphill, of the "101," marked up twelve to his credit.

Harvey Biggs, of the "J. R.," from Red Mud, scored eleven.

Bill Lasser, of the "X.," only marked up ten.

Charley Jones, representing the "D. C.," was unhorsed after making six.

Roe Lefflett, the champion of the "Pitchfork" brand, came within one of being perfect, having scored fourteen.

Jim Greer, the last on the list, refused to run against Lefflett's score.

All eyes were now turned to where Texas stood apart from the crowd, holding Buckskin by the bridle.

Judge Lynch then stepped forward and said: "Are the people now ready for the judges to award the prize, or is there an unknown knight who would dare to challenge the winner?"

The crowd responded by shouting for Texas.

"Then let this unknown knight come forth to do battle with our champion, or else we do proclaim the prize already won."

With the grace of a trained athlete, Texas vaulted to the back of Buckskin and riding up in front of the judges

said, "I challenge your right, most excellent judge, to award the prize in this contest before I have tested the skill of the winner."

Then turning to the crowd, Judge Lynch said, "Is it your will that this unknown knight meet our champion in the field?"

"Be it so! Be it so!" they all shouted.

"Be it so, the people have spoken; take your place, Sir Knight, and may the best man win."

Texas rode to the first post, then in a straight line to the thirty feet starting point, and instead of turning to face the track remained with the pony's head in the opposite direction until the bugle announced the time.

Then the crowd witnessed a magnificent feat of horsemanship.

With his lance gracefully at rest beneath his right elbow, and grasped firmly with his right hand, he pulled Buckskin up on his hind feet and swung him around as though on a pivot, and urged him forward at full speed.

Click, click, click, click, click—the five rings were taken and three seconds to spare.

Twice more Texas and Buckskin dashed over the track with the same results—a perfect score.

Then there went up a mighty shout of exultation, and even the stoical Indian braves let out a warwhoop to express their approval.

There was no jealousy among those cowboy rivals, and with one accord they rushed up to Texas, pulled him from Buckskin and lifted him upon their shoulders, and with Lefflett leading Buckskin, marched around the grounds. Kentuck turned and looked at Mollie and was not surprised to see the little lady dancing around and positively radiant with animated pleasure.

After the excitement wore off the crowd broke up into

small groups and the ladies repaired to the arbor, where they began to unpack hampers of pies, cakes and delicacies to flank the barbecued meat, bread and coffee, to be served on an improvised table in the courthouse.

The ranchmen and their wives superintended the distributing of edibles, and not one was forgotten. Soldiers, cowboys and Indians were supplied with an abundance. Good cheer and good fellowship prevailed, during the entire three days' sport. There was no conventionality and no restraint to mar the free and easy enjoyment of the occasion.

After the noonday feast the Italian band furnished music for all who cared to dance. Others engaged in impromptu pony races and games of different kinds.

General Buell and his escort, accompanied by the ladies of the garrison, departed for the fort at 3 p. m., highly delighted with their outing, and promising to give the other officers and their wives a chance to come on the morrow.

Those three days and nights tournament will live in the memory of Kentuck so long as he is permitted to recall the names of the whole-souled people who entered into the enjoyment.

From this time on Albany began to grow and clamor for recognition among the towns on the Texas frontier. A doctor, a druggist, a blacksmith and a school teacher settled in town. Papa Barr purchased an officers' tent at the fort and enlarged his hotel accommodations. One firm in Griffin moved a portable house from Denison and established a branch mercantile house in Albany. A cowboy named Alex. Lasley opened up a saloon, and was also elected commissioner.

Lasley's place was a fount where the thirsty could procure fire water, the sports throw dice and play cards,

and any wandering couple desiring to enter the state of matrimony could have the preliminaries attended to between drinks by calling in Kentuck, who had become proficient in performing marriage ceremonies and holding inquests.

It was so distressingly healthy in these days of the white man's preëmption of the Indians' right of eminent domain, that Doctor Shelton found but little use for his profession, and spent two-thirds of his time hunting and fishing. Once in a great while, as a good lady remarked, he officiated at a birth. But as a rule, his practice was confined to dressing gunshot wounds.

A very amusing situation grew out of the young doctor's use of Latin terms in making out his bill for practice in the sheriff's family.

As there was no money in circulation until the sale of beef in the fall, indebtedness was only settled once a year. From the time of the birth of the sheriff's first child in January until the following November was ten months. So it happened that when the doctor made out his bill the sheriff was away from home trailing a band of horse thieves, and the doctor desiring to make a trip to the buffalo range, sealed the bill in an envelope and dropped it into the post office. In due time Sheriff Jacobs returned, and among other mail matter received the doctor's bill. One of the first items that claimed his attention was, "to one case of obstetrics, ten dollars." Not being a Latin scholar, the sheriff was puzzled and could not make heads or tails of it, and determined to investigate.

About two weeks later the doctor returned from his hunt and Texas, Kentuck, Manning, the druggist and Papa Barre were present, when the sheriff joined the group and, without even saying "Howdy," by way of salutation, he confronted the doctor with the remark:

"Say, Doc., I know I'm dead easy; most any tin-horn gambler can do me up. I never squeal when I'm cheated in a horse deal, but I'll be dadblamed if I'm going to be hornswoggled by a frontier sawbones without making a kick."

"Goodness gracious, Jacobs, what in the world is the matter?"

"Matter! Well, that's cheeky, after sending in this bill."

"I don't understand you, Jacobs—what's wrong with that bill?"

"Why, confound your cheek, look there" (pointing his finger at the objectionable item.)

"Oh, that's all right, Jacobs."

"All right! Say, Doc., you are a ringtail-tooter, and no mistake. You don't mean to stand up here and say that I got any of them obstetrics, do you? Why, man alive, I'll swear I didn't. And Josie says that she didn't, and I know darned well we couldn't have used a whole case of them."

"Ha! Ha! Ha!—Excuse me for laughing, Jacobs, but that's the medical term for when that bouncing baby was born."

"Well, you blamed fool, why didn't you say so in plain English instead of using that outlandish lingo?"

The laugh and the drinks were on the sheriff.

CHAPTER VIII

AMUSING INCIDENTS AND INDIVIDUAL PRANKS OF THE COW PUNCHER

Various and strange were the things the cowpuncher did:
Always reckless and thoughtless as a frolicsome kid.

Along the pathway of the next ten years, the whirlwind of time drove the dust of countless incidents that would have been interesting reading between the covers of "blood and thunder" novels.

Nothing commonplace ever happened in the early days of Texas' Northwest.

And, as Kentuck looks back, memory recalls a troop of queer characters, each bearing his own individuality that made him a distinct person among his fellows, preëminent for some specialty, that by common consent awarded him a name in harmony with his chief characteristics.

No truer saying was ever uttered than "familiarity with danger breeds contempt for it." And the observer might have added that there is a fascination in living where the six-shooter is the only arbitrator in disputes between man and man.

Under these conditions life was only worth what each individual valued his own when called on to defend it.

Even the most peacefully disposed persons, like Kentuck, of a necessity in those days carried his six-shooter. In fact, to be seen without your gun was to call attention to the absence of an essential part of your makeup. Like

the excuse of the blind man for carrying a lighted lantern on a dark night, the six-shooter was a warning to the other fellow. Armed with a Colt's "45," a stripling was a match for a prize fighter, and dared to contend for his rights, notwithstanding the physical bully who opposed him could pound the spark of life out of him.

Ruffians, as a rule, are cowards, and will not take equal chances in a fair fight. But if they can "bullyrag" some effeminate man and take the "drop" on him, they parade as bad men. But even an effeminate man, armed with a six-shooter had been known to command the respect of these ruffians, who would otherwise have made him the butt of their cruel jokes.

Yes, the six-shooter placed all men on an equal footing, for skill superseded physical prowess, and a boy could shoot as straight and as hard as a man. It was also true that a man hunting for trouble, though armed to the teeth, could always find it. Consequently, it was the part of good judgment to move on when trouble was brewing.

It sometimes takes a severe lesson in experience to make us realize the force of good advice from our best friends.

This proved true and was vividly impressed upon the mind of Kentuck on one occasion after having been admonished by Sheriff Jacobs to purchase a "45" Colt's revolver.

Kentuck, though not a Quaker, nevertheless was a man of peace, and when he was halted by a bunch of cow punchers one morning as he rode over the trail from Albany to Griffin, he was unarmed and not prepared to resent the indignities heaped upon him.

"Say, 'tenderfoot,' can you dance?" said a half-intoxicated fellow as he dismounted from his pony.

"If I were in a log cabin on a puncheon floor, with a partner from the mountain district of the old State, I might take a hand in the sport; why do you ask the question?"

"Cause, you are going to dance a jig; roll off that bronc and strike a lively gait!"

"But say, I can't dance a jig! I ——."

"Oh, yes, you can." And Kentuck's tormentor pointed his six-shooter at his victim and fired a shot close to Kentuck's head to accelerate his movements.

The other cow punchers in the bunch sat astride of their ponies and grinned.

There being no way of escape, he was forced to keep time to the music of the cow puncher's six-shooter, which produced queer sensations and much perspiration. But when his tormentor had emptied his gun, the trying ordeal was finished, and Kentuck, almost finished from exhaustion, was permitted to remount his pony amid the roar of laughter that followed his departure.

Kentuck did not mention this incident to his friends, but as soon as he arrived in Griffin purchased a Colt's 45, a belt, scabbard and a box of cartridges, realizing that there was neither time to purchase nor borrow when a man needed a six-shooter.

But thanks to cool reflection and better judgment, neither provocation nor occasion compelled Kentuck to defend himself, though there were times when his Colt's 45 produced a feeling of security.

PRESERVING THE DIGNITY OF THE COURT.

By slow degrees the courts began to show some semblance of authority, and the local officers, supported by the government and State troops, made some inroads on the dens of vice.



DANCING TO SIX-SHOOTER TIME. (Page 154.)

The first district court held in Shackelford county occupied the old picket barn on the square, and the grand jury sat in the open air under a liveoak tree.

Judge Ousterhouse represented the dignity of the whole court, and notwithstanding his strenuous efforts to maintain it, at times he was forced to relax and partake of the free and easy spirit of his surroundings. Especially, when calling the docket, his sense of humor arose to the surface when the list of *nom de plumes* appeared, without a single legitimate name among them.

Kentuck stood at the front door one morning and heard the judge call the names: "Hurricane Bill, Hurricane Minnie, Stovepipe Joe, Black Joe, Dutch John, Shorty Collins, Sheeny Mary, Indian Kate, Snaky Jim," and the judge paused for a moment and added, "and other vagabonds."

One of the amusing incidents of the judge's attempt to enforce the law at this term of the court was when he imposed a fine upon Uncle Billy Wilson, an old forty-niner who had been summoned to appear as a witness in a case against Andy Brownlee for murder.

When the case was called for trial the State filed a motion for a continuance, setting up the absence of an important witness, one Billy Wilson, whose evidence was material, upon which the prosecution relied for a conviction. The exhibit of the sheriff's return showed that Uncle Billy had been duly summoned, but had failed or refused to attend.

The judge entered a fine of \$50 against the absent witness and ordered an attachment for his arrest, to be returned on the fourth day of the term. In the meantime one of Uncle Billy's friends informed him. With all the cunning resource of his Irish wit, Uncle Billy fixed up an ingenious plan to deceive the judge and save the

\$50. Dodging the deputy who came to Griffin to attach him, he secured a buckboard and a pair of Spanish mules and drove to Albany to make his excuse. When within a mile of the town he stopped, pulled off his right shoe and carefully swathed his right foot and leg to the knee in a thick bandage. And when he arrived with a cane previously prepared, he presented all the appearance of a serious injury that entitled him to the clemency of the court. Apparently so painful were his efforts to alight from the buckboard, Texas assisted him.

Uncle Billy had timed his arrival in Albany when court had opened the next morning after he had been fined. Consequently, he had quite a sympathizing audience when he entered the door and painfully made his way to the judge's stand. With seeming great effort he managed to confront his Honor by steadying himself with the aid of a chair, and with a distressed look on his face addressed the court:

"May it plaze yez, Mister Jidge, I'm sufferin' from a bad tumble down the back stairs of me shanty, a trying fur to help Biddy wid the week's washing—bad cess to the soapsuds, says I, for they sloshed all over the steps, Jidge, and Biddy, the tub and meself mixed up in a shindy that smashed me leg over the ash-hopper, and if ever I get over it, Jidge, sure and I'll be a cripple for life. And, Jidge, wid all this pain and misery, when I heard that yez fined me, I says, it's yez boundin' duty, Billy Wilson, to hitch up the bronchos and drive out to Albany and tell the Jidge the truth, and throw yezself on the mercy of the court. Far be it from the intention of Billy Wilson, Jidge, to shirk his lawful duty, and I hope yez Honor will remember Biddy and the childers and remit me fine."

"Well, Mr. Wilson," replied the judge, "I think you

have a sufficient if not a legal excuse, and I will set aside the fine, and as neither the State nor defendant is ready for trial, will continue this case until the next term."

"Thank yez, Jidge; may yez shadow niver grow less, and may Mistress Jidge and all the little Jidges live long and die happy."

"That will do, Mr. Wilson," said the judge, "you are excused." And with many a groan Uncle Billy hobbled along to the door and disappeared.

Joe Batts met him on his way to Griffin singing an Irish ditty and his leg in normal condition.

It was a standing joke for many years that Uncle Billy's Irish wit won a legal victory by playing on the judge's credulity.

Among the various charges submitted to the grand jury by the judge was that gambling was reported to be prevalent in the county and that it was the sworn duty of the members of so august a body to investigate, and, if sufficient evidence existed, to find bills of indictment against the offenders.

By common consent the judge appointed one Frank Clampitt foreman of the jury. Among the conscientious members was Uncle Joe Matthews.

After several days' deliberation without results, and no prospects of finding any indictments, the judge decided to discharge the jury the next day, and admonished them to finish up the business before them.

During the entire day, prior to the time when they were to be discharged, the other members had noticed that Uncle Joe seemed to be very much troubled, as though not satisfied with the proceedings.

And as the time approached to file into the presence of the judge he began to fidget and shook his head. as if overcome with the weight of responsibility, he arose and said:

"Say, Frank, didn't the judge say that we was to investigate into gambling in the county?"

"Sure he did, Uncle Joe, but we just can't start any investigation at this time. It would be manifestly unjust to some members of this grand jury to spring an investigation without any warning."

"But, Frank, under our oaths it seems to me that we are bound to follow the judge's instructions."

"Under ordinary circumstances, you are right, but there are conditions mixed up with our duties that makes 'self preservation the first law of nature,' and greater than the judge. And in this condition this jury is now placed, for it would not be fair to the foreman to start an investigation."

"Well, Frank, if you feel that way about it, I guess you are plumb right."

And the first grand jury adjourned without following the judge's instructions.

DANGER IN THE DARK

The attendance on the spring term of the district court of Shackelford county in the year 1878 necessitated the erection of a tent annex to the Hotel de Barre, to accommodate the guests. Papa Barre made a flying trip to Fort Griffin and negotiated with the commissary department for a wall tent twenty feet square.

The hotel proper was a two-room picket house with dirt top. One room was used for kitchen and dining room combined, and the other was for the office and sleeping apartment. Consequently, the addition of a tent gave the hotel a swell appearance especially after prairie hay was scattered over the ground to make a mattress for the spread of blankets. A few canvas cots for the judge, lawyers and ranch owners lined the walls of the tent.

When all was complete Papa and Mamma Barre sat down upon a bench and dipped snuff out of the same bottle and smiled.

Among those who occupied the tent the first night were Texas, Kentuck and Col. John N. Simpson, owner of a ranch in Taylor county, where the city of Abilene now stands.

The presence of Colonel Simpson (president of a Dallas bank, and erstwhile candidate for Governor on the Republican ticket) will make the incident that happened that night in the canvas annex of more than ordinary interest to the readers.

When all had retired and the primitive light, composed of a twisted rag in a bowl of tallow resting upon a pine box in the center of the tent, cast a sickly, smoky light over the sprawling guests, a snoring concert proclaimed all were asleep.

The one lone cock guarding a half-dozen hens in a near-by mesquite announced in clarion tones that the midnight hour had arrived, and save for the grunts and snores from within, all was quiet at the Hotel de Barre.

Now and then the lull in the wind permitted the sounds of hilarity to float across the public square from Alex Lasley's saloon where some belated cow punchers were celebrating.

Papa and Mamma Barre had retired to the inner depths of the picket house with a clear conscience, to obtain much needed rest.

No one was awake to sound a note of alarm when the staggering form of Mike Kegan pulled aside the flap of the tent and observed the situation from the magnifying influence of whisky in his fuddled brain.

"That's (hic) a h—ll of a layout—wonder if they died with their boots on? (hic.) Maybe ain't dead (hic);

guess I'll shoot 'em up and see if they'll kick; (hic) just punch a hole in that darned fizzling thing in the washpan (hic); looks like a firebug (hic); shoot him on the wing 'fore he gits away."

And there was a flash and an explosion that created an exciting commotion, followed by an acrobatic performance excelling anything ever pulled off in a circus ring.

The guests in the Hotel de Barre annex arose as one man and made a dash for the open air without standing on the order of their going, some of them performing remarkable stunts.

John N. Simpson, opposite to the "wild and woolly" Mike, sat up so suddenly that his cot turned over endwise and he had rolled under the tent wall before he realized what happened.

Texas and Kentuck collided as they attempted to arise, and rolled over each other in their efforts to escape.

There was an excited scramble among the cow punchers lying on the ground before they could *sabe* the situation.

"Lasso that infernal fool!" shouted Papa Barre, as he rushed into the tent.

"Noap, they ain't dead ones (hic)—call that a regular stampede," said Mike.

"Gimme that gun, you sneaking coyote!" yelled Dick McAnulty, as he grabbed Mike by the collar and stuck a six-shooter under his nose.

"Yer (hic) needn't talk so loud, pard, I ain't deaf (hic), but being's you're so particular 'bout it (hic), here's the old gun—the layout weren't dead nohow, were they, pard?"

The disarmament of Mike restored order, the guests



When the cowpunchers came to town. (Page 162.)

returned to the annex, and normal conditions once more prevailed.

AN EMBARRASSING SITUATION

We are told that "variety is the spice of life," and after a few months' experience in the office of justice of the peace, Kentuck was prepared to acknowledge the truth of the adage, in so far as circumstances developed conflicting emotions between a sense of duty under the law and the necessity of conforming with local conditions.

The enforcement of the law on the frontier always seemed to have an elastic application, and was sometimes stretched to the limit and at other times contracted to its minimum.

But thanks to an accommodating Vigilance Committee, very few felony cases came up for examination, for the good reason that the *corpus delicti* and the victim were buried in the same grave.

Consequently, Kentuck was often tempted to resign and make an application to some ranchman for the position of cow puncher rather than depend upon the uncertain fees of his office. But his good-humored constituency held out the tempting bait that the duties and the fees would increase in proportion to the increase in population in the near future.

In the meantime "Dan Cupid" got busy and produced conditions that called for the services of the J. P. to perform the marriage ceremony.

In this connection it may be interesting to relate the embarrassing situation that confronted Kentuck at Uncle George Greer's ranch in the fall of 1879. The occasion was the marriage of Tom Greer to Bettie Lafflet and Roe Lafflet to Annie Greer.

The importance of this event in such a sparsely settled

district can be better appreciated when one is informed that all the cowboys on the range had taken a day off to celebrate the wedding. About 200 men and a half-dozen women were at the ranch when Kentuck arrived.

Having been notified a week in advance, the J. P. carefully prepared and committed to memory an impressive ceremony, in view of the fact that it had been arranged to marry both couples at the same time.

The small proportions of Uncle George's ranch house were not equal to the occasion, and it was decided to perform the ceremony in the open air. In the meantime Grandma Greer and the visiting ladies were busy assisting the brides to dress. But as Bobby Burns said, "the best laid plans o' mice and men gang aft a-glee," and so it proved on this occasion.

One of the most ludicrous incidents imaginable happened while the preparations for the ceremony were in progress.

As the hour drew nigh Grandma Greer grew nervous and unwittingly was the innocent cause of a domestic explosion that came near upsetting all previous arrangements, and did scatter decorum on the wings of hilarious laughter.

Uncle George was one of the kindest and most generous of men upon God's green footstool, and on this occasion was very busy looking after the comfort of his guests. He was here, there and everywhere, bidding the boys welcome, supplying stake ropes, furnishing tobacco and matches, and doing everything in the line of hospitality in harmony with his long established reputation.

When there seemed to be nothing more that he could do on the outside he entered the house where the ladies were busy, and where Kentuck sat in one corner silently going through a mental rehearsal of the previously prepared marriage ceremony.

As so often happens in well regulated families, the pride of Grandma Greer was too strong for the objections of Uncle George, and he was hustled off into the shed room to put on a clean outfit of clothes, including under garments and a white shirt. In her haste the good wife grabbed out of a drawer what she supposed to be the necessary garments, but what proved to be a domestic bomb.

Perhaps five minutes elapsed when those inside and outside were electrified by an eruption from the crater of Uncle George's profanity. The cuss words became loud and vigorous, shutting off the buzz of conversation and causing a general rush to the little shed room where Uncle George was engaged in executing a war dance.

What the boys saw can better be imagined than described. In the middle of the room was the irate old gentleman in an abbreviated nether garment, holding at arm's length a pair of lady's unmentionables and gazing at them with supreme disgust, trying to explain between cuss words, to Grandma Greer, who hurried in, that it was impossible for him to wear them and retain his self respect.

Nothing but the free and easy good fellowship characteristic of the frontier saved the situation. Everybody laughed until their sides ached. But, during the hubbub, Kentuck's prepared ceremony escaped his memory and he was left to stagger through the service.

Of all the unique characters that ever lived on the frontier of Texas, George W. Greer was without an equal. Small, wiry, without a pound of surplus flesh, he was gifted with a superabundance of energy that he worked off to a good advantage on his cattle ranch.

And right here is an excellent opportunity to gain an insight into the peculiar humor of the old gentleman. It

has been reported that on one occasion the commander at Fort Griffin sent a small escort of cavalry with the paymaster on his way to Fort Clark.

Lieutenant Fred, now Gen. Frederick D. Grant, was detailed to command the soldiers. The first day's march they camped over night at the crossing of Hubbard creek near Uncle George's ranch house. Being used to extending hospitality on a large scale, he invited the whole outfit, consisting of ten soldiers and the two officers, to partake of the evening meal. And though the officers mildly protested that the soldiers were prepared to cook, they accepted, and all marched up to the house for their supper. With the assistance of several cowboys, Mother Greer soon prepared an appetizing meal of warm corn bread, coffee and a dish of fried potatoes and fresh meat.

When all was ready Uncle George invited them to the table, when the following amusing colloquy occurred:

"Walk in, gents, and be seated."

"But, Mr. Greer," protested Lieutenant Grant, "the soldiers can wait until your family and the officers are served."

"Well, I'll be hornswoggled if they do."

"But, Mr. Greer, the regulations of the army——"

"The regulations of your old Yankee army be damned! See here, Mr. Lieutenant, if anybody waits for a second table, you dude officers can take a back seat and watch the balance eat."

The Lieutenant blushed and looked embarrassed, but the Major, who was an old campaigner, smiled and said, "Come on, boys, we will go in and clean up the grub while the Lieutenant waits."

Grant saw the humor in the situation and joined in the laugh that followed.



UNCLE GEORGE GREER. (Page 168.)

THE BRANDING PENS.

To relieve the monotonous existence that fell to the lot of the county officials who were called on to perform the legal duties in the newly organized county of Shackelford, Texas and Kentuck were willing to accept any diversion that promised to fill in the time that was otherwise very dull.

Consequently, the marking and branding of cattle or a roundup within reasonable distance commanded their presence.

And it frequently happened that the desire to lend a hand was so strong in Texas' makeup that he often mounted a trained bronco and helped to rope the animals.

After the grass matured sufficiently in the summer to justify moving cattle, Jess Ellison's outfit drove a large herd through Albany to the home ranch on North Prong. Texas and Kentuck mounted their ponies and followed them to the branding pen, to see the year's crop of calves marked and branded.

When they arrived Ellison had already prepared for the day's work and placed the cattle under close herd near the corrals, where a certain number could be cut out and driven in without crowding.

The fire was already making a good bed of coals between the logs where the "J. E." irons were being heated ready to decorate the hips of the unfortunate calves.

Lanky Jones and Sam Hatcher rode into the herd and cut out about thirty head; steers, cows and calves were rushed through the gate into the corral. Then they gradually separated the calves and turned the steers and cows outside. The majority of these calves were from three to five months old, and as wild as deer.

When Cæsar Boynton announced the irons ready, at the proper heat to do effective work, Lanky and Sam

started the calves on the run around the pen to keep them from dodging. Then each swung his lasso above his head, forming an open loop by the turn of their wrist, and with unerring skill threw them, one over the head and the other over the hind legs of an animal, with a sharp upward jerk to prevent the ropes slipping off. The well-trained ponies turned their heads toward the branding fire as each rider took a turn of his lasso around the pommel of his saddle. This movement brought the calf to the ground.

The riders then dismounted and held the calf until two more cow punchers ran up and took possession; one sitting on the neck, held down the head, and the other squatting behind the back, held the tail between the hind legs of the calf.

"Hot iron!" yelled one. "Marker!" yelled the other.

Jess Ellison handled the iron and pressed it carefully upon the hip, producing a smell of scorching hair. In the meantime Boyanton had cut a swallow fork out of one and an underbit out of the other ear. The animal was then allowed to get up and scamper off to the other end of the pen, and another victim was thrown down.

The work of marking and branding calves and mavericks was kept up all morning until the entire herd had been culled. Then everything was turned loose on the open range, amide the lowing of the cows as they hunted up their offspring.

After dinner with the boys at the ranch, Texas and Kentuck rode back to town.

ATTACKS ON THE OVERLAND STAGECOACH.

The holdups of the overland stage in the early days in Texas differed largely from the holdups in the Northwest Territories in that instead of the bold, daring rob-

bers, the attacks were generally made by the Indians, who took a malicious delight in circling around on their ponies and discharging a volley of arrows and bullets at the drivers as they lashed their horses into a dashing run for safety.

During these attacks it sometimes happened that the horses were killed and the drivers killed or wounded in the battle, while many an Indian bit the dust. In the emergency the uninjured passengers were compelled to call on some nearby ranchman for assistance to the next stage stand.

Consequently, the driver was always a brave man, cool and deliberate in the hour of danger, with nerves of steel and hands skilled to guide the Spanish mules over the rugged trail and through the mountain pass, where the Indians often laid in ambush.

The adventures of the old-time stage drivers would make a volume of exciting incidents worthy of a place in the archives of the past instead of mention in so brief a space as the writer can devote to it.

But as a most potent factor in the development of the country west of the Brazos river, the stagecoach was a concomitant in the stirring events of the times, and there is no excuse for passing them up to the shelf of oblivion without acknowledging their place in frontier history, especially when we consider the stage line as the most important link in the communication of the civilized East with the "Wild West."

When Kentuck arrived in Fort Griffin in 1876 the overland stage ran from Dallas and Denison, the terminal of the railroads, to the Gate City of El Paso, on the border line of Old Mexico, with a system of branch lines running to Forts Richardson, Belknap, Griffin and Clark.

Among the skilled drivers that dashed into Fort Griffin

behind his six-in-hand, the writer remembers Dick Wheeler, now grown old and gray and living in the city of Wichita Falls, Texas.

With a multiplicity of reins that a "tenderfoot" would tangle into a bewildering confusion, he sat upon the driver's seat with the ease and confidence of experience, and assured his passengers of a safe deliverance at their destination, barring accidents and Indians.

Unless the trail was rough and tortuous, he held the reins in his left hand, and with a long-lash whip in his right, cracked merry encouragement to the wild mules that galloped ten miles without a halt.

No previous training had been given the wild, unfed mules. Roped, thrown and blindfolded, they were harnessed while kicking and braying their protest, and were pushed into line and hitched, while an attendant held each by one ear and the nose to prevent a dash for liberty.

When all was ready and the passengers inside, the driver would yell: "Let her go, boys."

Each man turned loose his mule and jumped back out of the way and, for the first half-hour the driver had his hands full keeping them in the trail. It was said, with a great deal of truth, that it was impossible to stop them between stations, and if a passenger desired to leave the stage en route, he was compelled to swing from the steps.

And any one on the wayside, desiring to take passage, was compelled to board the stage while in motion.

Dick Wheeler drove over the entire route from Fort Worth to El Paso during the year 1877, pushing on ahead of the construction of the Texas & Pacific as the iron rails were being laid westward.

At that time the Comanches were troublesome in the

"plains" country, and Wheeler was mixed up in several exciting adventures.

One, especially, is worth mentioning. It was a west-bound trip, and the overland was bowling along the trail near the stage stand that developed into the town of Toyah. The stage could be seen for miles as it rolled along over the prairie.

The evening shadows were lengthening, and driver and passengers were looking forward to a night's rest before resuming their journey on the morrow. The undulating surface of the trail as the stage swayed through the buffalo wallows, occupied their attention, and no one noticed a band of painted warriors until they came charging down with a blood-curdling warwhoop. Wheeler and the passengers responded to the Indian charge with a volley from their rifles, and the battle was on.

Two of the mules were shot down, the others became helplessly entangled in the harness, and the stage was overturned. Wheeler cut the harness and freed the mules, and they galloped away toward the stage stand. In the meantime, Wheeler and the passengers used the overturned stage for a breastwork, and all except a Jew named Bernstine engaged the Indians, who circled at full speed, swinging on the opposite side of their ponies and shooting from beneath the animal's neck. Two or three of the Comanches were armed with pistols and, though poor marksmen, made it interesting for the defenders.

While the others were busy pumping lead, a bullet from a Comanche gun shattered a spoke near Bernstine's head, the ragged splinters sticking into the skin and making the blood flow and he made a frantic appeal.

"Yust you look here oncst, don't it, where der blood flows from der wound in me head. Henry Bernstine is

sure dead. Der old fadder and der mudder will mourn for him, but he no return some more to his happy childhood home, don't it? Vay out here where no wimmins and childrens live, you will bury me when the fight is done, but you don't let 'em take me hair off, vill you?"

"Oh, cut out that chin music, Sheeny; you are not hurt. Jump up and be a man," said Wheeler.

"And I ain't hurt some, hey? By the great prophet Elijah, I was so glad dot Henry Bernstine is not dead."

A hearty laugh followed this sally, and the fight continued.

But the white men being better protected and good marksmen, the Comanches, after having a horse killed and one of their number wounded, abandoned the fight and rode away to the north.

The escaped mules arrived at the stage stand and the agent and hostlers knew something was wrong, and lost no time going to the rescue. The stage was righted and fresh mules hitched in, and the whole outfit rolled into the little settlement.

THE "HAPPY FAMILY" DELUSION.

That the prairie dog, owl and rattlesnake live in the same town is a well established fact. But that they are a "happy family," going in and out the same dog hole, is a fallacy born of the imagination of some romancer who has imposed on the credulity of the public, who never traveled where the prairie dog towns of Northwest Texas cover hundreds of acres of otherwise fertile lands.

Of course, when necessity leaves no choice of escape, the dog, owl and the snake will make a dash for the most convenient hole. And it sometimes happens that the rattlesnake is coiled in the mouth of the hole when the dog makes a dash for the same hole. Then there is a dis-

troubling scene that cannot but appeal to the sympathies of one watching the little rodent when it finds itself where the chances are about equal between the pursuing terror and the fangs in front.

Perhaps the dog will take all kinds of chances to escape to another hole rather than dash for liberty through the coils of his snakeship.

In every dog town there are abandoned holes, deserted by the one-time occupants for some good reasons; generally because one of the number had been killed and fallen down the passageway, where it was left to decay. Into these abandoned holes the snakes find their way and take up their abode where owls already live. This is the true explanation of the "happy family," theory. In fact, the dog, snake and owl are deadly enemies when they meet in the passageway of a dog hole. Nevertheless, a student of nature can find much that is interesting in the habits and intelligence of a colony of prairie dogs.

In a large colony, covering fifty or one hundred acres, the underground city is connected with tunnels resembling streets and alleys, used in common by the whole colony. Removed from the common passages are the homes of each family of dogs, where they raise their young and store their food. These homes are generally elevated six inches above the common passage, and entered from a small tunnel leading from the passage to the home. In every colony there is a drainage canal and public wells. Any one who has ever tried to drown out the dogs by pouring water into the holes has found that unless he uses an isolated hole he can pour barrels of water into one without any perceivable effect.

It is unfortunate that these little animals were called dogs when in fact they are of the ground squirrel species, for otherwise the early settlers and travelers might have

used them for food when larger game was scarce. Prejudice, by reason of their name, protected them from the hunter's rifle until the man with the hoe came along and used poison to clear the land of the pests.

One of the most terrorizing things that can happen to the denizens of a prairie dog town is the onrush of a stampeding herd of cattle or buffalo. As their sharp hoofs tear up the loose earth and send it rattling down the mouth of the holes, while the dogs, owls and snakes are making frantic efforts to dive down out of the way of the moving avalanche, consternation reigns. For the time being each forgets to make war on his neighbor while trying to escape from the common enemy.

But the greed for gain wiped the buffalo off the face of the prairie and drove the Indian beyond the border of the State, and the prairie dog remained to contest with the white man the possession of the land.

The system of fencing in large pastures has proven a protection to the antelope, jackrabbits and prairie dogs, and in many places they have multiplied in large numbers. But the man with the hoe is marching westward and relentlessly making war on all wild animals.

A few more years and Texas, like the older States of the Union, will be cut up into farms and small pastures, and there will be no hiding place for wild animals. The sportsmen can travel many miles without amusement or profit to-day, where game in abundance roamed a few years ago.

In the days long gone Texas and Kentuck awakened in the mornings and looking out over the prairie could see buffalo, deer, antelope and wolves, and hear the wild turkeys leaving their roosts in the trees along the North Prong, rarely sitting down to a meal without enjoying turkey, but nothing remains but the memory.

BEEF ON THE RANGE

When "Dutch Nance," George and Jim Loving were the agents for St. Louis, Kansas City and Chicago stock yards, beef steers were sold and delivered on the range to the stock yard agents instead of being shipped by the ranchmen themselves.

As soon as the season opened these agents rode from ranch to ranch and bargained for a certain number to be rounded up and delivered on a certain date to the agents, who drove them to the nearest railway point, Dallas, Denison or Fort Worth, 150 or 200 miles distant.

To simplify matters the agents employed the requisite number of cow punchers to gather and hold until a herd of about 2,000 was made up, then to be driven over the trail to the railroad.

"Dutch Nance's" home was near the town of Denton, but by reason of his occupation as a buyer of cattle on the Griffin range, he became a familiar visitor in the cow camps and the resorts around town where the cattlemen were wont to spend their leisure time.

Robust and full of life, he became a boon companion of the festive cow punchers, entering into all their sports and sympathizing in all of their misfortunes. It was not an uncommon event for him to make Albany his headquarters for two months during the fall season when he was directing the gathering of his purchase of beef steers in the surrounding ranches.

During these periods Nance entered into the social whirl, and was the gayest of the gay gallants that made their heels clatter and spurs rattle to the music of Black Andy's fiddle.

And these affairs were a source of genuine enjoyment in those days of good fellowship, when neither riches,

class nor dress divided the people. All the boys chipped in their dollar to make the affair a success.

And it was Irish generosity that was prevalent to the extent that one's purse was at the pleasure of his friends, whose I. O. U. was all the security necessary. Open doors and unrestrained hospitality greeted all.

Ranches were few and far between in those days and all kept open house, consequently, when Col. Cæsar Boynton, wife, two sons and two daughters, old friends of Sheriff Will Cruger, arrived from Albany, Ga., their advent was hailed with delight by reason of the fact that they located a ranch four miles east of the town.

And notwithstanding Colonel Boynton was an aristocrat, belonging to the old school of Southern gentlemen, whose pride and pretensions ought to have been buried in the grave of the Civil War, his sons and daughters were soon able to assimilate family pride with Western hospitality to the extent of making the Boynton home a popular resort for the cowboys. Mollie, Zuda, Cæsar Jr. and George devised ways and means for the enjoyment of their new friends.

"Dutch Nance," Texas and Kentuck were frequent visitors, and generally leaders in the square dances when there were sufficient numbers to make a set.

Texas, whose love affairs were not running smoothly, secured the coöperation of Mollie Boynton in devising a way to meet the girl he loved. It was often arranged that a number of young people were invited to the Boynton home to spend the evening, and Texas and Mollie Lyle given a rare opportunity to enjoy each other's company.

One evening when the usual number of merry-makers were assembled, a dapper little man dressed in "store clothes," with the stamp of city impressed over his whole

person, appeared from the shadowy light beyond the doorway and stood in the entrance, as if uncertain whether to retreat or advance.

The costume worn by the stranger, more than his bewildered attitude, produced an embarrassing silence that might have become painful if Mrs. Boynton, coming from a rear room had not recognized him and exclaimed:

"Well, I declare if that is not Cheever Pace?"

"Certainly, I'm Cheever Pace, from your old town in Georgia, and a deuce of a time I have had jolting along in a stagecoach from Fort Worth. Met Bill Cruger in Fort Griffin, and he asked a bunch of cowboys going to Ellison's ranch to loan me a pony and allow me to ride with them along the trail until we came to your house. They said something to Bill about being disgraced if they were seen with a 'spider-legged' dude, but he explained that I was his friend, and was only a green 'tenderfoot,' and didn't know any better than to dike up like a 'scissor-tail.' 'And, boys, you will do me a favor to deliver him to Mrs. Boynton without damaging the package.' One of them named Jackson said, 'Being as you put it that way, Cruger, we are inclined to grant the favor, but we will shy around Albany, for fear that some cow puncher, full of 'loco-juice,' might drop a lariat over him.' Now, what did he mean, Mrs. Boynton?"

Everyone in the room enjoyed a hearty laugh, much to the amazement of Pace.

Mrs. Boynton kindly advised Pace when he awoke in the morning to accept the loan of a Texas suit from her son George until he could purchase clothes more in harmony with his surroundings.

"Dog take it, what is the matter with these clothes?" said Pace.

"All right where you came from, but all wrong out here on the range," said Texas.

"But I don't understand," said Pace.

"Oh, you will learn later. I made the same mistake; I don't have to be told now," said Kentuck.

"But what is a 'tenderfoot'?" inquired Pace.

"A fellow without experience, who tries to walk over a rough trail barefooted," explained "Dutch Nance."

"Fortunately, Mr. Pace, you are without any rough experience, thanks to Sheriff Cruger. And there is no reason why you may not join us and have a pleasant evening."

"You forget, daughter," said Mrs. Boynton, "that perhaps Mr. Pace will enjoy a lunch first."

"Oh, beg your pardon, I did forget." And Mollie Boynton excused herself to prepare the lunch.

After satisfying his appetite, Pace joined the others, and an impromptu dance was enjoyed for an hour.

The hands of the clock were nearing the midnight hour when the guests of the evening departed, "Dutch Nance," Texas and Kentuck, escorting Mollie Dobbs and the two Misses Holcomb to Albany, Mollie Lyle and Cheever Pace remaining over night with the Boyntons.

But the advent of the railroads brought about a change in the manner of handling cattle, and ranchmen began to ship their own beeves to market.

Another change came also in the nature of an influx of Eastern capital for investment in Texas cattle and ranches. It was a favorite avenue for retired manufacturers and merchants of Boston, New York and Philadelphia to invest money for their sons, who were often sent out to take charge of the property.

And one of the biggest mistakes of these scions of rich men was that they had acquired a theoretical knowledge

of cattle raising in one of the departments of an Eastern college, which instead of an advantage in the practical workings of a Western ranch, proved their undoing. For their theory had no conception of an open range in a sparsely settled country, where nature grew the provender and cattle rustled for themselves. Consequently, investments of this kind proved disastrous to the investors, at the same time producing abnormal appreciation in the price of stock cattle.

Strange to say, many old-time ranchmen who could not withstand the temptation of speculation in the fictitious prices, also went broke, instead of waiting until the market became normal again.

During these days many ludicrous situations occurred, growing out of the strained relations between the practical Westerner and the theoretical Easterner, often leading to an open rupture when some old-time cow puncher rebelled against a nonsensical innovation.

This was forcibly illustrated one morning on the Griffin range during the delivery of a bunch of cattle to one Dunkan, nephew of the Eastern purchaser.

Duncan was fresh from college and, in his own estimation, what he did not know about the cattle business was beyond the knowledge of Texas cow punchers.

One can imagine the self-importance of this graduate who had listened to the wise professors lecture on the anatomy of a cow—an Eastern cow—raised in a barn and fed on prepared food. But Dunkan's first morning's experience with "Mrs. Longhorn," knocked all the halo from around his theory.

The whole outfit was busy preparing to round up the local range on the morrow, and had neither time nor disposition to listen to Dunkan's theories. No one paid any attention to the young man from the East. But he

refused to be ignored and got busy asking questions, and was invariably referred to the "range boss," a red-headed Irishman named O'Connor, who had an utter contempt for what he called a spider-legged dude.

Duncan chased around from place to place and finally located O'Connor near the cook's shanty, cinching up his bronco.

Without any preliminaries, Duncan blurted out: "Say, me good fellow, how far is it to where the gentle bovines are grazing, that you intend to drive up and decorate with the insignia of me dear uncle?"

O'Connor looked up from his shaggy brows, and eyeing the young man with contempt, said: "Oh, to blazes wid yez foin talk, ye blubbering idiot. If I had time I'd chuck ye down a prairie dog hole, where yez could speel yez story to the snake and awl, instead of snooping around here wid yez baby talk."

"But, me good fellow, you do not seem to understand. I take great pleasure in this ideal life of the cowboy."

"Oh, cut out yez chin music and lave off bothering me. I don't know what yez mean by all that palaver, but I'm willing to do what's right about it."

"Then if you will kindly order a horse, I'll take great pleasure in accompanying you, so that I can take observations and make suggestions that may prove helpful in simplifying your work."

"Say, Tucker," shouted O'Connor to a cowboy near by; "saddle up that old flea-bitten gray and turn him over to this dude."

Following instructions, Tucker saddled up one of the old outlawed cayuses that had been turned loose for a year. This old skate always took the bit between his teeth and ran away when mounted by any one not familiar with his tricks.

So it happened that when the dude from the East was astride of him, one of the cowboys came galloping up, yelling, "Yip! yip! yahee!" Away went that old flea-bitten bronc like he was shot out of a gun, carrying Dunkan far afield over the prairie, on and on for several miles, and it was near the noon hour before the dude returned, sore, dejected and humble. He had learned a lesson in the school of experience, and was a "sadder, but wiser man."

But time and experience are wonderful educators, and it did not take Dunkan long to become a full-fledged cow puncher. All the Yankee drawl and affectation of "away down East" was knocked out of him, and he became able to hold his own with the boys on the range.

From a dude college student to an expert "bronco buster" was a big drop in ethics, but Dunkan landed upon both feet and made one of the best hands on the ranch.

After eighteen months of rough, hard labor, driving, marking and branding cattle, until his hands and face were the color of tanned leather, he concluded to visit the "old folks at home."

When he arrived in Boston there was a family reunion, and the place of honor was given him at the banquet that followed. Among the invited guests on that occasion was a number of college chums and lady friends.

Dunkan appeared in evening suit and was the "lion of the hour."

Time and again he was importuned to tell the amusing incidents of his rough experience on the Texas cattle range. So preoccupied did he become in the recital that he for the moment forgot his surroundings, and unconsciously lapsed into the free and easy habit of eating in a cow camp.

One of the courses served at the table was a liberal

portion of chicken pie, a dish that Dunkan was particularly fond of, and while he was busy eating and talking he committed an unpardonable breach of table manners by throwing the chicken bones over his shoulder upon the floor.

The shout of hilarious laughter that followed this breach of etiquette cause the erstwhile "bronco buster" to blush until the red blood showed through the tan.

Dunkan was one among many college students who made good cow punchers on the "free range" of Texas.

Consequently it is passing strange that Eastern writers who were interested west of the Mississippi river persistently class the cowboys as ignorant, coarse and uncouth. Wild and reckless, I grant you, but ignorant and uncouth, never!

Unfortunately, there were a few vicious and unprincipled rascals who belonged to some of the outfits, and disgraced the calling.

But this was the exception to the rule.

KIDD BOGGS AND THE TELEPHONE

The march of progress brought many changes in ranch life in the early '80s.

The Texas & Pacific railway pushed its way west through the open range, and the immigrants arrived by car loads, built towns and fenced in sections of land along the route of the iron highway for agricultural purposes.

This necessitated a change in the plans of the old-time cattle kings. They read the "handwriting on the wall" of destiny, and began to file on and lease large tracts of land for pastures; fenced them in with strands of wire, converting the old range into pastures for breeding and raising improved grades of cattle.

During this transition stage there were many conflicts of interests, sometimes bordering on hostilities, between the open range and pasture men. In some sections this developed into fence-cutting and other lawless acts. But as the months passed things began to adjust themselves to the new conditions, and many ranchmen, who drove their herds farther west, began to improve their home ranches.

With other improvements came the telephone, at first used in its experimental stage in the small towns, later enlarging to include the local ranches. Often miles of wire fencing were used to make a connection between the ranch and the home town.

In this connection it is worth while to relate an amusing incident that happened on a ranch not many miles from Fort Griffin.

In order to avoid being personal, the writer will say that during the absence of Kidd Boggs from the home ranch, with a bunch of steers on the Western range, the ranchman made connection with Griffin by hitching the electric current to his wire fence.

Texas and Kentuck were present when Kidd Boggs returned from the range for a week's rest at the home ranch, and witnessed the amusing incident of Kidd's first introduction to the telephone.

While Kidd was cleaning the alkali dust from his anatomy and getting a bite to eat, the other boys put up a job on him by communicating with a friend in town and requesting that he accuse the Kidd of stealing a yearling when he talked over the phone.

After the cleaning up process and eating his lunch, Kidd sauntered into the office known as the "boss' workshop." The other boys were lounging around waiting until he discovered the phone.

Throwing his hat into the corner of the room, shaking hands and saying howdy, all 'round, he dropped into a chair and, like the cat that came back, began to take observations. And spying the phone box, he exclaimed: "What the blazes is that, now?"

"Oh, that box on the wall? that's a talking machine," responded one of the boys.

"What you giving me?—think I'm a greaser?"

"Sure thing, Kidd," remarked another boy.

"Oh, go way back and set down; I ain't green."

"Go over there, Kidd," said Texas, "and turn the crank on the side; take down the horn with a string to it, hanging on the peg, and put it over your ear, and say hello into that thing in front."

Kidd got up, eyed the boys suspiciously and walked gingerly over to the phone, carefully looked it over and finally following instructions, yelled "Hello!"

"Is that you, Kidd Boggs?" came back over the wire.

"Sure thing," answered the Kidd.

"Well, I'm onto you hard and fast, Kidd. You stole that red yearling from Bar X ranch."

"What—what's that you say? Darn your measly hide!" And before any one could interfere, the Kidd stepped back, pulled his gun and began to pump lead into the phone box.

The boss and the other boys joined in a roar of laughter, and Kidd sheepishly returned his gun to its scabbard. 'Twas a "horse on him."

RIDING INTO A SALOON FOR THE DRINKS

The spice and variety of frontier life was that the unexpected was always happening; something altogether out of the ordinary dull routine; startling surprises that almost took your breath, leaving one to wonder what

would be the next move on the complex checkerboard where men played for big stakes.

One of the most surprising stunts that a bunch of cow punchers could pull off without batting an eye was to ride with unconcern into a saloon and line up on horseback in front of the bar and order the drinks.

Texas and Kentuck were standing in front of E. Frankle's store on Griffin avenue one evening in the summer of '79, when a rollicking bunch of Millet's cow punchers, led by Peeler, rode up in front of the Old Adobe saloon. Their loud talk and belligerent attitude gave evidence of too much whisky.

"Come on, boys," said Bill Jones, a reckless specimen of bravado. "I'm as dry as a herring and haven't time to hitch," and he spurred his bronco into the open door of the saloon, followed by a half-dozen as wild and reckless cusses as ever sat astride of a pony.

The obedient little animals were reined up in front of the bar, and the drinks ordered all around.

Though the barkeep, Mike Casey, was not in the best of humor over the lawless act, he shrugged his shoulders and served the drinks, managing to keep a civil tongue while the outfit cussed and roared with delight over their escapade.

They were ready either for a fight or a frolic, and would have tossed up a penny for choice.

Finding no one willing to challenge their unceremonious entrance and dare-devil conduct, they rode out swinging their sombreros over their heads, stood up in their stirrups, and let out a series of yells as they spurred their ponies into a gallop and ran out of the Flat, firing right and left.

"Those onerary cusses need a few loads of buckshot at close range," remarked Texas.

"Yes," replied Kentuck, "Cap and Lon Millet can scrape up as scurvy a lot of scalawags as can be found on the range."

PRACTICAL JOKES

The members of a "down East" shoe manufacturing firm, who had successfully invaded the other portions of the State, could not understand the conditions that prevailed in Northwest Texas, where they were unable to dispose of any of their wares. Consequently, in the early spring of 1877 they ordered one of their salesmen to visit the range country, study the situation and report to headquarters in Boston, the object of the firm being to manufacture a special article to meet the demand for footwear.

A jolly, loquacious gentleman named Billy Watson was selected by reason of his "free and easy" disposition and his propensity for mixing with all kinds of people successfully.

But notwithstanding Billy knew his business, and anywhere within the civilized limits would have held a winning hand, he did not know straight up about the country west of the Brazos river.

So when he climbed into the stagecoach at Fort Worth with his sample case and letters of introduction to the leading firms in Weatherford, Graham, Comanche and Fort Griffin, he was like a sailor adrift on an unknown sea.

In addition to being a helpless "tenderfoot," he made the mistake of being dressed in a flashy suit of store clothes and a derby hat—a sure challenge to any self-respecting cowboy to resent an invasion of the established costume of the frontier.

"Brazos Bill," the stage driver, took Watson's measure,

and decided to let the "tenderfoot" profit by experience, instead of warning him or arguing the question of propriety. There were three other passengers in the coach—Aunt Polly Sikes, Jim Loving and Dave Gardner—all bound for Weatherford. The men wore the regulation broad-brim hat, blue flannel shirt and overalls, with the legs thrust into a pair of high-heeled boots; six-shooters, camp knife and jingling spurs.

At first the situation was a little strained, and Watson and his fellow passengers eyed each other suspiciously until the old lady broke the silence by exclaiming: "Law sakes, ain't this Mary's creek, where the road agent held up the stage the last trip?"

"Yep," said Jim Loving, "you are plumb right, sis; they sure did!"

"Say, Jim Loving, what yer calling me sis for, and me old enough for your grandma?"

"Excuse me, Aunt Polly," grinned Jim, "I clean forgot."

"Well, you had better remember your manners next time, young man."

"Holdup—what's a holdup?" said Watson.

"Oh, it's only a little fun a fellow named Lone Jack had with the driver and passengers when he stepped out in front of the horses with a black rag over his face and a Winchester in his hand," said Loving.

"What did the passengers and the driver do?"

"Contributed their surplus wealth to pacify him."

"Anybody hurt?"

"Nope; he politely allowed them to depart after removing the mail sack."

"Say, do you know this is a little interesting to a man like me, making his first trip West?" remarked Watson.

"Spect so," said Loving.

After a few minutes' silence Watson, not entirely satisfied, asked: "Does this happen often?"

"Nope," remarked Dave Gardner; "it is generally the Indians that come cavorting around the stage and make everybody hustle to keep out of the way of a flock of arrows."

"Goodness, gracious, man! You talk as if it was a commonplace occurrence instead of an event where people are liable to lose their lives."

"Nothing much when you get used to it, stranger," remarked Gardner.

"Get used to it? How can a man get used to it when he is killed?"

"Course not, if he's dead. But suppose he don't get killed, he won't be so skittish the next time, I guess."

"Well, that's cool," said Watson; "I'm not so sure I'll enjoy this trip like I anticipated."

"Where you going, stranger?" asked Loving.

"A little trip out West in the interest of our boot and shoe house."

"Ever been West before?"

"Never."

"Then you'll learn a whole lot before you return, stranger."

"Seems I'm learning now," said Watson.

"Hope so, stranger," remarked Loving.

During the remainder of the journey a desultory conversation was kept up relative to Indian raids, horse thieves and exciting events generally until Watson was apprehensive that something terrible would happen.

Weatherford at this time was a straggling village of a few houses, not calculated to allay Watson's fears, especially as it had more the appearance of a frontier supply post than the county seat of an organized county.

One thing Watson did learn while waiting over for the next stage going West, and that was that his firm did not manufacture the right kind of footwear for the Western trade. He learned that shoes were tabooed entirely, and the kind of boots the cowboys would tolerate must have fancy tops and high heels. This much he informed his firm in his first letter East.

But what he had not yet learned was that not only must he know the kind of article for the market, but that a transformation must take place in Billy Watson before he could expect to take many orders for boots.

Like all salesmen, Watson was fond of spinning yarns and could relate some good ones, too.

The opportunity to indulge in this pastime presented itself the first evening in Weatherford.

After supper the proprietor, all the guests and many of the male population of the town assembled in the office of the Carson & Lewis House, among them, three or four cowboys.

It was not long before Watson monopolized the conversation and became the center attraction of the evening.

The cowboys resented this, and decided that the "tenderfoot" was too fresh, and sprung the old range gag on him.

Listening patiently to one of his most brilliant selections, without even an encouraging smile, one of their number said:

"Now, stranger, if it don't make any difference with you, and you won't get angry, we don't care to believe that story."

A sickly smile overspread Watson's face, and, while very much chagrined he was sharp enough to see that the joke was on him, and invited all hands to the bar.

The next morning, before the stage arrived, the pro-

prietor, who took a friendly interest in Watson, called him aside, and in a few kind words informed him that it would be better to lay his derby aside and wear a hat more in harmony with his surroundings. Quick to see the logic in the suggestion, he bought a broad-brim Stetson, which met the approval of the cowboys.

But it was only after his experience in the town of Comanche that Watson acknowledged that he was fully initiated into the mysteries of the "Wild West."

Here he met congenial spirits who led him to a humiliating exhibition of his skill as a sprinter. As villainous a plot as was ever hatched by conspirators was planned by those who professed to be his friends.

In company with four of the conspirators, Watson hired an old stagecoach and started to a country dance, ten miles distant. In the meantime ten more of the conspirators, dressed as Comanches, sneaked out of town and formed an ambushade where the road dipped through a dark ravine.

When the stage was passing through the defile the imitation Indians dashed from concealment, whooping, shouting and firing their guns. Four grasped the horses by their bits and the others rushed to the stage. Watson and his companions jumped out and tried to escape. Two fell, exclaiming that they were shot. The others took the lead and yelled for Watson to come on. In the melee they ran through the line of the supposed Indians and headed for the town. After a spirited chase, during which Watson's companions all fell from the fusilade kept up by the pursuing Indians, Bill Watson ran into the town of Comanche more dead than alive, with a lurid story to relate.

It was several days before he learned the truth and was willing to admit that even a clever drummer was not

equal to the cunning of a bunch of Texas cow punchers. To Billy Watson it was so realistic that he manufactured a hair-raising story that had all the elements of the real thing.

IN BED WITH A COUGAR

In the spring of 1879 Texas and Kentuck visited Jess Ellison's cow camp on the North Prong of Hubbard's creek about four miles southeast of Albany, where the boys had selected a temporary camp until the headquarters ranch was established a few miles below.

The camp was on the shore of a deep water hole under a spreading elm tree.

Both Texas and Kentuck were welcome in any cow camp on the range, and always enjoyed these outings.

When Sam Jackson, the cook on this occasion, began to hustle provisions for supper, he discovered that the outfit was shy on meat, and appealed to Ellison. When informed of the situation, Ellison ordered two of the boys to mount their ponies and drive in a fat yearling. The yearling was butchered and the carcass hung on a limb near the fire, and some choice portions fried for supper.

The conversation while eating was chiefly relative to the depredations of a large cougar that had been killing calves and yearlings on the range along North Prong.

"Riley Carter saw the blamed thing kill one of Uncle George Greer's yearlings last week, but was too far away to secure a shot," said Roe Leffle, one of Greer's cowboys stopping in Ellison's camp over night.

"Yes, he's onto his job, sure enough," said Sam Jackson; "he has killed a dozen head in the last two months. That's part of our business to hunt him down and kill him. I believe he has a den in the rocky bluff below Royal's place."

"Have you any guns and dogs in camp?" inquired Texas.

"Two long-barrel Winchesters and that old hound—can't run much, but good nose for the trail."

"Well, Kentuck and I will remain over tomorrow, and we will hunt the yellow devil," remarked Texas.

"That's just what I would suggest," said Ellison. "It will be exciting sport to run him to cover and take a pot-shot at him."

During the remainder of the evening the conversation was general; no particular subject of interest was canvassed by the group around the fire.

The air was chilly and the boys made what was called a grand spread; that is, they laid their blankets in one large bed and snuggled up together to keep warm.

When all had retired old Tige, the hound, curled up on one side of the blankets and it was not long until the concert of snores gave unmistakable evidence that the men and the dog were wrapped in slumber.

Sometime near midnight—that hour friendliest to sleep and silence, the hour when "ghosts walk and graveyards yawn,"—something happened.

About this time old Tige awoke and scented danger in the air. He gave an ominous sniff, followed by a sharp bark, as he bravely dashed out toward the tree where the carcass of the yearling hung. For the briefest part of a moment there was a low whining noise, then a loud piercing cat squall, mixed with the sharp painful yelps of the hound as he rushed back to the blankets for protection. But as he was so closely followed by the cougar that he could not stop, both dog and cougar ran over the sleeping forms of the cow punchers.

It would be hard to tell which was scared the worst, the dog, the cougar or the men under the blankets. The

cougar gave an agonizing screech and disappeared like a yellow streak in the night. Jess Ellison and Sam Jackson rolled over the bank into the water; Texas, Kentuck and the rest of the boys took to the open prairie and ran some distance before they realized the situation. The blamed old hound was scared so bad he sat down upon his tail and howled. It was almost daylight before the camp quieted down.

"Say, Texas," said Sam Jackson the next morning, "wasn't that the darnedest mixup of blankets, cow punchers, cougar and dog you ever heard of?"

"Sure thing, Sam; but I would not think that it required a cougar to compel you and Jess to take a bath."

"Depends on which side you occupy when the cougar arrives, Texas. Now if I had slept on your side, perhaps I would have run instead of attempting to swim."

When the morning's repast was finished ponies were saddled and Texas, Kentuck, Ellison and Jackson rode up North Prong to the rocky bluff below Royal's ranch.

No more favorable place for a cougar's den could be found. The stream washed the base of a rocky ledge, almost perpendicular, with large cavities covered with dense thickets of underbrush and catclaws.

Climbing to the top of the ledge, Texas and Kentuck, each armed with Winchester rifles, kept a sharp lookout while the other boys beat the brush up and down the stream. Evidence of the recent presence of the big cat was discovered, and the hunters were on the qui vive for the sudden appearance of the cougar.

It was about noon when the old dog struck a warm trail and soon located the cougar. With an angry scream of defiance the big cat broke cover and ran up the body of a leaning elm tree that hung over the water. But the intervening trees prevented the two riflemen from secur-

ing a good shot. In the meantime the old hound barked at the foot of the tree, while the cougar snarled and spit in its anger.

By careful maneuvering Texas secured an advantageous position and drew a bead on the cougar, but before he could pull the trigger the cat sprang to the top of another small tree and Kentuck leveled his gun to fire. Again the cougar sprang, this time upon the rocky ledge and ran toward Texas, passing within a few feet of where he was standing. But with rare presence of mind he stood his ground and fired a ball into the beast behind its fore shoulder. With an unearthly scream, like the wail of a dying woman, the big cat made a spring at her slayer. But the leaden messenger had penetrated her heart and she fell a mass of yellow at his feet, jerking in her death struggle to the edge of the bluff, where she fell into the water below. But Sam Jackson threw his rope and dragged her to the shore, and he and Jess Ellison removed the skin. When stretched to full length this large female cougar measured nine feet from tip of nose to the tip of its tail.

Texas was the hero of the hour, having stood his ground in the face of danger and killed a ferocious wild beast that had long depredated on the herds of the cattle men.

ROPING A FULL-GROWN DEER ON THE RANGE

However honest might be the intentions of the trail boss, it frequently happened that an outfit from Southern Texas, driving a large herd to Kansas or other northern points, accumulated many stragglers that drifted into the herds from the local ranges along the trail.

To protect their interests, many of the large ranches in Shackelford, Throckmorton, Archer and Baylor counties sent their cowboys to the crossing on Red river,

where the stragglers were cut out and driven back to their home range.

On one occasion Texas, Luke McCabe and Mart Gentry were sent north as far as Doan's store, at the trail crossing.

They were absent ten days on the trip and cut a herd of thirty head, and started the bunch south. But while holding them over night there was a stampede, and the steers raced down the river and were lost in the brakes.

After following traces of the runaways the next morning, until they were lost in the S. B. Burnett range, the boys scattered, under agreement of a rendezvous on the Big Wichita at the mouth of Beaver creek.

Fortunately Burk Burnett maintained a line-riding camp at this point, and when Texas and the other boys arrived Tom Pickett, the range boss, extended them the usual hospitality, and they decided to make this a common point from which to ride the range, in hope of rounding up the runaways.

The first night in this camp was out of the ordinary in two respects. The Burnett outfit possessed a pack of hounds and a wild Irishman by the name of Pat O'Tool.

After supper Pickett, who was a sportsman when the opportunity offered, invited the visitors to go cat hunting. Texas and O'Tool were the only two who accepted, O'Tool being the new cook for the Burnett outfit.

Texas and Pickett mounted their ponies and the Irishman followed on the pack mule.

It was a moonlit night, but shortly after they started a bank of clouds came up in the southwest, and when the hounds struck a trail and were in full swing a light thunder shower burst upon the trio, veiling the moon and casting a dark shadow over the valley.

The pack of hounds pushed the game to cover in a thick-

et along the bank of Beaver creek. The animal was at bay surrounded by the dogs when the three hunters arrived on the scene.

By the aid of intermittent flashes of lightning they indistinctly saw something in the thicket.

"What do you reckon it is, Pickett?" said Texas.

"I expect that it is a bobcat or a coyote," replied Pickett.

"But seems to me it looks larger than either," remarked Texas.

"Look out, boys," said Pickett, "when she flashes again I'll rope the dad-blasted thing." Suiting his action to his words, he uncoiled his lariat.

True to his promise, he threw his lariat and made fast to the animal, which proved to be a full-grown buck deer. Then there followed one of the greatest scrimmages you ever heard of.

That cussed deer jumped straight up in the air, snorted, bucked and ran in a circle, winding the lariat around O'Tool and his mule.

The rope was wet from the rain, and when the cold, wet strands struck his muleship, he threw down his head and began to buck, pitching the unfortunate Irishman off in front, and prancing all over him with his hoofs.

In the meantime Pickett and Texas, with the aid of the dogs, succeeded in throwing and tying the deer, with all four feet together.

By this time O'Tool had scrambled to a sitting posture, and was carefully examining his anatomy, to find where he was injured.

"Holy Mither, I'm killed entirely, and that heathen bruit of a mule has broken every bone in me body, bad luck to the divil. I'll be a dead gossoon and never see the bogs of ould Ireland again."

"Oh, get up, Pat, and lend a hand to tie this deer on the mule."

"May the divil fly away wid yez, and the ould witches comb yez hair wid a garden rake if I iver listen to yez soft voice, me honey. Here I am a respectable Irish gentleman, wid me feelings hurt and me best suit of clothes ruined, all for nothing at all, at all."

"Oh, cut it out, Pat, and let's go," said Pickett.

And the deer was carried into camp alive.

CHRISTMAS ON THE RANGE

The old-time cowboy made the most out of life that circumstances would permit, and never became discouraged or backed down along the line of duty, no matter how large the obstacle that confronted him.

When out on the open range, far from the home ranch, with no white man's habitation within miles of his lonely camp, where he and his companions spent the hours of evenings, he always managed to extract a certain degree of comfort and amusement out of the situation. It often happened that the holidays and even Christmas, were spent in some sheltered valley or canyon, where a winter's camp was established to keep back the drifting cattle. These camps were generally supplied with a dugout among the brakes or on a mountain side near a deep water hole, convenient for line riding.

During the winter of 1877 J. C. Lynch's outfit maintained a camp on the headwaters of North Prong of Hubbard's creek, near the south side of a low mountain that sheltered the camp from the north wind.

It was an ideal place for a camp. North Prong made an abrupt turn where the water washed the base of a bluff during the flood-tide of the spring rains. In the side of this bluff a dugout had been excavated and cov-

ered with timber and dirt. A rough door shut out coyotes and other prowling varmints when the boys were absent. Within this dugout the men bunked and kept their provisions.

Ed Tucker, Joe Batts and Pat O'Laughlin did the honors when they invited Texas and Kentuck to eat Christmas dinner with them.

A wild turkey gobbler had been killed the night previous, and was suspended from the tip of a bended sapling over a bed of live mesquite coals. O'Laughlin had been turning and basting it all morning, and as the noon hour approached it was brown and juicy.

Joe Batts used his best skill making up a batch of dough and forming it into a large pone, well seasoned with tallow for shortening. This was baked in a large oven over a bed of coals and the embers piled upon the lid.

Ed Tucker exhibited the perfection of experience in the art of coffee-making, brewing it strong enough, as he expressed it, "to hold up an iron wedge."

In the meantime, Kentuck, who had not forgotten the recipe for making "Tom and Jerry," soon had the mixture concocted to "the Queen's taste."

Texas, who claimed to understand the anatomy of a turkey, was busy sharpening a butcher knife, preparatory to scientifically dissecting the bird at the proper time.

Therefore, it was a jovial bunch of good fellows that assembled around the rough festival board that bright Christmas day.

A bottle of pickles and a can of peaches gave the proper relish, and the "Tom and Jerry" made the spirits arise as fast as a glass of spirits went down.

'Tis true that it was a Christmas dinner in the wilds,

far removed from the conventional room, table and spotless white cloth, set with artistic care and loaded with delicious viands. 'Tis equally true that the board was not graced with the presence of lovely woman, whose smiles and fluffy-ruffles, lend sunshine to the Christmas dinner. But, nevertheless, the good cheer and comradeship on that occasion will never be forgotten by those living who participated in the Christmas dinner on North Prong.

"Say, boys, good-by," said Texas; "Kentuck and I have had a splendid time, and may you live long and prosper." And the comrades rode back to Albany well pleased with the recreation.

It was occasions like this that cemented the friendship of those who lived on the frontier.

Nowhere on top of earth was the brotherhood of man better exemplified than among the cowboys of the prairie country. Both time and money were at the disposal of your friend. Even life itself backed up that friendship when necessary to support a comrade. "Do unto others as you wish them to do unto you" was the unwritten law lived up to by the knights of "The Quirt and Spur."

"Rough and ready, bold and brave,
Money and friendship he freely gave;
A good Samaritan in time of need,
Flying to the rescue with uttermost speed."

FORT MUGGINSVILLE

On an elevated plateau within 100 yards of the Clear Fork of the Brazos river, not far from the mouth of Deep creek, the early settlers found it necessary for the protection of their families to build a large stockade, inclosing about five acres of land. Within this enclosure they built rude log huts to furnish shelter and protection against the blasts of winter and the heat of summer. In

the center of the stockade they built a schoolhouse large enough to accommodate all the children and the teacher. On Sundays this house was used for divine services. The stockade was about eight feet high, with loopholes, affording an excellent defense against Indian attacks.

During the years from 1863 to 1875 the families of all ranchmen within a radius of 100 miles lived at Fort Mugginsville, often remaining for several weeks at a time without any protection, except a few old men and boys. But every woman in those days was a heroine, accustomed to using the rifle with deadly effect. During these periods the ranchmen and their cowboys were out on the open range, rounding-up, marking and branding cattle, camping wherever night overtook them, often compelled to fight bands of Indians to prevent them carrying off the saddle ponies belonging to the outfit.

Within the stockade the monotonous life was relieved by the attendance of the children at the school and the occasional visit of the frontier preacher.

The school teacher, one William Veal, who afterward became one of the leading lawyers of Northwest Texas, was an original character, overflowing with humor and always ready to perpetrate a practical joke, that sometimes complicated matters and introduced awkward and ludicrous situations.

Among the ranchmen's families who resided in this little colony were the wife, son and two daughters of Uncle Joe Matthews, a typical frontiersman, big-hearted, honest and frank, always ready to come to the aid of a friend in distress. And, with few exceptions, everybody was Uncle Joe's friend.

After the fall round-ups the cattle were turned loose to drift on the open range until the grass became green in the spring. Consequently, during the winter season

the ranchmen and cowboys repaired to Fort Mugginsville for the three months' idle time. One can imagine how soon this monotonous life of being penned up in a five-acre stockade would affect a live, robust cowboy. So, when Bill Veal taxed his mental faculties to devise amusement for the boys, his diversions were hailed with delight, especially the organization of a debating society.

While others hailed the prospect of this new diversion with delight, Uncle Joe shook his head in a dubious manner, and seemed to possess a premonition of trouble ahead. Now, the old gent was easily embarrassed, and also had a slight defect in his vocal organs that added to his confusion when called on to take part in the evening's exercises. And notwithstanding the close ties of friendship between him and Bill Veal, he always viewed with suspicion any attempt on Bill's part to introduce any new form of entertainment. He had learned from past experience that Veal did not hesitate to place him in an awkward position whenever opportunity presented.

Some men seek honors and other men have honors thrust upon them. Uncle Joe belonged to the latter class. For it soon became apparent that he had been selected to take a leading part in these debates. And though he begged and pleaded with his tormentors to be left off the program, his name always headed the list in opposition to Bill Veal. The only saving clause in the situation was that he never lost his temper and even laughed over his own mistakes. Veal possessed an easy flow of words as well as a keen sense of humor, and consequently found Uncle Joe an easy mark for his witticisms.

But as if these trying ordeals were not enough to exhaust the patience of a saint, much less a whole-souled gentleman who was willing to undergo mental tortures to amuse his friends, the crowning act of conspiracy

against Uncle Joe's peace of mind was his appointment to the office of justice of the peace.

Some few weeks prior to the organization of the debating society, the cattlemen recognized the necessity of having some semblance of legal authority to appeal to in case of emergency, but as both Shackelford and Throckmorton were unorganized counties, attached to Palo Pinto for judicial purposes, it became necessary to have a justice of the peace at large for the whole community. The enthusiastic friends of Uncle Joe, without his knowledge, secured his appointment to the office, and after a great deal of persuasion induced him to qualify. But before he became acquainted with the onerous duties of his office circumstances and Bill Veal were his undoing.

As strange as it may seem, Dan Cupid visited this sparsely settled district of the Texas frontier and shot his arrow into the hearts of a lad and lassie within the narrow limits of Mugginsville. In almost any community this would have been an ordinary event, arousing only a passing interest. But within the stockade where the settlers were like one large family, every one took a personal interest in the lovers.

As soon as the engagement of (for the purposes of this story) Tom Guier and Lizzie Lafet was made known there was a general consultation held by the older and wiser heads. And as the young couple desired that the matter be not long delayed, it was decided that all arrangements could be made within a week, for necessity reduced the costumes of the bride and groom to a minimum, by reason of the great distance from any place where they could be purchased. This reduced the preparations to preparing the wedding dinner and securing the proper authority to perform the ceremony.

The itinerant Methodist minister having, after a brief

visit, departed the week before, with no probability of his return within the next six months, his presence on the occasion was out of the question. The next legal authority, except Uncle Joe, was 150 miles distant, too far away to be considered. Consequently, notwithstanding all of his protests, Uncle Joe was told to consider himself engaged for the occasion. In his dilemma the good old gentleman turned to his friend Veal for advice, though he had many proofs of his disloyalty. Now, though Veal was a true and loyal friend of Uncle Joe's and always helped him in his business affairs and never failed to respond when called on, when it came to an opportunity to have amusement at his friend's expense he did not stop to consider the solemnity of even the marriage ceremony. Consequently, Uncle Joe proved an easy victim to Veal's blandishments, and with confidence disarmed of all suspicion he followed Veal from the fort one evening to the open prairie, where they could recline on the grass beneath a liveoak tree, and where they could have a confidential talk, and where the confiding old gentleman listened to the advice of his friend, who volunteered to assist and instruct him in the necessary marriage ceremony. But he was not an apt scholar, and jumbled the teacher's words in a shocking way that was not at all promising. He mixed up the classic words of Veal with the localisms of the frontier.

As the time approached for the trying ordeal, Uncle Joe grew nervous and did not seem to enjoy his accustomed meals, and his good wife Catherine became anxious, and wanted to dose him with herb tea, but he sadly shook his head and beckoned his friend Veal aside for another rehearsal.

The wedding day arrived. It was an ideal day in mid-winter. The crystallized dew sparkled like diamonds as

the first rays of the sun pierced the crisp atmosphere of the early morning. All nature began to greet the king of day as his bright face came in view over the top of the sloping hills in the east. The lowing of the cattle, neighing of the horses and shouts of the cowboys announced that Mugginsville had chased the drowsy god of sleep over the stockade, and that the inhabitants were preparing to begin the routine duties of the day. In a comparatively short time the buzz of daily life was in full force and Mugginsville assumed its normal everyday condition.

The wedding ceremony was announced to take place at 2 p. m., and as a general invitation had been extended to the whole range, the cowboys from 100 miles distant were expected to arrive during the morning hours, for winter and summer alike they were prepared to camp out, and were always at home on the prairie when night overtook them. Many, no doubt, had camped within easy distance the night before.

The importance of the occasion weighed heavily upon Uncle Joe's mind, and he was anything but gay on this festal occasion. And when he hunted up Bill Veal for a final consultation, he looked like a motherless calf. The colloquy that took place on this occasion of the final rehearsal of the rite of matrimony can only be based on the story often repeated by the Hon. William Veal in after years. There can be no doubt that it was ludicrous in the extreme, and something after the following style of frontier lingo:

"Say, Bill, I'm about to quit—stampede—leave the bed ground and take to the brush. Blamed if this marriage business hasn't locoed me. I can't remember that dodgasted stuff you have been feeding me for a week. Say, Bill, what's the use in me bucking around in a bald-faced

shirt and a fried collar, like a two-year-old in heel-fly time? Let the blamed idiots wait until the sky-pilot comes back again. I don't *sabe* this J. P. business—never hankered after it, but you blamed fools drove me into the corral and branded me before I could kick."

"Now, look here, Uncle Joe," said Veal, "you can't quit the drive now, and disgrace Catherine and the children. Every galoot on the range within 100 miles of Mugginsville will be here to see you hitch 'em up in double harness—the chips are all stacked, and you will have to play the game out—no chance to take the back trail now, Uncle Joe. Of course, you feel a little upset, but just think how happy those mavericks will be when you put the legal brand on them, and they will be allowed to herd together without any one objecting to the mark and brand."

"Oh, chuck the whole business, Bill; I'm sure sick, and I know I'll ball up in the middle of the trail, with that blamed lingo you have been giving me."

"Here, Uncle Joe, brace up," and Veal pulled a suspicious bottle from the bosom of his shirt and handed it to his friend. After each had paid his respects to the contents, the rehearsal was gone through for the last time and they returned to the hustling little fort.

But Uncle Joe became absent-minded and passed by his most intimate friends without noticing them. The ranchmen and cowboys missed his usual cheery greeting. He walked as if in a dream, and did not answer Aunt Catherine when she called to him from the cabin door. If ever the victim of malicious fun-making suffered the full penalty of his credulity it was this confiding old gentleman who would not have hurt the feelings of a child, much less to have imposed upon his friends. In Uncle Joe's case it was downright cruelty to burden him with

the legal responsibility of the marriage. Nature had endowed him with a kind and loving disposition, overflowing with generosity. His simple life on the frontier had removed him from the wiles and sharp dealings of competition, and he was unfitted to cope with deception of any kind, much less to suspect his best friends, for his whole life had been an open book read by all men. Consequently, he overestimated the importance of his position and tried to measure up to it. For once in his life he could not enter into the jolly spirit of the occasion. He had been removed from his accustomed place as host, and was no longer the "hail fellow well met." It seemed to him that he had been set aside as a vicarious sacrifice by his friends and neighbors. It even sobered Bill Veal to see his friend so dejected, and caused him for the moment pangs of regret. But matters had proceeded too far for him to call a halt.

The crucial moment arrived, and the little plaza around the schoolhouse was crowded with the guests. The bride and groom, as presentable as the circumstances would permit, came through a lane made by the cowboys to where Uncle Joe, supported by Bill Veal, stood in front of the schoolhouse door, and all the men doffed their hats and a silence, so profound that it made Uncle Joe tremble, fell over the assembly.

One minute—two minutes—three minutes before Uncle Joe could summon courage enough to speak.

He looked helplessly at the eager faces before him, coughed nervously, wiped his face several times with his bandana, gasped and finally said:

"Tom Guir, are you plumb sure that you love Lizzie Lafet?"

"Sure I do, Uncle Joe," replied Tom.

"And you want me to give you a legal bill of sale to all right and title to mark and brand her?"

"That's what I'm here for, Uncle Joe."

"Lizzie, has Tom always played fair with you—didn't sneak around on the blind side of you to palaver—has made an honest and square deal with you?"

"He did the square thing, Uncle Joe."

"Then I (aside to Veal: 'Say, Bill, I'm going to cut out all that funny business') declare you two to be husband and wife. (Oh, say, Bill, I forgot all about that bursting asunder business, and I'm going to stop the deal right now.) Now I'm done—you youngsters trot off and behave yourselves."

A loud shout went up from the crowd, a rush was made for the bride and groom and a general handshaking took place. Everybody seemed as happy as if it were their own wedding day. Uncle Joe soon recovered his wonted cheerfulness, and was the liveliest kid in the bunch.

The schoolhouse was turned into a banquet hall, and a royal feast was spread. The bill of fare consisted of wild turkeys, venison, prairie chickens and quail; ponies of light bread, hot biscuits and hot coffee; wild plum jelly and grape preserves; cakes and pies in abundance. And it was the jolliest crowd that ever assembled around a banquet table to enjoy to its full measure the true happiness of those who bow not to caste or position in society.

After the banquet the evening and the night following was given over to dancing and other merry rounds of pleasure, that kept pace with the hands of the clock that hung on the schoolhouse wall.

A MARRIAGE UNDER DIFFICULTIES

Imagine, if you can, the conditions during a continuous rain in the semi-arid district of Northwest Texas.

For ten days the heavy rain clouds hung low over the

entire landscape, and everything was soaking wet. As an Englishman would say, 'it was beastly weather.' The great watersheds of the open prairie had turned its torrents into the valleys, and the dry beds of the canyons had become rushing rivers, obliterating all traces of the streams that ordinarily accommodated the head waters.

Kentuck was sitting in the cooped-up office of the old picket courthouse, looking out through the small 8 by 10 glass window, at the gloomy sky and misty prairie, while the continuous dripping of the eaves gave him a miserable, depressed feeling. He came nearer being real homesick than at any time since he left the mountains of his native State. As if in response to his ardent desire for something to happen, there slouched into the room the dripping figure of Ed Tucker, one of Lynch's cowboys.

"Hello, Tucker," said Kentuck, "what brings you to town through the rain?"

"Very important business, Kentuck."

"I'll stake my money on that, Tucker, or you would not be riding a day like this."

"You bet it had to come off or you would never have seen this coyote. And you have got to play a hand in this game, too, Kentuck, so you might as well pull on your slicker, old man."

"What, you don't mean to say you came after me on a day like this?"

"Yep, can't do the job myself, and I'm afraid it will spoil if it is put off."

"What's all this chin music about, anyway, Tucker?"

"Why, Joe Batts has roped old man McCarty's gal and wants you to brand her, so he will have a legal right to put her in his corral."

"Gee-whiz, Tucker, they will have to put it off until the weather clears. Every hole on the prairie is full and

running over, and we can't find a pony or ford a single stream."

"Yep, that's so, but we can swim them."

"But, I tell you, I haven't any pony, and I'll be dod-blamed if I'm going out to hunt one."

"Got no excuse, Kentuck. I led one in, and she can swim like a duck."

"Say, Tucker, you are not serious, I hope. Why, it would be worse than foolishness for me to go out in this weather. Besides, it doesn't give me any time to study up an appropriate ceremony. I don't know a thing about tying the matrimonial knot, Tucker."

"Sorry, old man, but Joe said I was to take no excuse."

"Now, see here, Tucker, be reasonable for once in your life. I can't see any harm in delaying this matter for a day or two."

"Of course, you don't, Kentuck, 'cause you are not going to be married, but you are going to attend to this marrying business all the same, so get ready."

"Oh, go to thunder. I suppose there is no use arguing with you?"

"Now, that's sensible, Kentuck. You didn't suppose I was going back without you, after swimming all the way here, did you?"

"How many streams are there to swim, Tucker?"

"North Prong, Salt Prong and Deep creek are the main ones, and a whole lot of small draws."

"Great goodness, we will be under water half of the time."

"Yep, most of the time."

"Say, Tucker, you are not really in earnest. You know you are only trying to play a practical joke, and give me a ducking in North Prong, and have the laugh

on me. I haven't forgotten the time you played one on me by lending me that old gray cayuse that threw me several somersaults, while all you yaps split your sides laughing."

"Hold on, Kentuck; this is no monkey business, old man; it is plumb downright serious. Joe will have to be spliced to-day or wait until the fall round-ups are all over. Why, you wouldn't treat a sneaking coyote that mean, Kentuck? Just think of it—making Joe wait six months—he would pine away to a shadow."

"Oh, well, I guess there is no way out of it but to go. If I am drowned I hope you will plant flowers on my grave."

"Of course, you will need wringing out when we get there, but think of how well pleased Joe will be when he knows that he has a legal bill of sale to that girl."

A very few minutes sufficed to make arrangements for the journey, and Kentuck and Tucker were off for the McCarty ranch.

As they passed the door of Papa Barre's hotel, Kentuck informed him that if any more fools came along looking for the J. P., to shoot them and he would hold an inquest over them when he returned.

A more depressing and unromantic journey than their ride on that rainy morning cannot be conceived. There was a continuous downpour and the trail ran a perfect sluice of water. The smallest ravines were bank full, and the lowlands along the streams were great lakes. All the trees, shrubbery and vegetation was dripping, soaking wet and even the prairie hawk, sitting on a dead mesquite limb, looked forlorn with his feathers plastered down with heavy moisture. Nothing but the tiny frogs seemed to be alive to the situation and enjoying themselves.

Several times Kentuck and Tucker rode saddle-skirt deep through the water covering the trail, but it was at the crossing of North Prong that they made their first plunge into the seething flood.

Tucker led, and his little wiry mustang was soon blowing the water from his nostrils as he swam breast high across the stream. This encouraged Kentuck to urge his pony to follow, which he did after registering a protest. When safely over they both dismounted to allow the animals to rest. Then they mounted and were off for Salt Prong, riding through a valley running knee deep in water.

The ford on Salt Prong proved to be more difficult and dangerous. The rush of the head waters caused the banks to wash, and the trail at the crossing had caved in at the water's edge, leaving an abrupt descent.

"Take the lead, Kentuck," said Tucker. "It is your time to navigate, old man."

"Not on your life, Tucker; you are the guide on this journey, and I don't propose to divide the honors with you. So just mosey along, my son, and take your annual bath."

"Oh, of course, I knew you were going to flunk, Kentuck, but I wanted to show you some courtesy, even if you are a 'tenderfoot.'"

"Cinch your fly-trap, and hit the trail, Tucker; it will be noon before we arrive at McCarty's ranch, and think of that wedding dinner spoiling while you are hesitating to irrigate that alkali dust on your back."

"Cheese the racket, Kentuck, or you will swallow so much red mud mixed with a little water that it will take a derrick to lift you out of the way of the chuck wagon when it comes along next spring."

By persuasion of his spurs, Tucker urged his pony to

slide down the bank and plunge into the water. The pony and rider went out of sight in the swift running stream, and when they appeared Tucker slid off behind and grabbed his pony by the tail, and the animal towed him across. Before he had time to turn, Kentuck urged his pony into the water, and went through the same performance given by Tucker, being his first experience tailing onto a pony.

In this way they successfully forded Deep creek and came in sight of McCarty's ranch, not far from the confluence of Deep creek and the Clear Fork of the Brazos river.

The ranch house was built of rubble stone, a story and a half high, with a corral and a few sheds near it. On this occasion it stood in the center of a lake about a mile wide, with the water three feet deep in the lower story. Out of a half-window in the gable the heads of the occupants could be seen, watching the movements of the two as they hesitated on the edge of the lake.

"Seems to me you are losing time, Tucker, fooling around this water hole," remarked Kentuck. "Why don't you lead on? I'm anxious to taste the flavor of that wild turkey that I know Mother McCarty has been cooking for this occasion."

"There you go again, Kentuck; I would think your mind was occupied with the marriage ceremony instead of wasting your chin music on me."

"Thunder, this rainy weather has knocked all the ceremony out of me, and I can't remember a word of it. Go ahead and let us get through with it as quick as possible, Tucker."

"Well, here goes; spur up, Kentuck. Head for the liveoak and we will miss the ravine on the left of the trail. It might give us some trouble if we fell into the catclaws that grow there."

Notwithstanding the average depth was only three feet, there were several depressions it was necessary to swim before they arrived at the ranch house.

The whole family, including Joe Batts, were upstairs, in what may properly be called the loft. Downstairs the water was three feet deep, and the dogs, pigs and chickens were making a brave effort to keep from drowning.

Using their lassos for stake ropes the ponies were tied to the open work of the stairway and allowed to drift behind the house out of the current. Then in response to the invitation to come up, they climbed to the loft and extended their congratulations to the prospective bride and groom and received a hearty welcome.

The room, nothing more than a vacant garret, furnished but little space to manœuvre in, consequently there was no place for the candidates for matrimony to change clothes for the ceremony, however much they may have desired to do so.

In fact, the ceremony partook more of the burlesque than solemnity, for the ridiculous figure of the J. P. trying to summon sufficient dignity for the occasion, while he shivered like a half-drowned rat, with no chance to escape, produced the realistic feature of a comic opera.

There were a few minutes' awkward silence, during which no one seemed inclined to take the initiative, and it fell to the lot of the J. P. to set the ball rolling.

"Oh, I say, Joe Batts, what do you think I permitted Ed Tucker to tow me through all this water and mud for? Get a move on you, quick, and lead Mollie McCarty over here by the window, and I will tie you so hard and fast together that it will take a cyclone to burst the bonds."

Joe turned red in the face, and the bride-elect began

to snicker. Good old Mother McCarty came to the rescue and hustled them in shape before the J. P.

"Now, hold up your right hands—no, dod blame it, that's wrong—of course I don't want to swear you—say, Tucker, if you don't get that grin off your face there will be a funeral instead of a wedding—Oh, yes, now I remember, join your right hands—say, Joe, don't you know your right hand from your left? Now, Mollie, if you don't stop snickering I'll throw up the job and quit."

"Joe Batts, are you willing to take this girl, Miss Mollie McCarty, to be your lawfully wedded wife? Well, why don't you say yes—what are you looking so skeered for?—Did I hear you say yes? Well, it was a mighty weak yes, but I guess it will do.

"Now, Joe, I'm not going to ask you to promise to support her, and those other fool questions the preachers shove at a fellow, because I don't think you are equal to the burden without the help of Uncle Jake McCarty, but if you don't try, I'll have you indicted.

"Now, Mollie McCarty, do you take this sap-headed galoot, Joe Batts, to be your lawfully wedded husband? Say, Mollie, if you don't stop giggling long enough to say yes, I'll go away and leave you half spliced.

"Oh, that's a mighty chirpy little yes; sounds like a chicken when it first pips the shell.

"Now, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the law, and according to the Constitution of the United States and of this State, and in the presence of the witnesses here assembled, I pronounce you husband and wife. And may the Lord have mercy on your souls.

"Say, Tucker, what are you doubled up in a knot for? You look like a case of cramp colic."

"Now, Kentuck," said Batts, "I'm much obliged to you until you are better paid. You know I'll not have any money until the boss sells some beeves."

"Oh, that's all right, Joe; don't let a little thing like that bother you."

"Come here, Mollie, and let me give you a piece of fatherly and motherly advice. Begin now to train Josephus in the way he should go, and if he departs therefrom, make him cook, wash and milk the cows."

Notwithstanding the difficulties, Mrs. McCarty set out a delicious lunch of wild turkey, bread, coffee, cakes, pies, and other good things.

And after an hour's rest, Tucker and Kentuck started out on their return journey to Albany.

This marriage under difficulties and similar events go to prove how brave and cheerful the early settlers were under trying ordeals.

CHAPTER IX

ON THE BUFFALO RANGE WITH A FRONTIER TRAMP

Down the valley the herd came, ten thousand or more;
Clattering hoofs, clashing horns and a bellowing roar.

The traffic in buffalo hides was greater than the trail and ranch supply business combined, during the hunting seasons from 1875 to 1879.

Thirty tons of lead and five tons of powder, stored in the warehouse and magazine attached to the Conrad & Rath supply store, gave some idea of the immense trade done by this firm alone, to say nothing of the business done by the firms of York & Draper, William McKamey and T. E. Jackson, each carrying hunter's supplies.

Around these stores one could join the groups of sun-bronzed hunters, and listen to marvelous stories.

They were the favorite resorts for Kentuck to spend his leisure time, and created within him a wild desire to visit the scenes where men risked their lives and endured all kinds of hardships.

No doubt that many incidents related were exaggerated and perhaps some pure fiction, for your hunters and fishermen are great romancers.

But uncertainty is a most potent tonic to whet the appetite for curiosity, and even the experienced hunters were often led to investigate the rumors that were set afloat by garrulous tongues.

Especially interesting was the story told of a mysteri-

ous personage known as "Smoky." He was reported to come and go from camp to camp on the range like the spirit of the "Wandering Jew."

If he had any antecedent history no one knew, and the freedom of frontier license forbade investigation by those who might otherwise have questioned him.

If he had any haunts where he hid during those periods when he disappeared for weeks and months, no one had ever discovered them.

Three times in five years "Smoky" had visited Fort Griffin, but the dance halls and saloons were not patronized by him. Ammunition, coffee and tobacco were the extent of his purchases, and he did not tarry long after securing them.

Notwithstanding the mystery that surrounded this strange man, nothing crooked had ever been charged against him.

Kentuck saw "Smoky" on one of his rare visits, and sized him up as the one and only frontier tramp. But later on he came to know this queer character under circumstances that gave him an opportunity to know that beneath the surface there was true manhood.

THE WHITE BUFFALO

"Hello, John! did you see the white buffalo?"

"White nothing! What kind of guff are you giving me, Dick?"

"Sure thing; one has been seen on the range near the Moor Brothers' camp, on the headwaters of the Clear Fork."

"Oh, I guess so," said John with an incredulous smile.

"Yes, one of the Moor boys is willing to swear to it—saw it himself."

"He must have been loaded with fire water."

"Maybe so, but Conrad offered \$100 for its hide, and Charley Moor said that he would bring it in if some other outfit did not beat him to it."

The conversation was in the hearing of Kentuck and aroused his curiosity. Hunting up Wilhelm, at Conrad's store, he inquired as to the truth of the rumor.

"Charley Moor is reliable," said Wilhelm, "and if he said there is a white buffalo on the range, it is true."

"If true, 'tis a rare freak of nature."

"Yes, nature plays some queer pranks in the mystery of reproduction. A white buffalo knocks a white black-bird off the Christmas tree."

Very few believed the report, and it was treated as a huge joke by the old hunters. Nevertheless, the improbable aroused curiosity, and every "doubting Thomas" kept an eye out when searching the range with his field glass.

The Moor brothers promised a "high old time" to the boys of their outfit when the white buffalo was killed.

One morning, a week before Christmas, Henry Palm's freight outfit came to the Moor camp to haul hides to Griffin, and Charley Moor was preparing to accompany him to the fort to purchase supplies.

"Billy, if you will go out and kill the white buffalo I'll bring back enough fire water to give the boys a week's spree."

"All right, Charley; here goes for a try." He picked up the "50-50" rifle and disappeared up the canyon, and it was near the noon hour when he returned with a pure white buffalo hide.

"Well, I'll be darned if you haven't made good, Billy; how did you turn the trick?"

"Got him on a long shot of a thousand yards."

"Hurrah for Billy!" shouted the boys.

BUFFALO HUNTING IN 1877

It was the middle of October, 1877, that ideal time of the year in Northwest Texas when the balmy air of fall sends a thrill of invigorating vitality through the system of man, making him long for the range, where the buffalo, deer, antelope, and wild turkeys abound in countless numbers, and the possible chance of meeting a band of hostile Indians to add the spice of adventure to the outing.

The conditions appealed to Texas and Kentuck like the spirit that prompts the mountain climber to face the rugged Alps. No man could live twelve months in a frontier town listening to the marvelous stories of the wild life of the buffalo hunters, who slaughtered their thousands in a season's hunt, without being possessed with an ungovernable desire to visit the scene.

Consequently, it was no great effort for Texas and Kentuck to persuade two congenial companions to join them for a journey to the "Staked Plains."

Nicknamed, respectively, Tennessee and Missouri, in honor of their native States; these young men entered into the enterprise with all the enthusiasm of novices.

It was one evening in the back room of Tennessee's drug store that the route was planned and the details worked out.

It was agreed to follow the Overland trail via the Greer crossing on Hubbard's creek enroute and return over the divide at the head of the Clear Fork via the "Shinnery" and Old Fort Phantom Hill.

One day's preparation secured Uncle Joe Nixon, a typical Englishman, and his span of horses and a covered wagon.

The necessary equipment of guns, ammunition, cook-

ing utensils and provisions, with plenty of blankets, were loaded into the wagon the night before, and in the early hours of the next morning Uncle Joe awakened the four young men for an early start. And one of those delightful journeys overland across the vast prairie country of Texas was begun. Only those who have enjoyed the experience of the open-air ride during the day and camping out at night in the uninhabited West, can understand the exhilarating influence that animates the traveler for recreation.

After crossing the Greer ford on Hubbard's creek, the trail gradually ascended to the open prairie country, where distance had no limit except the failure of the eye to catch the outline of space.

Off sixty miles to the southwest could be seen the blue outline of Signal Peak, a flat top mountain used by the Indians when on the warpath to build signal fires. Thirty miles due West the Double mountains marked the course of the trail, winding its way like the track of a great serpent across the open country to the Staked Plains.

Deer and antelope proved an easy mark for Texas' Henry rifle enroute, and each day's supply of fresh meat was fat and abundant.

Beyond meeting a few wagons loaded with buffalo hides, nothing transpired worth relating, until the outfit camped on the Double Mountain Fork of the Brazos, three days out from Albany.

The wagon was driven to a bend near a deep water hole, where a grove of cottonwood and elm trees supplied an excellent camping ground.

The sun was sinking in the west before the preparations for the night were complete, and Uncle Joe had announced supper, when the call and answering call of wild turkeys were heard approaching the stream.

"Be quiet, boys," said Texas; "we will have some rare sport tonight. That big cottonwood around the bend is a regular turkey roost."

As if with one impulse each individual in camp approached a knoll between the camp and the high ground, where a view could be obtained of the little valley along the stream. A few scraggy mesquites furnished an excellent screen for observation. From this vantage point the campers were able to see the approach to the cottonwood roost.

The call of the gobblers leading the flock into the valley and the answers of the hen turkeys became more and more distinct as they approached the edge of the shrubbery along the bank. Then came the bronze birds, first the leaders, and paused to reconnoiter before venturing into the opening near the tree. Then came the flock, until at least 500 flew up to the roost in the stately cottonwood.

The utmost caution was necessary on the part of Texas and his companions to prevent flushing the turkeys before night set in.

The remainder of the preparations were carried on quietly, and by the time the moon arose the men were ready to approach the roost and begin the slaughter of the birds.

And it was indeed rare exciting sport, though a cruel waste of game.

When all were ready and each armed with a double-barrel shotgun and plenty of ammunition, they advanced under the shadow of the tree on the opposite side from the moon. This brought the turkeys out in bold relief against the moonlit sky, an easy mark to shoot.

By mutual agreement, each selected a bird and all fired at once.

Several large, plump birds were heard to fall, and

though greatly disturbed, the larger number of the flock remained on the roost, and the remainder flew in a circle and settled on near-by trees. The hunters kept up the bombardment until they became tired of the sport, and in the morning picked up a dozen dead birds without the trouble of hunting up the wounded. During the next three days the choice parts of the turkeys were cooked and the remainder thrown away.

Every day the buffalo increased in numbers, and small herds could be seen making their way to the watering holes, but the hunting ground proper was nearer the Plains. Consequently, Texas and his companions did not loiter by the way, but pushed on to where the large outfits were camped on the Deep creek of the Colorado river.

The fifth day out from Albany they drove up in front of Conrad & Rath's branch store, a low, rambling building constructed of poles and buffalo hides, where only such supplies were kept as was necessary to meet the demands of the hunters for their immediate wants.

It was the noon hour and Henry Jacobs was standing in the door, parleying with a drunken hunter who had imbibed too much Hostetter's bitters, and was recklessly handling a buffalo gun, one of those murderous weapons that shoot a four-inch cartridge, and will do execution a mile distant. When Texas and his companions drove up, the muzzle was pointed in their direction and the gun discharged. The bullet striking the ground between the horses, ricocheted, making a loud buzzing noise that came near making the animals run away.

This drunken man, with his gun and plenty of cartridges, was a dangerous combination, and kept every one guessing in which direction the gun would be discharged

Finally he drifted to a shanty a mile down the trail, much to the relief of every one around the supply store.

This being a central point on the buffalo range, the four young men and Uncle Joe concluded to camp and make excursions to the different outfits within easy distance.

John Causey ran the largest outfit on the range, and was camped about five miles down the stream in a large valley covered with a thick growth of mesquite grass, that furnished an excellent pasture for the buffalo.

Accepting Jacob's invitation to remain until morning, the wagon was drawn up near the store and the horses hopped out.

The remainder of the day and the night following was given over to rest and becoming acquainted with the few hunters that came in during the evening after some necessary articles.

Jacobs and his companion, Josh Cook, prepared a stew of fresh buffalo meat and insisted on Texas' outfit eating supper with them.

It was about dusk when the host and his guests sat down to a rough pine table in the rear of the store, with cracker boxes for seats.

The camp kettle, filled with a hot stew of buffalo meat, potatoes and onions, was lifted from the fire of mesquite coals in the opening outside and deposited in the middle of the table. Bread made of sour dough, soda and tallow, was dumped from an oven and a large coffee pot filled with the amber liquid was brought in. Tin cups, tin plates and knives and forks completed the preparations, when Jacobs extended the invitation "to step up gents and get your chuck."

The rear end of the store where this mess table was located furnished an excellent view of the approach

along the trail from the west, as the opening was unusually large. The conversation was desultory, of a general nature and covering a wide range.

Jacobs, who was a wit and possessed a fund of good humor, was telling some amusing incidents during his experience as a merchant on the buffalo range.

“SMOKY”

Among the strange characters that he had come in contact with, one especially made a lasting impression. Jacobs said that at first he thought that he was a little batty in his upper story, but later found out that he only became excited on the subjects of Indians and rattlesnakes. “He has been coming here regularly every two weeks since Conrad & Rath opened up this branch store. He comes and goes as silently as an Indian. No one seems to know anything about him or where he is located. So far as I know, he has no friends or acquaintances.

“When least expected he will drop into a camp and accept an invitation to ‘chuck,’ and sometimes roll up in his blankets and pass the night. But he studiously avoids talking about his past, and I suspect that he has had some great sorrow, that he carries around and nurses all the time. He will remain for an hour at a time gazing into vacancy, never uttering a word. It is only when some one mentions Indians that he raises his head with a jerk and his eyes flash fire.

“I tell you, boys, that man has a history worth knowing if you could get him to talk. By the way, isn’t this Wednesday? Sure it is, and the day for one of ‘Smoky’s’ visits. That’s the name he always uses when introducing himself. He’s a little late to-day, but I believe I see an object coming down the trail and, I’ll bet it is ‘Smoky.’

"Now, boys, we must use all our tact and best judgment to try to induce him to talk, for I am certain that he can furnish us a hair-raising story. But we must handle him as carefully as a basket of eggs, or he will shut up like an oyster. Have you any snake-bite medicine? If you have, maybe we can loosen his tongue with a drink."

Uncle Joe went out to the wagon and returned with a gallon jug and set it on the dirt floor by Jacobs.

That indescribable shadow of the twilight hour was combating the fading light of the king of day when "Smoky" rode up to the opening and dismounted.

To all appearances he was like the "wandering Jew," and had lived through the ages.

Without turning his head or noticing those seated at the table, he leisurely unsaddled his tired broncho and hopped the animal, then walked slowly up to the opening, nodded by way of salutation and said:

"My name is 'Smoky,' gents!"

Jacobs introduced each separately, then extended a cordial invitation to "Smoky" to partake of the evening meal.

An extra tin plate, cup and knife and fork were laid on the table, and "Smoky" sat down without waiting for a second invitation.

Jacobs lifted the jug from the floor and placed it with an extra cup in front of "Smoky," with the invitation to help himself.

He eyed the jug a moment, pulled the cork, smelled the contents and poured out a generous portion, and sipped the liquid in the slow way that marked all his movements.

As if through mutual understanding, the others seated around the table entered into a general conversation with-

out noticing his actions, allowing him ample time to satisfy his appetite.

In the meantime, Kentuck sized "Smoky" up, taking a mental inventory of the man.

As Kentuck looked on his grimed, weather-stained face and noted the sharp, cadaverous features, and those black, piercing eyes masked beneath overhanging, bushy brows, he became convinced that "Smoky" possessed indomitable courage. Especially did his compressed lips and square chin denote that he could be relied on under the most trying emergency. He was certainly a wild, grotesque figure, even on the frontier of Texas. His dark brown hair was long and unkempt, falling in many a tangle upon his shoulders, and gave almost a weird appearance to his face, overshadowed by a Mexican sombrero. His lean, sinewy figure was bent either from habit or age, and, when walking, he had a peculiar shambling, sliding-forward gait, noiseless and catlike, resembling a wild animal stalking its prey. But it was his costume that would have turned a burlesque actor green with envy. A woolen shirt once blue, though not gaudy, was almost as variegated as Jacob's coat; overalls, slick and shiny with the grease of many an open-air dinner, alike impervious to dirt and weather, were thrust into the legs of a pair of cavalry boots that once did service for one of Uncle Sam's troopers, but now with holes in the uppers and minus their heels, presented a comical sight.

"Smoky" was "armed to the teeth." Around his waist was a belt with fifty rounds of cartridges, half for a Colt's revolver and half for a Winchester rifle.

Swinging from his belt was a Colt's "45" and a long hunting knife, and in a scabbard attached to his saddle was a long-barreled Winchester. These articles, to-

gether with his pony, roll of blankets, coffee pot and frying pan, so far as known, constituted all of his earthly possessions.

And his name was "Smoky." "Smoky"—yes, but "Smoky" who?

"Smoky" nothing; only "Smoky," that's all.

He might have dropped from the horn of the new moon that swung in crescent shape low down over the western horizon, were such a thing possible, so far as there being any proof to the contrary, or, more probably, have come up through the underlying strata from the regions below, so far as Kentuck knew.

He was forbidding looking, all right, but must be extended a hearty frontier welcome, for it was one of the unwritten laws that strangers must be entertained.

So preoccupied were the young men in the general conversation around the table, and the jolly good time they were having, they seemed to have forgotten "Smoky's" presence. And it was only when he ceased paying his respects to the buffalo stew, and was wiping his knife upon his overalls, that they were startled with the remark:

"There is a small bunch of Indians broke loose from the reservation, and are trying to make trouble for the hunters near Blanco canyon."

"Indians on the warpath! What? Where? Indians? Did you say Indians, 'Smoky'?"

"That's what I said, gents! They attacked Poe and Jacob's camp last Saturday, but a few shots from the buffalo gun made them turn tail."

"What tribe, and where are they now, 'Smoky'?"

"Only about a dozen Comanche bucks from the reservation at Fort Sill. A squad of the 7th Cavalry is on their trail, and they are headed for the Horseshoe Bend on the Upper Pecos."

"And you don't think they will come this way, 'Smoky'?"

"No, the soldiers will cut them off from the open country, and they will be forced to stay in the brakes or go back to the reservation."

"Well, pour out another drink, 'Smoky,' and pass the jug," said Jacobs.

"All right, gents," and suiting his action to the word, "Smoky" raised the jug and poured a good stiff drink into his cup.

The jug went the rounds and each drank a small portion of the contents. It soon became evident from his conversation that "Smoky" had been raised a gentleman, and was a man of culture and education.

Toasts were drunk, Jacobs rendered a song and Texas told an interesting story.

In the meantime the exhilarating effects of the liquor awakened "Smoky," and he began to take a live interest in the jollification, even going so far as to utter exclamations of approval.

Finally, Jacobs addressed him and said, "'Smoky', you must have had some exciting experiences with the Indians, and we would enjoy very much to hear you relate some of them."

He bowed his head and remained silent so long that those around the table feared that he had ignored the request. But when he did look up it became evident that he had decided to respond.

"Well, gents, you have been sociable and treated me white, instead of merely tolerating my presence because you wouldn't dare break the rule of hospitality. Yes, it may do me good to relate some of my experiences instead of brooding over the past.

"I don't know whether either of you ever heard of

Jeff Turner, known all over South and Southwest Texas as 'the Indian hater'? Well, he was a jim-dandy, all right, and killed and scalped more Indians than any hunter on the border. The whites said he was crazy; the Indians said he was a 'black devil'. Turner used to join every raid after the redskins, and it was said that he had thirty-five scalps hanging up in his cabin on the Cibillo. He was in several expeditions commanded by Big Foot Wallace. Turner was never quiet, and if there were no expeditions on foot, would camp on the Indian's trail by himself.

"I think it was in October, 1864, when the least protection was given to the settlers on the frontier, by reason of the Confederacy calling all the troops to the front for the final stand against the advancing army of the North, that I joined a caravan of six families from Harris county on their way to San Saba, being at that time as far west as any man dared risk the safety of his wife and children.

"I'm an old bachelor, never had any relatives in the State that I ever heard of. Consequently, have been drifting from 'post to pillar,' as the old saying goes, without any definite object in view, but always searching for adventure. I guess I'm a frontier tramp, all right, for I'm continually roaming over the range.

"Well, to return to the San Saba trip. We were about ten days on the trail. I did not become very well acquainted with the outfit, notwithstanding they treated me kindly, I was too backward to make much progress with the women folk. It is true, old Bill Gillipsie's big fat gal, Sue, had a heap to do with it. She took a malicious delight in teasing me when I lounged around camp. Jess Shumake's daughter, Fan, was not quite so bad, but she made a good second to Sue's lead.

"Joe Larkins, George Muse, Drake Wesley and Mike Lewis had not been married long and had no kids large enough to make it uncomfortable for me, or I expect I would have cut loose from the gang before we were three days out.

"It was the last day of our journey, and we were passing through the cedar brakes when we were joined by a tall, awkward stranger, riding a bay pony.

"After a customary 'Hello,' he asked where the outfit was going.

"Being informed that they intended to stop at San Saba town, he remarked that it was a sensible idea, for the country was full of bad Indians west of there.

"Riding up along with me, he said, 'stranger, my name is Jeff Turner; what might your name be?'

"They call me 'Smoky,' I replied.

"'Well, stranger, that's as good as any other name, I reckon. Where be you goin' to?'

"'Going west on the range; not particular where I stop.'

"'Got any plans after you shake this outfit at San Saba?'

"'I never have any plans, Turner; I just trust to luck.'

"'Well, 'Smoky,' luck is a mighty uncertain jade, liable to throw you at the most critical moment, but that's a matter of individual opinion. Now, after a day's rest, I'll strike the trail again.'

"'Is there any particular place out West that you are bound for, Turner?'

"'Yes, I'm going to join Johnson's outfit and help drive a bunch of cattle to the range near Fort Phantom hill, on the Clear Fork, of the Brazos.'

"'Are you a cowboy, Turner?'

"'Noap, I'm no cow puncher.'

“Well, if I'm not too inquisitive, what's your business?”

“Killing Indians.”

“Killing Indians? Say, Turner, you are not in earnest, I hope? Why man, that's dangerous business.”

“Not when you understand it, 'Smoky'.”

“But, say, Turner, there cannot be any profit in killing Indians?”

“No, if you only count money profit, but when you count revenge—do you hear, 'Smoky'?—revenge—it is worth all the time and money in this world. Yes, there is a little woman and two babies lying under the trees down on the banks of the Cibillo, whose blood cries for revenge.”

“For six years I have been on their trail, picking them off one by one until thirty-five of their scalps hang in the old cabin where they murdered my wife and children. Now that black-hearted tribe of Comanches have gone west where there are plenty of buffalo, and I'm going to follow them. Yes, I'll follow them to hell, 'Smoky.'”

“Of course, gents. I had nothing more to say, and we rode along in silence for a while.

“When we came in sight of the little village of San Saba, Turner seemed to awaken from the stupor of memory and take an interest in our surroundings.

“Well, 'Smoky,' we are now in sight of the town, the ranch is off two miles east, and there is no reason why I should go to town to-day, so adios, 'Smoky'; if you want to go West, come out and join the outfit.” He turned his horse's head to the right and was soon lost to sight.

“Our wagon train was not long on the way to the town, and by noon were comfortably settled in a wagon yard.

"After this I did not see much of my companions of the journey and the next day concluded to ride out to the ranch and see Turner.

"Johnson's ranch was a well appointed cattle ranch headquarters, with all the necessary pens, corrals, sheds, bunk houses and mess rooms. The main ranch house, where Johnson's family resided, was about 500 yards from the cowboys' bunk house. This residence was a low rambling adobe, one story high with a long porch the full length of the house. Mode Johnson's family consisted of his wife, two daughters and his brother Dick. Now, Dick was to be the trail boss on the drive to the range west of Fort Phantom hill. So when I arrived at the bunk house and found Turner, he went with me to the horse corral, where Dick Johnson was inspecting a bunch of saddle ponies. After the customary 'howdy,' I tackled him for a job. Having had but little experience with range cattle, he employed me to help herd the ponies and assist the cook.

"It is not necessary to go into details of the next week, devoted to the gathering of 1,000 head of cattle and the start Sunday morning for the west; you are familiar with such scenes.

"It was a two weeks' long, dusty drive up the trail, loose herding at night and long or short drives during the day, according to the distance between water holes. There being plenty of deer, antelope and turkeys along the route, we had a regular feast every meal. Nothing startling happened until we pulled out from Fort Griffin, where the boss paid several of the boys out of limbo for tanking up and using their firearms too freely.

"From Griffin we followed almost a northwest course for the gap at Leadbetter's Salt Works. From rumors at Griffin and a few signs that Turner picked up at the first

water hole the day following, we became convinced that a roving band of Indians were on the war path.

Consequently, we moved with great caution, and put out extra guards at night. At the Salt Works we were told that a band of Comanches with a bunch of stolen horses passed through the night before, and exchanged a few shots with Leadbetter's outfit. This caused Dick Johnson to hold a consultation with all his men, and after wasting considerable chin music, it was decided to send Turner and me ahead as scouts, to look out for the redskins, and give the alarm in time to prepare for an attack.

"Nothing could have pleased Turner better, though I'll admit that I did not feel so comfortable about it. In fact, if I had been consulted the probabilities are that I would have preferred to remain with the herd. But I well knew that it would not do to show the white feather.

"We dropped the herd coming up the Salt Creek valley toward the gap in the mountain leading to the open prairie.

"Turner always carried a field glass, and when we emerged from the pass where the trail crossed the prairie, he leveled it on the open landscape.

"It was a twenty-six miles' view to where the white chimneys of the Fort Phantom Hill like bright specks reflected the sunlight on the banks of the Clear Fork of the Brazos river. The fringe of trees, like a dark green thread in the distance, marked the course of the stream from the northwest to the southeast, as it semicircled toward Fort Griffin. Here and there, between our point of view and where the trail crossed the Clear Fork at Phantom Hill, were several smaller streams, also marked by threads of green. Turner occupied at least ten minutes looking through his glass, apparently covering every

mile of territory before he took it from his eyes. Then he turned and looked at me for a minute as if in deep thought, then said: 'Smoky,' there don't seem to be much in sight, except two objects; one bothers me and the other troubles me. On the trail between the crossing of the Clear Fork and the first stream this side is a covered wagon and some loose ponies driven behind. Evidently some fool and his family going West. Off to the right, down the Clear Fork, about twelve miles, if I'm not mistaken, is that murderous band of Comanches. The natural lay of the ground shields the wagon from the Indians, and neither can see the other, but by camping time they will be so close together that the Indians will discover the wagon, then that fool and his family might as well say, good-by, vain world. Now, it looks blamed sneaking measly for you and me, 'Smoky,' to let that fool cuss run into the trap without warning him, especially if there are any women and children along. Now, Johnson's outfit is too far behind to be in any danger, so I'm going to save the dodblamed fool, if I can manage to ride fast enough and keep out of sight of the Indians. Of course, 'Smoky,' you don't have to go with me; you can return to the outfit and tell them where I have gone. There may be a scrimmage before I come back, and there is no use of you being mixed up in it.'

"'Now, Turner,' I said, 'if you think I'm going to let you go on without me you are badly mistaken. It is true I'm not very anxious to mix up with a lot of redskins, but I will not desert a friend in time of danger; it's against my principles.'

"'I always thought you had the right stuff in you, 'Smoky,' that's the reason that I invited you to join the outfit at San Saba. Well, come along, 'Smoky,' we haven't time to parley if we intend to save that fool and his family.'

“What makes you call him a fool, Turner?”

“Because nobody but a fool ‘tenderfoot’ would venture out into an Indian country with a covered wagon.’

“Spurring up our ponies, we were soon riding at a lively gait over the trail.

“About ten miles from the Salt Works the trail crossed Chimney creek, a stream named after a lone chimney on the bank where a ranch house had been burned by the Indians. Five miles farther we crossed Spring creek, named after the clear spring water that bubbled up from the bed of the stream.

“We had now arrived in the vicinity of the Indians, and it was necessary to use the greatest caution to prevent being seen. The only chance of warning the man with the covered wagon, was to locate them, and then circle around in front of the Indians.

“We were giving our bronchos water under the bluff at a deep water hole, and Turner had just handed me a piece of jerked buffalo, when we heard the sound of animals’ feet just over the divide on the hardpan; thought it might be cattle coming for water, but Turner dismounted and crawled up through the broom-weeds to the top of the bluff to see.

“In two minutes he came rolling down and hastily mounted and said, “Smoky,” if you ever did any fast riding in your life, now is the time. Those damned Comanches are not a half mile away, and we have to get out of sight around that bend if we want to keep our scalps.’

“There is no doubt about our riding as fast as those ponies could go under the persuasion of both quirt and spur. Instead of following the trail, we ran across between the creek and the big bend, and quirted our ponies over the mesa and over the top of the divide on this

side of Elm creek, and dropped out of sight down the slope just in time to escape being seen by their advance scouts sent ahead to select a camping place. Being safe for the time being, we dismounted to give our ponies wind, and Turner crawled back to where he could see the Indians. He returned in a few minutes and said: "Smoky," I saw the whole outfit file down into the valley and they have about forty stolen ponies, and a sick or wounded red on a drag-litter. I expect that they had a scrimmage somewhere up the country. Now straddle your pony and we will make for the ford on the Clear Fork before the red devils come in sight.' We quirted ahead and crossed just above the mouth of Elm, and from the liveoak thicket at the top of the hill on this side saw them go into camp.

"We then hurried on to find the covered wagon that Turner saw from the high ground through his field glass. As we emerged from the live oaks and followed the trail along the river, we came to the stranger's camp about two miles from the fort. It was as wild and untamed a place as rugged nature could have been expected to furnish for a resting-place over night. Within twenty feet of the camp the bank of the river dropped to the clear blue water, mirroring the ever-changing colors of the twilight sky. The low bank on the other side was hidden beneath a thicket of wild plum bushes, so dense that deer and wild turkeys could approach and drink without being seen from the trail skirting the shin oaks above. This thicket extended for one-half mile east of the foot of a sloping hill, surmounted by the ghostlike chimneys of the old abandoned fort where once Generals Lee, Johnson and Grant were stationed when young lieutenants before the war. Off to the southeast the open prairie extended far away, gradually melting into the invisible

blue, where, on clear days, there appeared a beautiful mirage, representing a forest-crowned hill, with a lake as its base line, giving to the fort its phantom name.

“Up and down, the river’s course was marked by tall cottonwood and low-spreading elms, with here and there a glimpse of steep bluffs.

“In time of the spring rains these bluffs dam up the drift-laden water, and it overflows the low banks and piles the debris among the mesquite trees, there to remain high and dry, a warning to man not to build his habitation in the path of the flood tide.

“Running north by west, in an irregular parallel with the river’s course, was a dense growth of shin oak varying from one to three miles in width. This Liliputian forest abounded with all kinds of wild animals and turkeys and also furnished excellent concealment for renegade white men and bands of hostile Indians.

“The place where we found the covered wagon, the shin oak came within one-fourth mile of the river, a delightful camping ground, but a dangerous place to be attacked by the Indians.

“As we rode up to the camp, Turner remarked: ‘Of all the blamed idiots that I ever heard of since I built my cabin on the banks of Cibillo, that fool certainly takes the bear grease.’

“In the gathering twilight we could see a man hopping out a pair of horses and a woman pottering around the chuck box, while three little children were playing on the grass.

“As we pulled up our horses near the wagon, the woman had started a blaze under some dry mesquite limbs, preparatory to cooking supper.

“‘Hello!’ said Turner, by way of attracting their attention and announcing our arrival.

"The woman shaded her eyes with her hand and came forward to greet us.

"'Hello, strangers,' she replied; 'where ye be from?'

"'From over the divide, down the overland trail,' said Turner. 'What's your name, and where are you from?'

"'Our name is Burton, and we live down near McKinney,' replied the woman.

"'Well, what in the world are you doing out here?'

"'Oh, paw was a little crowded for room down there and came out to locate a ranch.'

"By this time the man had returned to the wagon with an armful of wood, and throwing it down near the fire came up and invited us to dismount and camp with them.

"'Well, generally speaking, we would be glad to accept your invitation, but this evening we are in a little bit of a hurry to move on,' said Turner, 'and, if you have any regard for the safety of your family you will hustle those traps back into the wagon and pull out of here.'

"'Why, what do you mean, stranger?'

"'I mean,' replied Turner, 'that there is about 100 Comanche Indians on the war path, and they are camped on Elm creek, not more than two miles from here.'

"'Goodness, gracious, paw,' shouted Mrs. Burton, 'get the horses quick—here, Mary Ann, throw those things into the wagon while I help the children to climb in—hurry up, Jake, with the horses.'

"Turner and I dismounted and helped Burton harness his horses and hitch them to the wagon.

"'Say, Burton, you blooming idiot, what did you bring your family out into this Indian country for?'

"'Why, that real estate agent that sold me a certificate told me the Indians were all on the reservation, and that it was perfectly safe to bring my family. And ma she wanted to come so bad I just concluded to bring them

along. And now, gents, I'll admit that this Indian business is a little out of my line, and I'm willing to do just what you suggest.'

" 'Well,' said Turner, 'I have been over this trail once before, and I think I know where an old trail enters the shinnery back of that knoll over there. All of you hustle into that wagon in a hurry and follow me. 'Smoky,' throw sand over that fire, it can be seen a long way, and I expect the red devils have already located it. Everybody ready? All right, come on.'

"By this time darkness set in and those in the wagon could only see Turner dimly as he led the way.

" 'Swing into the big trail here,' he said, 'and we will follow it to the slope of the knoll, where the hard-pan gravel will leave no signs, over to the edge of the shinnery; then we will double back to the rocky knoll and strike the old trail, and if the reds are not particularly hunting for signs, we may escape without having to stand them off with our guns.'

" 'Why don't you keep to the Big Trail, Turner, until we strike the open country?' asked Burton.

" 'Say, you are a 'tenderfoot' all right. Don't you know that the Comanches are prairie Indians and do all their devilment and fighting in the open? They don't like to tackle anything under cover. No sir, we are going into the brush. There used to be a water hole on the old trail, about half way through the shinnery, and we will go there before making camp, provided the Indians don't ambush us.'

"By this time we arrived at the point where we intended to enter the old trail. There was a flash in the darkness, followed by the report of a rifle, and a bullet whistled uncomfortably near my head.

"All was in confusion in a moment, and but for the

presence of mind and quick-spoken words of Turner, the panic might have proved disastrous, for all were taken by surprise.

"Burton, whip that team into a run and follow the old trail. 'Smoky,' bring your shooting-irons here, and help me hold off these red devils until Burton escapes—we are up against a tough proposition, I'm afraid."

"Evidently the shot was fired more as a signal than with any hope of hitting one of us, for with the exception of the noise made by the retreating wagon along the trail, the silence from the direction of where the shot was fired was almost painful.

"'I don't like this silence,' whispered Turner. 'The red devils are too quiet to suit my idea of safety. Keep a grip on your gun, 'Smoky,' while I lie down and try to see and hear what they are up to.' Suiting his action to his words, Turner dropped quietly to the ground, only to spring up the next moment and excitedly whisper, 'Smoky,' the jig is up; we are surrounded. They are closing in on all sides—crawling on the ground like snakes—only one chance—make a rush for the old trail—no time to lose—every one of the bloodthirsty cusses will shoot to kill—don't stop to return their fire—if you ever did any first-class running against big odds, do it now—if a red pops his head up in your path, punch your gun against him and pull the trigger—we will fight our way out—are you ready?"

"'Yes,' I replied.

"'Well, here goes,' and Turner made a dash for the trail, closely followed by me.

"Gents, that was the signal for the darnedest hair-raising, blood-curdling yells you can imagine, followed by a storm of arrows mixed with reports of guns, and they began to close in, determined to kill or capture us. I

was close to Turner's heels as he ran, rifle in one hand and knife in the other. Two powerful Indian braves arose in our path, ready to brain us with their tomahawks. Turner leaned forward until his head was below the line of his hips and shouted to me to shoot. I fired and one Indian fell, and at the same time Turner dodged the keen edge of the other's tomahawk, and, raising his knife on a line with the Indian's breast, sprang from the ground like a mountain lion and fell upon his foe with an impetus that forced the Indian to his knees, and before he could recover Turner drove the knife into a vital spot and sprang to one side just in time to save us from falling into a death trap. Four more Indians were in the trail blocking the way, and all around us was a din of shrieks and yells, enough to still the stoutest heart. Before either of us could grasp the situation, Turner shouted to follow him, and jumped into the thicket of wild plum bushes on the side of a ravine. I followed and we went sliding, tumbling, falling down the steep bank before the Indians discovered our escape. Down, down, there seemed to be no bottom, and all the time the loose stones and earth falling upon us like hail, until we landed bruised and bleeding at the bottom. As we lay like bundles of rags, stunned and half conscious, the breath knocked out of us, we could see far above us a ribbon of blue sky that marked the top of the ravine, and could hear the distant yells of the Comanches, like wild animals deprived of their prey. What a lightning change in the situation of a few moments before!

"Say, Turner, I didn't know that the bottom had fallen out when I followed you into that plum thicket, but I'm sure glad to give the reds the slip, even if we did travel over the roughest road in America," I remarked.

"Yes, it was slip, slide, roll, tumble and a hard jolt

at the bottom, and I don't mind acknowledging the roughest experience I ever had with the Indians since they murdered my wife and little ones.'

"'Where are we at this moment, how did we come here, and what has happened in the regions above?' I remarked, feeling a bump on my forehead.

"'Well, 'Smoky,' Turner replied, 'we took a leap in the dark, and when we landed in space without wings we fell down instead of going up, and right now are up against a tough proposition. We have escaped the red devils to-night, but, like rats in a trap, may meet the cat in the morning. In the meantime, we are cut off from our horses with nothing to eat, and probably nothing to drink. I wonder what become of that fool Burton? I don't think the Indians followed him up, and if he's got sense enough to remain quiet he may escape. Well, "Smoky," if you have not broken your bones in the fall we will get up and try and do something.'

"'I'm all right, Turner.'

"'So am I, too. Now where are our guns?'

"'I held onto mine in the tumble, but lost my knife and half of the cartridges. Where is your gun?'

"'Well, while you are hunting your gun, Turner, I'll creep down toward the mouth of the ravine and see if there are any Indians there.' Making as little noise as possible I made my way to where I could see the mouth of the ravine. I did not have long to wait when I saw the moving figures guarding the ravine. During the time I was absent, Turner found his gun, badly battered but still good for service.

"'Just as I supposed,' remarked Turner, when I informed him of the Indians at the mouth of the ravine. 'We must go up the other way if we hope to get out of this devil's trap.'

"Nothing could be seen ahead in the darkness, between the walls of our natural prison, and we were compelled to feel our way along the bed of the ravine, often crawling over rough, jagged rocks that barred our way, and at other points became entangled with catclaw bushes growing along the sides. All sounds from above had ceased, and save the lonely hoo-hoo of the prairie dog, owl and the sharp yelping of a pack of coyotes, the only sound was our exertions in making our way up the ravine. We had gone perhaps 200 yards when Turner, -who was in advance, exclaimed, 'Well, I'll be blowed if this isn't a jim-dandy fix!'

"'What have you struck now, Turner?'

"'Butted up against a solid wall, and unless there is an opening above my head, we are done for, sure.'

"In a moment I was at his side and we began a close examination. Slowly we passed our hands over the solid wall, but failed to find either an opening or means to climb.

"'There may be an opening above our heads,' said Turner. 'We are in a pocket of some kind, and if I dared light a match we might discover some way out, but the red devils would be sure to see us and shoot or tumble rocks down upon us. Now, 'Smoky,' brace yourself against the rock and I'll climb on your shoulders, and maybe I can find something.'

"I furnished the necessary shoulders and he climbed up in a jiffy, and began examining the rock above.

"'Holy smoke, here is a round hole as big as a barrel, over to the left, just out of reach of a man down there. Keep still, 'Smoky,' and I'll crawl into it, then pull you up. Now, pass up the guns first, so I can push them back out of the way, then hold up your hands and I'll yank you up.'

"The guns were handed up as Turner requested, and I extended my hands and he grasped my wrists. 'Now climb with your feet while I yank,' he advised.

"After a severe strain on his muscles, with all the aid I could give him, I was finally landed in the mouth of the hole. We were now in what seemed to be a rough passage through the solid rock, just large enough to admit our bodies crawling on our hands and knees, single file.

Silently we began this strange journey, each pushing his gun ahead. The darkness was intense, and seemed to press heavily upon us like an unseen hand. At a short distance, perhaps eight or ten feet from the entrance, the passage opened into a low cavern, very little higher than the passage, but spacious in width.

"'Range up alongside of me, "Smoky." I think we have entered an underground prairie, and we want to keep in touch with each other. We may run onto something in this queer place and need our combined strength.'

"Ten minutes more, crawling through a sea of darkness over a damp, slimy floor, keyed up to the highest sense of uncertainty, and alert to the slightest movement or sound; and yet, not prepared to hear that awful, deadly warning of death.

"'Rattlers! By the great Saint Patrick, rattlers, 'Smoky,' rattlers!'

"'Snakes! Rattlesnakes!' I replied. 'That's the deadliest foe a man ever tackled in the dark.'

"'Yes, this must be the devil's reception room, and if we don't make back tracks we may become the devil's guests for all eternity,' said Turner.

"'Strike a light, Turner, so that we can locate the diamond-backs. I don't care to run into a nest of them.'

“All right; though that is a dangerous experiment, it is better than fooling around in the dark.’

“He lighted a Mexican wax-match, that burns like a taper. As soon as the light penetrated the inky darkness a terrible sight met our eyes. Not more than ten feet away was a wriggling mass of writhing, twisting, hissing rattlesnakes. The contortions of their repulsive bodies, the lightning movements of their forked tongues, and that venomous green light of their eyes, so deadly fascinating, was enough to congeal the blood and strike fear to the stoutest heart. As we looked, the mass began to untangle itself, and large rattlers wriggled along as if intent on cutting off all chances of escape. For once Turner lost his presence of mind, and was struck dumb by the awful conditions that surrounded him. He struck another match, but it only made the situation more appalling, for there were numerous passages opening into the cavern, and they all looked alike. In the confusion following the deadly warning of the snakes, we had completely lost our bearings, and were as helpless as children. It paralyzed our tongues and numbed all of our faculties, and the blood flowed back to our hearts with an icy chill that stopped circulation. Horror of horrors! Could Dante’s *Inferno* hold terrors equal to this deadly situation? The cold, bare cave, too low to admit of any position except upon hands and knees or sitting upon the rock floor. Egyptian darkness followed the last flickering spark of the match, and to be helpless victims at the mercy of venomous reptiles that at any moment might strike their poisonous fangs into our quivering flesh was almost too much for weak human nature without unhinging the mind. Unconsciously we moved each toward the other until we leaned together as if for mutual support. How long we remained in this position I have no means

of telling. It might have been hours, while the cold perspiration formed beads on our foreheads. But at last the chilly atmosphere and our cramped position began to tell, and, though the slightest movement would expose us to the extreme danger of being bitten by the snakes, our benumbed limbs must be straightened to ease the pain that gripped and cramped them. Neither spoke, for speech was frozen at its fountain head, and silence like the hush of death filled the cavern. The snakes were either coiled or quietly crawling over the slimy floor.

“Turner made a slight movement, followed immediately by his hoarse, unnatural voice as he excitedly exclaimed, ‘Smoky,’ I have received my death warrant; no earthly power can save me; don’t interrupt me; your life hangs by a thread so slender that the least movement will break it and send you over the Big Divide into the other world. Dig a hole in the morning and plant me where the buzzards and coyotes cannot pick my bones. I have no message to send to any human being. Those who cared the least bit about me are dead, and the living who once knew me have forgotten my existence. For ten years I have lived in the wilds of Texas, a law unto myself. Back in the mountains of old Kentucky there may be a few old men and women who will remember a young fool who moved with his wife and children to the unknown land of Texas, but it would serve no purpose to remind them of it. I have faced death a thousand times, and now that “the White Horse and His Pale Rider” are coming, I will not shrink from the summons. When the Indians murdered my wife and children I lived only for revenge, and have followed the life of a frontier rover, going wherever I could kill a red and take a scalp.’

“I smothered a groan, for I could make no response,

and the remaining hours of that awful night were a vigil of death.

"The subtle poison of the rattler's bite coursed through poor Turner's veins and I was powerless to help him. Soon his reason took its flight, and he tossed in wild delirium until the end. Gents, you can't begin to imagine the terrible ordeal through which I passed, listening to his wild ravings, and expecting any minute to feel the deadly fangs sink into my own flesh.

"You see, as the fiery poison spread through his veins his ravings became awful, and they burned their way into my brain until I can remember almost every word at this moment.

"Whether the eyes of his soul actually saw the awful scenes that he described in his mad delirium, I am not prepared to say, but to me, under the circumstances, they were real. Yes, I saw, in the inky darkness, as if in a vivid dream, the unfolding of the horrible picture, and accompanied him through it all. And I sometimes think that by reason of the realism, as the shifting panorama ran through my brain, the startling revelation was all that saved me from becoming a raving maniac.

"Shall I recite that part, where he described entering the lower regions?"

We were so deeply interested—spellbound, as it were—that we only nodded our heads in reply, for fear of breaking the spell of "Smoky's" story. As he took up the thread of his narrative, we, too, seemed to actually see the exciting scenes of his recital.

"Well, gents, after many short flights into the unknown, he seemed determined to enter the lower regions.

"All at once he grasped my arm, and in a hoarse, unnatural voice, said: 'Look! there is a hole in the ground—'tis the skylight to hell—strange the devil should leave it uncovered.

“Come, here is a rare chance—look down there—what a queer country it is! Oh, here is a winding stairs that rests upon the top of a high mountain—come, quick, there is no one in sight—we will go down and investigate. Say, it makes me dizzy to look down into the great depths—be careful or you will fall—mercy! it’s getting too hot—let’s stop and get our breath. I wish I had a linen duster instead of this overcoat—say, stop, it’s getting sizzling hot. Wonder if we didn’t make a mistake coming down here? Let’s go back; it’s too hot to go ahead. Oh, come back! Don’t leave me alone in this awful place.

“Holy smoke! Some one is coming up the stairs, and he is dressed in red from head to foot, with long pointed shoes to match. Look, he is armed with a three-pronged trident. No, I’m alone now and cannot escape—the door to the skylight is closed.

“Oh, now he sees me—look at his dark fiery eyes—listen, he speaks to me!

““Aha; A stranger in hell? How came he thither? Not by the established route, via death and the grave, for his soul is still dwelling in the tabernacle of clay. Can it be that he came through the skylight? It never happened before; it must not happen again. He must not escape and go back to earth, to reveal what he has seen. But can I preserve him alive, in the flesh? It would be an experiment worth trying. Perhaps a fire-proof suit, lined with a vacuum of congealed air, might answer the purpose.

““Stranger, how dare you to enter his Majesty’s dominion except through the regular route traveled by the lost souls? Thou hast violated the laws of hell, that forbid flesh and blood to enter here. Only the spirits of the damned are tolerated as slaves within Satan’s kingdom.

Now I go to prepare to transport you to the palace of the king, where the heat rises seven times greater than molten iron. In the meantime, on penalty of death if you disobey, remain here until my return." And, raising an instrument to his lips, he blew a loud, keen blast that echoed in the distance. From somewhere in space there came in view a sedan chair carried in the air by four flying bat-winged imps, and they floated down to where the official of Satan waited on the stairs. He entered the sedan and was swiftly wafted away to the king's palace.

"Alone; 'tis a strange place to wait—wait for what? To suffer this excessive heat—perchance to perish while the perspiration is driven through my pores like water from a sponge.

"Ah, now my vision is enlarging—I see the length and breadth of hell—look! Far away the bleak mountains ascend into starless darkness. Yonder glimmering fires of the eternal lake of brimstone send bluish shafts of light between the lofty peaks, and fantastic shadows dance along the mountain sides. Down the precipices great caverns yawn, and deep, dark ravines cleave the hills in twain. Along the valleys streaks of white light zig-zag over the surface like forked lightning.

"In the distance is a great walled city; yet there is not a single habitation in the barren waste surrounding it. At the base of the mountains are millions of little specks going in and out of burrows like an army of ants.

"Yes, hell is populated—populated with souls of the damned, who like so many salamanders live in the eternal fires forever and aye.

"Far above the walls of the Eternal City rises an immense dome over whose top can be seen a swarm of bat-

winged imps waiting for orders from the devil's emissaries. Upon the parapet of the walls of the city an army of red devils are on guard.

"Somewhere within these walls Satan and all his minions dwell, and hold in subjection millions of damned souls.

"Listen! What means this commotion in the air? See, 'tis the bat-winged imps floating a closed sedan. They are coming; nearer and nearer! Now it floats at my side; the curtain rolls up, and he who bade me wait on the stair, sits within. Stepping quickly from the sedan, he presents me with a suit of red, similar to a diver's rig.

"Attire yourself, stranger, at once," he commands. And, for the first time since his departure, I realize that my flesh has undergone a transformation. Oh, horrors! my clothing has disappeared and my flesh resembles parchment. What can have happened to it without my knowledge? Have I been mummified and yet live?

"As I hesitate, the sharp words of command ring out! "Ho, imps! grasp the victim and thrust him within this suit."

"In the twinkling of an eye two of the bat-winged imps grasp me. Two more open the suit, thrust my lower limbs into inflated legs; then by a dextrous movement manipulate spiral springs, and the upper portion arises to admit my body and head, and now it comes together and clasps—I'm sealed within. They hustle me into the sedan, and the official of Satan follows and pulls down the curtains: "Away to the palace!" he shouts.

"I know not what I am now—I do know I am not flesh and blood—'tis a strange body, devoid of all feeling—no pleasure, no pain—nerves wrought like steel—body metallic. "Tell me, thou strange being, what has come over me?"

““It is my Royal Master’s pleasure that thou shalt forever dwell in hell. Thy presence within the secret door, that communicates with the surface of the earth, has made him very angry. At first he decided to throw you into the fiery pit of damnation, but at the suggestion of the vice-devil, who is a scientist, you are to demonstrate the process of gradual transformation, that makes it possible to save the mummified body of man as well as his soul. Therefore, you were left on the stairs until the heat gradually absorbed the moisture, blood and fat of your body. And now you will be carried to where the intense sulphuric atmosphere will complete your transformation. If we succeed, you will become a rare specimen for freaks. But here we are above the receiving tower of the palace; we now descend to the landing.”

“‘A moment of slow, downward movement, and the sedan swings at the landing platform, where four footmen grasp the handles and carry it through the grand hall, to the large swinging doors of the king’s audience chamber. The doors are opened and the sound of many voices is heard.

““Ho, there, minions! deposit the sedan and retire. Come forth, Pluto, and let the prisoner stand before the council.”

“‘Pluto raises the curtain of the sedan and commands me to follow.

“‘And now I’m blinded by red glaring lights—now my vision returns—a most wonderful scene! I stand in the center of a dome-covered chamber. In front is the throne, occupied by Satan himself, king of all the devils. In hideous grandeur he looks down upon me with his fierce eyes that burn through and through me like red hot bars of steel—cruel eyes that slant to the bridge of

his nose, giving the expression of fox-like cunning. His nose is like an eagle's beak, almost touching his cynical mouth, and the lines of his face narrow from his low forehead to his sharp chin, and his mouth has a perpetual sneer.

“Satan and all his councilors are clad in tight-fitting suits of red, with cloaks and cowls. Thirteen councilors sit in a semi-circle in front of the throne. Satan holds in his right hand a trident with glittering points. In this vast chamber the official business of hell is transacted.

“In the center of this chamber is the bottomless pit; into its depths are cast those who commit treason against the king of hell.

“As I make these observations the devil watches me with a critical eye and says:

““Stranger, you were saved from physical death to test a scientific theory advanced by our vice-devil, else you would have been hurled into the lake of fire and brimstone for defying the laws of hell and the mandate of the ruler of the universe, by entering my dominion clothed in flesh and blood, instead of coming via the route of death and the grave.”

““Oh, King,” I reply, “I came not within thy dominion by design, but found the opening by chance.”

““Well, it matters not now; your coming is without precedent, and if your transformation is made from flesh and blood to a being impervious to the intense heat of hell, it will also be without precedent. Here, Pluto, take him to the fireproof clothing room and robe him for the journey down the main shaft to the vice-devil's experimental laboratory.”

“And Pluto led me to a long, low room, where hundreds of red suits hung on the walls.

“Commanding me to discard the clumsy suit I wore

in the sedan, he assists me to robe myself in a tight-fitting suit with cloak and cowl, and mica eye protectors.

““This way, stranger,” says Pluto, as he leads the way to the platform around the main shaft, and grasping a tube he shouted an order to the central messenger office.

““In a few moments from the depths below there came floating up the main shaft, supported by four bat-winged imps, an open sedan that came to the level of the platform and remained stationary.

“““Enter, stranger, I follow,” and with a wave of his hand, Pluto pointed to the sedan.

““When seated, the imps flop their wings in unison, and we circle to the center of the shaft and begin to float down—down—down—into the depths below.

““From somewhere in the unknown depths come shrieks of agony.

““With an exclamation of horror, I lean over the side of the sedan and look down; far below is a burning caldron; the molten glare of its bluish flames lights up the hideous faces of the pitchfork devils as they hurl the lost souls into the everlasting fires of hell. Pluto smiles. Down—down—it grows darker and the shrieks louder; great snakes are twisting and writhing, and enormous lizards are clinging to the sides of the pit. See! there goes a vicious dragon; look at his flashing eyes—horror! Oh, save me! Here comes a gigantic ogre—his great jaws are open—fire comes from his nostrils—he approaches—extends his claws—grasps me—thrusts me into his capacious mouth—’tis the end.’

“Say, gents, did you ever hear of a man’s hair turning gray in a night? I am not an old man now, but I lived a lifetime that awful night. Do you wonder that I appear queer and men shun me? Try to imagine for a

brief moment the terrible position of a man in a den of rattlesnakes, listening to the ravings of your companion, crazed with the deadly poison that entered his veins through the fangs of a rattler, and in his wild delirium journeying through the horrors of hell, then you can have a slight conception of the night Turner died.

"I hope you will never have such an experience. But if along the rugged path of life the unforeseen should happen, pray to the all-wise Creator to blot out the memory of it, and allow you to forget.

"How often have I awaked in the night and lived over again the scene in the rattlesnakes' den near Fort Phantom hill!

"Turner died just as the streaks of the morning light revealed the opening through which we entered the cavern. Somewhere into some of the many openings the snakes disappeared, leaving me alone with the dead. Say, gents, do you see these gray hairs and this haggard face? That night of horrors did it. And that I'm not a violent maniac is a great wonder. Over and over again it comes to me like an awful nightmare, and I live to hear and see Turner go through that struggle with death. Is it anything strange that I should be different from other men? They call me crazy, and some fear and others pity me, but none know how the scourge of memory drives me wandering over the range. Slowly and sadly I pulled the swollen body of Turner through the rocky passage, and gently lowered it to the bed of the ravine. After reconnoitering, I could see and hear nothing of the Indians. Temporarily covering Turner's body with brush and rocks, to protect it from varmints, I climbed up the steep bank of the ravine to where I could take observations. A quarter of a mile's walk and I arrived at the camp of the night before, where, to my

surprise, I found Burton and his family cooking breakfast. From them I learned that a detachment of the 7th Cavalry and a band of Tonkawa scouts were on the Comanches' trail at the time they attacked us, and heard the firing, and hurried up in time to exchange shots with the reds, who were now in full retreat, with the soldiers and Tonks at their heels.

"With the aid of Burton we made a litter and carried Turner's body to the mouth of the ravine; then placing it in his wagon, drove to a knoll in sight of the ghostly chimneys of Old Fort Phantom hill, and there we dug his grave and buried him, and a pile of rough stones marks the last resting place of Jeff Turner, the 'Indian hater.'"

So deeply interested, and so closely had Texas and his companions followed every detail of "Smoky's" recital of his wonderful experience, that not a word was spoken for several minutes after he ceased to talk. Then one after the other arose and took his hand, as a silent token of sympathy and a bond of friendship with this strange man.

At last Jacobs arose and said: "We thank you for telling us your experience, 'Smoky,' and we want you to know that every man here is your friend. Now, unroll your blankets, boys, and make a shakedown if you want to get any sleep before day, for if I mistake not, it is long after midnight." In a few minutes all, including "Smoky" were wrapped in slumber.

It was 8 a. m. before Texas and his companions awoke, and then only when Jacobs accidentally dropped a tin pan during his preparations for breakfast.

When all had satisfied their appetites, plans were formulated to enjoy an outing among the buffalo hunters in the vicinity. After considerable persuasion, "Smoky" was induced to make one of the party, and by noon the outfit was on its way to John Causey's camp.

That the reader may intelligently understand the situation, it is necessary to enter into a description of this business that made a vast slaughter pen of Northwest Texas.

This being the third year of the great hunting season that led to the extermination of the buffalo, the uninhabited prairies west of Fort Phantom hill were occupied by an army of 5,000 aggressive men, engaged in the wholesale slaughter of these animals for the profit derived from the sale of their hides. The business was carried on in a systematic way, and possessed none of the charms that attend the chase. All the details were carefully planned and deliberately carried out by the intrepid hunter with the same calm consideration that would have characterized their actions in any other business enterprise. Each outfit was organized, equipped and provisioned for the season, which generally lasted from three to six months, depending entirely on the movements of the buffalo. The hunter was the boss of the outfit, a kind of generalissimo, whose orders were the unwritten law during the season's hunt. His accouterments consisted of a pair of overalls, blue flannel shirt, duck jacket, a go-as-you-please hat and top-boots. He was generally armed with a Sharp's .45 caliber rifle, commonly known as the "buffalo gun," together with a long camp-knife and a six-shooter. He carried his cartridges in a double-width belt, supplying 100 rounds for a day's hunt. The barrel of the gun was three inches in diameter and very heavy, to prevent heating during continuous firing. This made it necessary for the hunter to carry a rest stick to support the gun when taking aim. Next in importance to the hunter were the skinners; generally from four to six men, whose duties were to take the hides from the animals and load them into the wagon to be hauled to

camp, where all hands staked them out to dry. The remaining member of the outfit was the cook. From six to eight men, equipped as described, founded a camp near some water hole within the range occupied by the buffalo, and if successful in their hunt secured from five to ten thousand hides during a season. In this camp the hides were salted, poisoned against insects and dried in the sun, ready to be hauled to market. The appearance of a buffalo hunter's camp would be no place to invite a housekeeper. A promiscuous confusion of pots, skillets, skin-pegs, ammunition boxes, provisions and blankets made a wild disorder that would disgust a woman beyond an apology.

The sun was about one hour high when the horses shied around a pile of hides in front of Causey's tepee, an Indian hut made of poles and hides. Only one man, Jim Smith, was in camp, building a fire and making preparations to cook supper for the outfit. The other men belonging to the camp had not returned from the day's hunt. After the usual salutation with Jim, Texas and his companions at once unharnessed their horses and prepared to remain over night. Knowing the custom among frontiersmen, they did not stand on ceremony, and when the hunters and skimmers arrived they were comfortably quartered within ten yards of the tepee, feeling perfectly at home under the circumstances. They were invited to partake of the supper prepared by the camp's cook, principally composed of fresh buffalo hump, coffee, bread and potatoes. After the supper was disposed of the members of both parties engaged in a general conversation, on the current topics that sifted through the old papers and the mail from the East. Especially interesting was Causey's detailed account of the attack on Poe and Jacob's camp ten miles west, a few days be-

fore, by a small band of Comanches who escaped from the Fort Sill reservation. A few well directed shots from John Poe's buffalo gun sent them helter-skelter over the sand hills out of sight. A detachment of soldiers sent out by General McKinzie had captured the young bucks and were on their way to the reservation. The chief, when questioned about the attack, remarked: "Me heap no like him buffalo gun—him shoot to-day and kill to-morrow—heap bad medicine"—trying to express his surprise at the long distance that the gun carried.

There is genuine enjoyment in sitting around a camp fire and drawing the seductive tobacco smoke through the stem of a pipe, while listening to the yarns spun by your companions, 'til the drowsy god reminds you that it is time to spread the blankets for the night. Then upon some grassy spot, to sleep as sound beneath the twinkling stars as when you listened to the first sweet songs that kept time with the motion of the cradle.

At an early hour the next morning every one was stirring around Causey's camp, and by daylight enjoying a delicious piece of buffalo meat with double-strength coffee to arouse dormant energies for the day's hunt. After the morning meal all hands and the visitors joined the hunter and the skimmers who were ready to start.

It was a beautiful morning, and the sharp, pure air sent the blood coursing through the veins with renewed vigor. Texas and his companions were to be given an opportunity of witnessing all the details of killing buffalo and saving the hides. They climbed into Causey's wagon and were driven to the top of an elevation a mile distant, overlooking the surrounding valleys, where Causey used his field glass to locate a herd of buffalo two miles west. Causey, who was an experienced hunter of two seasons, directed the driver to follow a course that

would keep an elevated knoll between the outfit and the herd, so that the buffalo would not stampede before he arrived within shooting distance.

The necessity for caution aroused suppressed excitement, and only the admonition of Causey to keep quiet kept the enthusiasm within bounds. Arriving at the base of the knoll, the whole outfit alighted from the wagon, and with Causey in the lead ascended the knoll. When near the top he commanded the other men to lie down until he took observation. He would raise his hand when it was time for them to crawl up and witness the herd under fire. It was several minutes before he signaled that he was ready to begin the killing.

When the signal was given, Texas and his companions slowly made their way to where Causey was leveling his gun. Here they had an excellent view of the situation. There was the herd 300 yards distant, leisurely grazing on the prairie, unmindful of the danger.

It was a grand sight to see those shaggy animals in their natural element—the wild bison of America, associated in every schoolboy's mind with the stirring tales of frontier life; with Kit Carson and "Buffalo Bill," the names linked with the buffalo and Indians. In fact, the early history of America would not be complete without the bison, which, Webster says, was erroneously called buffalo.

Getting a stand was the most interesting part of the hunter's duties in connection with the day's hunt. To do this he must shoot the leader down in his tracks; then by a series of skillful shots, aimed to ricochet in the dust and confuse the buffalo, causing them to run in a circle, becoming more and more compact, like the winding of an endless chain, until in this crowded condition they became too bewildered to break away. This state

was what the cattlemen called milling. The leader of the herd, a bull buffalo, was grazing about ten steps in advance of the herd, and from time to time raised his head on the lookout for danger.

A growth of cactus and catclaws on the crest of the knoll formed an excellent screen for Causey and the four young men who were anxious to witness the operations of the hunter. Taking advantage of the screen, Causey raised himself to a sitting posture and began to reconnoiter. Then he adjusted his cartridge belt, picked up his gun and rest stick. Placing the stick in front, he raised himself upon one knee, placed the barrel of the gun upon the stick and pointed it in the direction of the herd. One of the men directed the visitor's attention to the bull feeding in front of the herd. The next instant the sharp crack of Causey's gun was heard, and the animal pitched forward upon his knees, and slowly sank to the ground. During the next half-hour an exciting scene lay before them.

When the report of the rifle crashed with its startling effect, every animal in the herd raised its head and looked wildly around, but only for a moment; then they all rushed away at full speed toward the south, and the visitors expected to see them run out of range of the hunter's rifle, but a few well directed shots in the dirt in front of them, turned the herd to the east, then to the north, to the west and again to the south, until they began to mill and became perfectly bewildered by their own movements, and seemed to huddle together for mutual protection. What a grand, awful picture was presented! A herd of wild animals trembling with fright, while each report of the deadly rifle lessened their number, one by one, until the living were fenced in by the dead. A grand triumph of science and intellect over animal instinct. At

last the hunter's gun became so hot it was dangerous to attempt to load it. Then came an intermission, during which time the remainder of the herd scampered off in a southerly direction, leaving their dead and wounded at the mercy of the skimmers. Texas and companions followed the skimmers down from the top of the knoll to where the buffalo lay in an area of about 100 yards. Using their six-shooters the skimmers killed the wounded. A few motherless calves that had escaped the bullets were knocked in the head. Fifty-three buffalo had fallen and now the skimmers prepared to take their hides off. Each carried two knives and a steel to sharpen them. These skimmers were artists in their line. With one stroke of the knife they encircled the hock above the hoof, then a quick movement of the hand split the hide down each leg and along the animal's belly to its under-jaw. Then, with a large curved skinning knife, the hide was removed in the incredibly short time of from five to eight minutes. Nothing was saved except the tongues and hides. Consequently, from \$15 to \$20 worth of fine meat was destroyed to save a dollar hide. After the work of removing the hides was finished each man carefully wiped his knife and returned it to the scabbard attached to his belt. Then began the operation of salting and rolling the hides, preparatory to hauling them to camp. Having seen all that was worth seeing connected with the killing and skinning, Texas and his companions jumped into the wagon and returned to camp with the first load of hides, to watch the staking process. The hides were taken from the wagon and carried to a clear plot of grass, where they were carefully unrolled and stretched tight, to their full capacity, and stakes driven into the outer edge to hold them until perfectly dry, and piled in a rick to wait transportation.

Among the old bull buffaloes that led the herds up and down Panhandle there were many wise heads that had learned from experience that there was danger in the sight of a covered wagon. This became so pronounced that during the latter years of the hunting season in Northwest Texas all outfits carefully concealed their wagonsheets and avoided displaying anything white. In fact, like all animals that had come in contact with the deadly effects of the hunter's gun, it required the utmost caution to approach within shooting distance of the herd and prevent a stampede.

Consequently, when Texas and his companions were slowly plodding their way up the long divide between the Deep creek of the Colorado and the Clear Fork of the Brazos, they were not surprised when rounding the point of a low mountain and coming within view of a large herd, that as soon as the animals caught sight of the flapping wagonsheet they turned tail and fled.

As the great herd swept up the valley of the Deep creek, driven by the frenzied fear that only the brain of an excited buffalo can conjure up, when whirled in the cyclone of stampede, the crush was awful.

Great billows of dust rolled up like the thunder clouds that hover along the storm's path when the sky is darkened and the elements tremble. Those on the outside pressed closer and closer on the struggling mass, that grew dense from force of numbers. The weak and young were carried along and only escaped death because there was not room enough to fall down. But one large, shaggy bull, perhaps destined to some day lead the herd could he have lived, thrust his fore foot into a dog hole and the leg snapped like a pipe stem as the momentum threw him beneath the sharp hoofs that cut and mangled his body into a shapeless thing, quivering and jerking as the last spark of life escaped.

The great herd passed by and disappeared over the divide as the last rays of the sun scintillated over the mesquite grass.

The sunset and the gray shadows of the twilight deepened into darker hues as the night came on, and Texas and his companions camped on the side of the trail at Sand Rock springs. The moon arose, and its soft light melted the rough edges off the landscape and painted a beautiful picture to look upon. Insect nature was still. The onrush of the great herd had driven it into seclusion and it had not even ventured to chirp, lest it once more awaken that awful roar. But out there where the carcass of the dead bull lies, his rich, red blood is staining the prairie, and the scent of it has floated out on the night breeze until it has awakened the savage lust of a coyote on the mountain side. He stops, raises his head high in the air until his muzzle points heavenward and he begins to utter a series of short, sharp yelps, ending in a prolonged wail as he arises from his haunches and trots off briskly to find the carcass and feast. The yelps and wail are answered by another wolf in the distance, and then another joins in, and now is heard the well known coyote chorus. In the morning the polished bones will testify that they feasted and fought all night and skulked away to their dens in the gray light from the East.

The ways of divine Providence are hard to understand, and no doubt 'tis best for man not to philosophize when he can not have a reason why that it is necessary for life to subsist upon life to sustain life.

And before passing over this incident of their homeward bound journey it is well to notice a queer condition of the camping ground.

On the highest point of this divide was a bubbling spring in the bottom of a basin of sandstone, known as

Sand Rock springs. In either direction the country sloped down into the valleys along the streams, and it was twenty miles to water.

This was a famous camping ground for the hunters, Indians and trail outfits. By reason of the high elevation the Indians, when on the war path, used it to light their signal fires to communicate with their red brothers on some distant peak. But, like every other advantage possessed by the Indians, the white man appropriated it.

The bubbling water of this spring was clear and cool, furnishing a refreshing beverage to the thirsty traveler.

Texas and his companions lingered until the middle of the forenoon before resuming their journey toward the east, after spending two weeks on the buffalo range, enjoying the health-giving exercises and amusing incidents of range life.

No doubt, buffalo hunting for sport is attended by all the grand and exciting spirit of the chase, and is worthy of the ambition of sporting men. The Grand Duke Alexis, father of the present czar of Russia, devoted two weeks to chasing these quadrupeds on the Western plains, and called it rare sport. But the systematic killing that reduced buffalo hunting to a business, during the years from 1875 to 1879, destroyed them, leaving only a few small herds. In many respects the extermination of the buffalo has been a blessing to Northwest Texas. The buffalo was the Indian's commissary, and as long as they grazed on the open prairie the hostile Indians depredated upon the white settlers. The buffalo being capable of consuming as much grass as any other animal of the bovine species, his sudden demise opened up a vast grazing district to the stockmen, and thousands of head of cattle were fattened, year after year, where once the buffalo alone held possession. Thousands of tons of the

bleached bones of these animals have been shipped to market, to be ground up and sold as fertilizer. The civilizing influences of the white man has been too much for the buffalo and wild Indian, and both have passed into history. The remnant of the great herds that once roamed at will over the prairies of the Dakotas, Colorado, New Mexico and Texas is found at Charles Goodnight's Palo Duro ranch in the Panhandle, and in the government herd in the Grand Canyon.

CHAPTER X

THE GENUINE COWBOY AT WORK AND PLAY

Behind careless sangfroid and beneath rough exterior,
God enthroned a true man who will bow to no superior.

NATURE'S NOBLEMEN

Search the world over for manly men—nature's noble-
men, who scorned to do an underhand trick to gain an
advantage over an adversary, making the price of honor
so high that dishonor forfeited the life of the betrayer,
and you may have created an impossible ideal. But go
to the real old-time ranchman, who now perhaps is a
banker or dealer in high finance, and ask him to tell you
the characteristics of those bold, reckless, dare-devils
that he used to employ on the range, who could laugh
while they fought the robbers and Indians, and he will
tell you that nowhere on God's footstool were women and
children safer than under the protecting care of the cow-
boys. They never failed to respond to an appeal for help
when the lives and homes of the early settlers were in
danger. With his pony and arms the cowboy placed his
life at their service and boldly marched forth to victory
or death.

Like sailors who sailed the seas over, months and
months out of sight of land, the cowboys rode the prairies
for months and months without ever visiting a settle-
ment. Consequently, like sailors on shore, when they
came in from the range the cowboys turned themselves
loose and had a "high old time."

But when playtime was over and duty called they went forth without a murmur or a note of protest to the wilds once more, and cheerfully entered into the rough life that gave no hope of pleasure.

All honor to the Texas cowboy, living or dead. With all his faults his virtues were many.

He did picket duty far out on the frontier when civilization lingered in the background, trembling with fear lest the scalping knife and tomahawk come marching down the trail.

The writer of this volume takes great pleasure in recording this brief tribute to the cattlemen and cowboys, who were his personal friends through a period of years, whose bravery was beyond question and whose honor was always above suspicion.

The ranchmen and cowboys were a product of the times in which they lived—times that tried men's souls and put manhood to the test and lives hung in the balance. How bravely they met the issues and vanquished every foe, is a matter of frontier history.

It was the period when the unwritten law of hospitality drove away all selfish thought, and neighbor vied with neighbor to show their appreciation of the blessings of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Consequently, the frontiersmen learned the great fundamental truths and the secret of human happiness, "that it is better to give than to receive." The desire for a favor became a duty to him who received the request. Many a time has a careless cowboy by chance overheard a ranchman's wife say that she was out of needles, thread or buttons, and made it his special duty to ride five and even ten miles out of his way to secure a supply, that he might have the pleasure of presenting them to her on his return to the ranch.

A ranchman never killed a beef that he did not remember his neighbor (sometimes living twenty miles distant) and send him a quarter.

Generosity was a cardinal virtue carried to an extreme that would appear ludicrous in this day of sharp competition.

The appeals of the sick and distressed called forth a noble response from the scattered ranchmen and cowboys, who vied with each other to bring the first relief. No one was ever called on to solicit aid; it was sufficient to make known that a worthy object of charity had been discovered when the response was spontaneous.

Written obligations for small loans were never thought of. I. O. U., based on the honor of the man, secured from one to a thousand dollars.

Nowhere on the earth is true manhood put to a more severe test than on the frontier. It requires bravery, honor and integrity to fill the measure that Bobby Burns laid down when he said: "A man's a man for a' that."

Many things we gain and some things we lose in the march of civilization.

To the individual heroism and fortitude of the Texas cowboy the people of the State are indebted for their present wealth and resources, and the writer of this story is pleased to say that many of the erstwhile cowboys of Northwest Texas are alive to-day, enjoying the fruits of their labors, occupying positions high in financial circles, or filling positions of honor and trust, with the entire confidence of the people.

A ROUGH HOUSE

On one occasion, in the old Adobe saloon, known as the "Beehive" by reason of the sign over the door, on one end of which was painted a beehive, followed by a

piece of doggerel poetry that informed the thirsty traveler that—

'In this hive we are all alive, good whisky makes us funny,
And if you are dry, step in and try the flavor of our honey.'

In this old ginmill three men were killed and two officers wounded. The cowboys from Millet's ranch in Baylor county were making a night of it. Jim Bland, the range boss, and Charley Reed were the ring leaders. They were in the billiard room shooting out the lights, when Sheriff Bill Cruger was notified. Hastily summoning County Attorney Jeffrys and Assessor Bogard to assist him, he repaired to the saloon and demanded that Bland and Reed surrender. But the fighting spirit of the cowboys was aroused, and instead of complying they turned their guns on the officers and a fierce battle was fought through the partition door. When the smoke cleared, Bland and ex-Lieutenant Meyers, who were in the billiard room, and a cowboy by the name of Brannon, in the bar room were killed, Sheriff Cruger slightly wounded and County Attorney Jeffrys shot through the right breast.

It was early in October when Texas and Kentuck were invited to join Lynch's outfit and witness the final grand round-up of the season.

The organized system of round-ups, begun in the early spring and carried on during the summer, was now at an end, and all the calves and unbranded cattle would be cut out and driven to the home ranch, where they would be marked and branded before being turned loose during the winter months.

After seven months, occupied in hunting out the breaks and canyons, driving over miles and miles of broad prairies, the strenuous labors of the cowboys' season was

nearing the end and he could look forward to a few months' respite.

THE TEXAS COWBOY

And now, dear reader, this is an excellent place in our narrative to introduce you to the real Texas cowboy.

To see the cowboy in all his glory, one must catch a glimpse of him on horseback as he gallops over the prairie. In the saddle he is at home, and the more spirited the horse the better pleased the rider.

The horse and rider seem one, like the centaur, so much in harmony are their motions. The broad-brimmed hat, leather leggins and six-shooter go to make up the uniform that distinguishes him from the rest of the world. His saddle, bridle and lasso form the most important articles of his outfit, and are generally purchased with a view of display as well as for utility. These articles are often worth more than the pony that carries them. With a pair of blankets and an oil slicker, the average cowboy is prepared for all kinds of weather, and without a change of clothing will be absent for a month on a cow hunt.

Years of practice makes the cowboy an expert rider, while his open-air life and freedom from restraint give him a careless and reckless appearance, often taken for mere bravado. Therefore those who know him are not disposed to quarrel with those who judge the cowboy from observation, for even Kentucky was free to confess that in competition for public favor he would be handicapped by his appearance. There was an unwritten law in the kingdom where the cattle barons ruled forbidding the wearing of any costume that carried the earmarks of social or commercial life. And experience will prove that it is not prejudice but common sense that dictates the

cowboy's costume. A two weeks' trip after cattle will soon convince a man that a flannel shirt will hide dirt and stand the wear and tear of camp life much better than a white one, and one night around a camp fire will convince him that ducking overalls are the only protection against grease and dirt. Consequently, the cowboys adopted a costume in harmony with their occupation.

The large Mexican spurs that dangle at the cowboy's heels are a most potent persuader to his jaded pony, and will accelerate his movements when all hope of touching his feelings with a quirt has failed. As an ornament his spurs are sure to attract attention, and when successfully manipulated by a full-fledged cowboy along the pavement of a city or town are capable of making as much noise as a hurdy-gurdy in full operation. Next in importance to his six-shooter, the cowboy considered his spurs a necessary appendage to his equipment, rarely taking them off, even at a dance or social gathering.

In the cowboy's camp a stranger always received a hearty welcome.

The proportions of his bed and table were similar to the old-fashioned omnibus on the turnpike roads—always room for one more, and a chance to put your name in the pot that hung over the fire. And though the stranger might not admire the style of the cooking or the cleanliness of the bed, he certainly must admire the spirit of hospitality that proffered them. There was a rough, cheerful sincerity about the cowboy's manner that made one feel at his ease the moment he alighted from his horse. And in this connection let it be known that there was observed in the early days of the Texas frontier a rule of hospitality as commendable as it was convenient. Any one traveling across the country, no matter whether he be a range man or stranger, was privileged to stop,

cook and eat wherever he found a camp. The latch-string hung on the outside and the provisions were free on the inside; and if it were night a free bed and breakfast in the morning. Every ranch, in fact even every dug-out, was a free inn for the hungry and weary, and a generous welcome greeted the newcomer at the door.

The mustang, broncho or cayuse, depending on the particular locality for its name, was the cowboy's pony, a semi-domesticated animal that lived on the native mesquite grass, and was stabled on the prairie by hopping him out with a rawhide thong. It would be almost worth a man's life to touch him with a currycomb, and he has been known to stampede when proffered an ear of corn. No one except a genuine cowboy understands the mechanism of a mustang pony. You may ride him all day in a gallop, and at night he will look like Don Quixote's Rosinante, and you turn him out expecting to attend his obsequies in the morning, but you will find him fresh and ready for a journey. One of the peculiarities about these ponies are their ungovernable propensity to buck you off when you first mount one in the morning. This feat is accomplished by putting his head between his forelegs and jumping in a zig-zag manner for about five minutes, making it difficult for even an experienced rider to maintain his seat in the saddle. After a pony has performed this feat to his entire satisfaction, he is ready for the day's journey. These animals are of Spanish origin and are said to be the direct descendants of the Arabian horses bred by the Moors. They are noted for their endurance.

The cowboy's pony is an animal of a marked degree of intelligence, easy to learn any duty required of him, and particularly adapted to herding and driving cattle.

Free grass and one common pasture made cattle-rais-

ing exceedingly profitable in those days. No boundary lines, real or imaginary, marked the possessions of the cattle barons of other days—one vast expanse of prairie country, covered with the famous mesquite grass, upon which tens of thousands of head of cattle grazed at will, bearing on their sleek sides the peculiar monogram of ownership representing the rights of personal property.

After grass came up in spring, and cattle became sufficiently strong to be driven north from the canyons and brakes of the southern range, the ranchmen sent their outfits to begin to drift them slowly back to the home range. As the summer advanced, a series of round-ups were instituted to give the cattlemen the privilege of cutting out their brands, and drive by easy stages under close herd to the next range, and so on to the home ranch. Early on the day appointed for a round-up on a certain range, the cowboys meet at an appointed place, where they are apportioned off in squads under an experienced hand. Each squad gathers everything within a certain scope of country and drives them to a common center called a round-up ground. In this way all the cattle within a range of thirty miles square are bunched in one large herd.

THE ROUND-UP

Imagine, if you can, a beautiful valley, where the sloping hills on all sides form a natural amphitheater, and the green carpet of mesquite grass dotted here and there with dwarf-looking trees, and the whole scene enhanced by the blue sky, where the feathery white clouds float in azure space. And in the center of this grand picture painted by the hand of nature can be seen a great herd of 10,000 head of cattle fenced in by men on horseback.

This was Kentuck's first view of a general round-up,

and he rode to the top of a knoll where he could secure a good view of the scene below. A chorus of bellowing mixed with the shouts of the cowboys floated up from the valley, that made Kentuck alive to the scene before him.

When everything was ready and the cattle under the control of the herders, preparations were made to begin cutting out the different brands from the main herd and putting them in small herds under the care of the owners. This was the acknowledged right, exercised by each owner in turn, until the entire herd was cut and the cattle of the same brand separated from the other brands. To perform this task an expert hand from each outfit was selected. He was generally well mounted on a pony trained especially for this part of the work. Thus mounted on his faithful pony, the cowboy rode into the herd among the cattle and selected, one by one, the cattle wearing the brand he represented. Riding behind each animal, he would, by dexterous movements of his pony, force it through the packed herd to the outer edge of the herd, and with a quick movement start the animal on a run for a dozen yards from the main herd, when another cowboy would ride up and drive it to where the cattle in that brand were held under guard. The expert hand would again return into the herd and cut out another, and so on until all the cattle in that brand had been removed from the herd. While this process was going on there was a cordon of cowboys formed around the entire herd. One outfit after another cut the herd until all the cattle were separated into small herds, each carrying the brand of ownership, and to be driven back to the home range. One or more of the hands belonging to each outfit carried a long whip with a short handle, which required considerable experience to use. These whips were

sometimes used in cutting out, but their principal use was driving stragglers back into the herd when on the trail. After the cattle had all been separated they were driven off in different directions to the branding pens at each home ranch.

One glance back over the scene, as Kentuck and Texas started homeward, repaid them for all the fatigue of the day. The natural grandeur of the situation made a lasting impression on their minds. Toward all points of the compass the small herds could be seen, wending their way across the prairie, while now and then the distant shout of the cowboys floated on the evening air. It was a wild scene with no habitation in sight, a vast unbroken prairie almost weird in appearance as the shadows lengthened from the setting sun.

The animated scene of an hour before was now melting into silence, more imposing by reason of the reaction from the exciting incidents during the day.

MARKING AND BRANDING

Marking and branding cattle would be very interesting to those who never visited the cattle range, but to the ranchman and his cowboys it was a matter of business.

When the herd from the round-up arrived at the home ranch it was held under loose herd near the branding pen, and a number that did not overtax the capacity of the pen were driven in and lassoed one at a time, thrown down on their sides, one cowboy holding down the head and another at the animal's back holding its tail taut between its legs, while a third advanced with a red hot branding iron and burned the letters or characters on its side. As each animal was released the roper stepped into the center of the pen with his lasso, and swinging

the coil around his head, approached the bunch of cattle and started them on a run around the pen, and at the proper moment threw the open loop with precision and skill, rarely ever missing the head of the animal. This was repeated over and over again until all the animals carried the mark and brand of the owner.

Marking and branding cattle was a laborious work and sometimes dangerous, by reason of the wild nature of the cattle, some of them as vicious as the untamed herds in the valleys of the Amazon.

A mad cow whose fighting blood has been aroused is a dangerous proposition, as many a cowboy can testify to his sorrow. This was demonstrated one day in the streets of Albany, when a stray that persisted in trying to run back into the herd was finally lassoed and dragged some distance. When turned loose the animal arose fighting, and charged down onto everything in sight. A movement at a door or window was sufficient to incur her wrath. As a matter of safety, the animal was finally shot down to prevent serious bodily injury to some of the inhabitants.

It was also a dangerous proposition to undertake to wear red when riding or walking on the range. It virtually meant "shaking a red rag in a bull's face."

A STAMPEDE

For weeks the Reynolds Brothers had been massing a large herd of stock cattle, to be driven to their ranch in the "Bad Lands" of Dakota.

It was to be an experiment in removing Texas cattle to the rigorous climate north, to relieve the congested conditions of their home range, that had become circumscribed by reason of a system of wire fencing, introduced to divide the public domain into small ranches and farms.

The last round-up was made on California creek, and all was in readiness to depart early the next morning on the long drive across country to the distant Dakota.

The cattle had been bedded for the night and the tired cowboys gathered around the "chuck" wagon for the evening meal.

Two of the boys were left on guard around the herd, to be relieved after the others had satisfied their hunger.

It was a warm, sultry evening in the middle of August. The sun had gone down in a flood of glory and the twilight shadows settled gently down over the prairie. One by one the stars came forth and took their place in the firmament and a peaceful quiet soothed man and beast.

The two boys on guard were singing in that soft, low tone that goes a long way toward pacifying cattle when held under close herd. But something happened to alarm the cattle. There was a snort, followed by a loud bellow, and in a second the whole herd was on its feet, bellowing in unison as they made a mad rush for the open prairie.

"Say, pard, did you ever see an onrush of frightened cattle, racing for dear life in a frenzied stampede? Well, it is certainly worth seeing, and if you happen to be in the saddle trying to check the progress, you will never forget it so long as you live," said Luke McCabe.

"They are off for tall timber," said McCabe to his companion, Mart Gentry, as he drove his spurs into his bronco and attempted to gain the flank of the frightened herd.

"All right," said Gentry, as they raced down the valley. "Bear in on the leaders and see if we can't get them to milling. That's our only chance to prevent them breaking away and scattering."

By this time every cowboy in camp, led by the "boss," Jeffries, joined in the chase after the runaways.

It did not take long for the wiry little ponies to come abreast of the frenzied leaders and turn them in on the flying herd. More and more the pressure was tightened until the cattle began to run round in a circle, and soon formed in a whirling mass of uplifted heads and clashing horns, frantic with fear as they whirled over the ground like a cyclone, enveloped in a cloud of dust that obscured the whole scene.

The "mill" had now formed and all danger of a runaway was at an end, but the bellowing circle on the outside pressed closer and closer upon the inner circle like the winding of a rope upon a reel, until, from sheer exhaustion, the herd became an inert mass of smoking, steaming cattle.

And now the expert knowledge of the cowboys was displayed in the careful way they went to work to break the mill.

Led by Phil Reynolds, the boys rode slowly to the edge of the circle, and, forming a wedge, started in and gradually unwound the "mill" by moving the outside animals off on a tangent, reversing the process that wound them together, and the great mass became a peaceful herd once more.

Following a stampeded herd at night is a position of great danger. The chances of being caught in the "mill," are very great, and to be caught in the whirling mass was almost sure death to both horse and rider.

A dozen head of cattle were knocked down and trampled to death in this mad onrush of stampeded cattle that swept down the valley of California creek that starlit night in August.

Many an old-time cowboy now living in comfort and ease, with wife and children around him, can recall the exciting scenes of a stampede when he helped to chase

the flying herd in a whirlwind of suffocating dust across the open prairie far out on the northwest range of Texas. And he no doubt heaves a long sigh as he remembers.

OVERLAND TRAIL

This was the season of the year when from 75,000 to 100,000 head of cattle from Southern Texas was driven over the old Overland trail to Kansas and other Northern markets, to be sold or fed during the coming winter and then placed on the spring market.

It was one bright morning in the month of June, 1879, that Texas invited Kentuck to mount a pony and accompany him on a ride along the trail to Fort Griffin.

The trail broadened and narrowed in breadth according to the topographical features of the ground and the condition of the grass by the wayside. The season was unusually active, owing to greatly appreciated prices in the Northern market. It was estimated that between 75,000 and 100,000 would be driven through before the season closed.

When Texas and Kentuck came in sight of the moving herds, clouds of dust stirred by thousands of hoofs hung in heavy festoons over the valley and across the broad prairie, distinctly lining the course of the trail until it faded away on the distant horizon.

The herds were composed of from 2,000 to 3,000 head of cattle each, averaging about one mile apart, and driven from eight to ten miles a day, subsisting entirely on the native mesquite grass near the line of the trail. Each herd had an outfit of from ten to fifteen men, twenty-five to thirty saddle ponies and a "chuck" wagon presided over by a cook and his assistant. The cattle were loose herded during the night and started on the trail at 9 a. m. and driven until 5 p. m.

The system of driving the cattle along the trail is very interesting, especially to a tenderfoot who, for the first time, is permitted to watch the proceedings. On either side of the herd near the front rode two cowboys, called the pointers, who kept the leaders on the trail and shaped the course of the herd. The remainder of the boys, except the cook and his assistant, were busy keeping up the stragglers and cutting out the strays. The cook's assistant, known as the wrangler, kept the saddle ponies moving in the wake of the herd, and the cook brought up the rear with the "chuck" wagon. The cattle were driven in double column formation, like an army corps on the march, and the cowboys, riding up and down the line like so many officers, presented a novel sight.

In this way large bodies of cattle were driven over the trail.

Fort Griffin being the intermediate supply point on the trail, each outfit camped for a day and night within easy distance of the fort, to give plenty of time for the supplies to be loaded into the "chuck" wagon. All the cowboys not on watch took advantage of the chance for a night's carousal. And they generally made the night hideous with their drunken revelry. But the morning after the drunk was the critical time, when there was almost sure to be a clash between these scapegraces and the officers. There was a dare-devil ambition among these Southern cowboys to be able to boast on their return home that they had "taken a town," which, translated into vigorous English, means that they rode through the streets to the open prairie, shooting right and left, without being captured by the local officers.

To demonstrate what these escapades were like, it is only necessary to relate one instance as an illustration of the many that transpired during a season's drive up the trail.

It was the day after Kentuck qualified as county attorney that he mounted his pony and rode over to the fort to see what was on the justice's docket. When he came in sight of the fort he saw a bunch of about 2,000 head of cattle loose herded near the trail, and the "chuck" wagon rolling along in front of him, on its way to the town for supplies. From some unknown reason, Kentuck became conscious of a premonition of trouble between this outfit and the officers. And on the conviction thus aroused, he rode to the justice's office and inquired for Marshal Dave Barker. After the usual greeting, Kentuck said:

"Dave, whose outfit is that loose herded in the valley beyond Government hill?"

"Why, that's Gamble's outfit that Marshal John Poe had so much trouble with last season."

"Well, Dave," Kentuck remarked, "you had better summon a few of the boys to assist you and prepare for them in the morning, for they will try and even up the score this time."

"All right, Kentuck; I'll make music for them with a shotgun loaded with buckshot."

Colonel Steele's docket showed an accumulation of ten cases to be tried on complaints of gambling, vagrancy and drunkenness. After announcing that the cases would be taken up at 10 a. m. on the morrow, the judge adjourned court and Kentuck repaired to the hotel to clean up and rest.

The general bustle of a very busy day incident to the outfitting of about 500 buffalo hunters for a season on the range, and filling orders for ranch supplies, gave Griffin avenue the appearance of a business mart in a large city. Otherwise it was unusually quiet for the Flat. It was true, as the day neared the twilight hour, the cow-

boys belonging to the Gamble outfit gave evidence of being loaded with "booze," and inclined to stir up a racket. But it was near the midnight hour before they began to make a rough house in the dance halls. Kentuck was sleeping in the store-fort, an inclosure made with salt, meal and flour sacks, to form a protection from stray bullets.

An occasional shot would be heard and an imitation Indian warwhoop down the avenue near the old Adobe saloon, that announced the forming of a procession to begin a gunshot serenade. A very few moments sufficed to put this army of hoodlums in motion, and they came marching up the avenue firing their six-shooters right and left with reckless disregard of both life and property.

"Kentuck, do you know what that means?" asked his companion, George Wilhelm.

"Yes," replied Kentuck; "it means to lie low to-night and view the battle ground in the morning."

From that time until daylight there was pandemonium in the Flat. Ribald singing, mixed with warwhoops and boasting challenges to the officers, with pistol fusillades to emphasize the words, left no time for sleep.

The front of the store was constructed of plank only one inch thick and afforded no protection against "45" Colt bullets. Consequently, it was full of splintered holes the next morning.

It was about 8 a. m. when the Gamble outfit saddled up their bronchos in Hank Smith's wagon yard and rode out in front of the Beehive saloon for a farewell drink before going out to the herd. The negro cook of the outfit, "fat and sassy," weighing about 200 pounds, came in early to notify the boys that the herd was ready to move up the trail.

Marshal Barker and three citizens, heavily armed, anticipating trouble, and fearing that the cowboys would make a run and shoot as they rode out of town, concealed themselves in the mesquites at the foot of the avenue near the river.

About twenty yards before the trail dipped into the depression where the marshal's posse were concealed, a bridle path turned to the right through the mesquites and led to a shallow crossing about 300 yards above the main crossing.

As the marshal anticipated, the Gamble outfit, after cinching up their broncs, mounted, pulled their guns and began a mad race down the avenue, quirting their ponies to full speed, shooting and yelling as they passed along. The negro cook, on a poor mount, could not keep the pace set by the other cowboys, and by the time they arrived in the vicinity of the marshal's posse, the negro lost sight of his companions in the mesquites.

Whether the cowboys caught sight of the marshal and his men, or had been previously warned, certain it is that they made a detour on the bridle path, dodging the marshal and crossing at the upper ford.

The negro cook was not so fortunate, but, acting on the supposition that the cowboys were following the main trail, he ran into the marshal's posse and was ordered to surrender. But, instead of doing so, he pulled his pistol and began to shoot. Then there began an exciting battle, the negro retreating and the officers following, both sides exchanging shots as they came back up Griffin avenue, the negro managing to reload as often as his pistol was empty, notwithstanding he was wounded in a half-dozen places. Finally, his pony was killed, and he crawled behind it, using the animal's body as a breastwork.

He kept up the fight until Ed. Forrest, one of the marshal's posse, emptied a load of buckshot into him and, though wounded eleven times, he was still breathing and conscious. Only one of the marshal's posse, John Hammond, received a flesh wound. The negro gave his name as Dick Bell and was turned over to a negro family to care for, with the prediction that he would die before morning, but, strange to relate, he lingered along for two weeks and recovered sufficiently to escape.

This was but one of the many encounters between the officers and the South Texas cowboys.

Notwithstanding the preliminary organization of the Cattle Raisers' association in the year 1876, at Graham, in Young county, by S. B. Burnett, D. B. Gardner, Dan Waggoner, Tom Waggoner, J. C. Loving, D. W. Goodwin, John N. Simpson, C. L. Carter, W. B. Slaughter, W. B. Worsham, E. B. Harold and others, the real organization was perfected at Fort Griffin in the fall of 1877. From Palo Pinto and Jack on the east to the border of New Mexico on the west the ranchmen, range bosses and cowboys were present; not so much because there was an association to be organized, but because it afforded a rare opportunity for old chums to fraternize.

Consequently, for several days before the time set for the convention the numbers grew and multiplied until there were about 5,000 swarming Griffin avenue in the flat, on opening day. And the word cosmopolitan but poorly expresses the nature of the conglomerate mixture of nationality and kindred tongues, of that great throng as it moved up and down the rows of saloons and restaurants like a herd of wild steers in a small corral.

Hotels, restaurants, saloons, stores and wagon-yards did a thriving business and were crowded beyond their capacity, and any old place was good enough if it afforded room to spread a pair of blankets.

Nothing like this convention had ever been conceived, much less actually announced to take place on the frontier. And it had been looked forward to somewhat in the spirit that takes possession of children as they anticipate the coming of Christmas. Hundreds of miles had been traveled and hundreds of dollars saved up for the occasion. And now there was to be a glorious realization of their fondest anticipations, and an event to look back to for many years to come.

No statesman or lawyer had planned the formation of an association. It was to be a convention of, by and for the cattlemen of Northwest Texas, growing out of the conditions on the range that demanded coöperation of mutual interests. Therefore, it commanded the presence of delegates from all the ranches within 500 miles.

But it is not with the business end of this convention, but of the incidents concomitant thereof, that commands our attention.

'Tis the escapades of cowboy life under high pressure that are worthy of note on this occasion. For if the innate cussedness aroused by one cowboy full of bad whisky could set a town by the ears, how much more to encounter them by the hundreds?

There was Bland and Peeler from the Millet ranch, Hemphill and Biggs from the Jim Reed ranch, Tucker and Batts from the Lynch ranch, Gentry and Jeffrys from the Matthews ranch, Glen and Phil Reynolds from the Reynolds Brothers ranch, Jim and Cal Greer from the Greer's ranch, and space forbids the mention of several hundred more cowboys from outlying ranches who were not delegates.

These boys were there to have the time of their lives, while the bosses attended to business, and a rip-rousing old time they had, too.

Everything was wide open and the whisky tanks full. If you didn't waltz up to the counter and chalk your name down for a drink of your favorite brand, it was your own fault and there was no kick coming.

Sheriff Green Simpson and his deputies, Henry Heron and Marshal Dave Barker, were on hand 'tis true, but unless a fellow became too reckless with his shooting-irons, they never interfered with the festivities.

It was late in the evening of the first day. The convention had adjourned, after electing Kit Carter, president and Jim Loving, secretary and treasurer. The crowds surged around the hotels and restaurants, where the fumes of baked meat and coffee sent forth tempting odors. Many were already in that mellow state that comes from imbibing too much. Consequently, the conversation was hilarious and more forcible than elegant.

As darkness approached the whole avenue burst forth in a flood of light from the open windows and doors.

The time for merry-making had come. And the boys who knew how to make merry were on hand to see that the fun was fast and furious.

It was well enough to eat baked beef and drink coffee as a necessity, but throats used to alkali dust and gip water craved the cheering spirits sold over the bars—"Drink'r down, boys; drink'r down."

One by one the older and wiser heads became dizzy and drowsy and they rolled up in their blankets. But not so with those wild and reckless cusses from "Bitter creek." Their blood was warm and heads hot, and the devil spurred them on to all kinds of mischief. A grand rush was made for the dance halls, and the atmosphere soon became charged with tobacco smoke and fumes of whisky.

As the night advanced the spirit of recklessness grew,

and men dared to do those things that in their saner moments would have been called foolhardy.

The front room of the old Adobe saloon was crowded to suffocation when Zeno Hemphill jumped upon the counter and dared Peeler to help "shoot the lights out." And the fusillade that followed soon "doused the glims." Considerable confusion followed in the dark, and several were slightly wounded by stray bullets. But by the time Jack Casey and Mike O'Brien, the proprietors, had procured new lamps, the crowd had surged into the street on their way to Dick Jones' saloon, shooting right and left as they advanced up the avenue.

And so the night wore away, and the morning's sun peeped o'er the eastern brakes and shot a shaft of light along Griffin avenue, revealing bunches of cowboys sleeping off their stupor under the awnings in front of the business houses.

The second day was full of stirring incidents that at times almost amounted to a riot.

One of the most exciting events was between a local sport named Mike Harrity and Zeno Hemphill, relative to whether a "bronco buster" could ride a three-year-old steer as easily as an unbroken mustang.

Zeno claimed he could ride anything that wore hair. Mike bet him \$50 that he could not ride a steer. The money was put up in Harve Biggs' hands and two men were sent out to bring in a bunch of cattle from which to select the animal. They were gone about an hour and reported a bunch in T. E. Jackson's corral.

Bill Hitson and Jim Reed were selected as a committee to pick out the steer. The crowd repaired to the corral and the committee selected a large brindle three years old. Two of the boys roped him, turned the balance of the bunch loose, and led the wild, cavorting bovine out

in the open prairie, threw him down, tied and blindfolded him and a saddle was cinched on his back when he arose to his feet. Blindfolding always had the effect of keeping an animal quiet until it could be saddled and bridled. And this proved no exception, for the steer stood and trembled until the saddle was fastened. The lassoes were removed, and two boys held him by the horns and nose until Zeno mounted, then jerking the blinds off turned him loose.

Did you ever see a man attempt to ride a wild, untamed steer? No? Then you can have no conception of the real performance.

Wild-eyed, snorting and bellowing at every jump, that untamed steer pitched stiff-legged down the trail, humping and hunching his back until the saddle slid back to his hips while Zeno was holding on to the horns for dear life. Finally the saddle worked back over his tail and went rolling with Zeno into the dust.

Both Zeno and Harrity claimed the stakes, and a first-class shooting bee came near being pulled off. But friends surrounded the angry combatants, and a compromise was agreed to, giving Zeno half of the stakes.

The evening and the night following was a repetition of the day and night before, except the arrest of Hemphill, which came near bringing on a bloody conflict between the cowboys and the officers.

Hemphill was making a rough house in Dick Jones' saloon, and it was reported to the officers that a preconcerted movement was on foot to start a row and kill the officers in the conflict. The plan unfolded to the sheriff was, that Zeno would start a rough house, and when the officers came the Millet outfit, led by Peeler, would do the rest.

Zeno performed his stunt all right, but the two depu-



Shooting the Lights Out. (Page 291.)

ties nabbed him before the Millet outfit could come to his rescue, though he fought like a savage, and the deputies were compelled to knock him down several times with their six-shooters before they could drag him to the calaboose. In the meantime Peeler called his men and they came running after the officers with their pistols in their hands. The deputies, joined by the sheriff, arrived at the calaboose just in time to throw Zeno inside and face the mob. Pointing their six-shooters at the men the officers prepared to give them battle, but Captain Millet came up and ordered Peeler to desist.

HORRIFYING EXPERIENCE OF JAMES A. BROCK

James A. Brock was head clerk in the post trader's store, within the military reservation on the hill overlooking the Flat. A man named Hickey obtained the concession from the commander of the post to run the store. It was a semi-military institution, patronized by soldiers and civilians alike. A "canteen" was run in connection with the establishment, furnishing amusement and drinks to the customers. Ranchmen and buffalo hunters bought supplies from this store, and it became a very live business place.

Young Brock was paid a good salary, and conceived the idea of starting a ranch on Foyle creek, about six miles west of the fort. Energetic and determined in the execution of his plans, he hired an old negro by the name of Nick Williams to build a cabin and make the necessary improvements to comply with the State law governing the taking up of land by the actual settler. Nick proved to be a faithful hired man, and soon transformed the little valley into a model ranch.

Brock often visited the ranch and remained over night to perfect plans with Nick, who, under instructions, hired

two more negro men to assist him. Brock then began to purchase a few head of stock cattle from time to time, and started the J-A-B brand. By the strictest economy and sharp trading his ranch flourished and showed signs of prosperity.

Not content with plodding along waiting for the natural increase in the old beaten track with his longhorns, Brock sent an order back to his old home at Oberlin, Ohio, for a dozen shorthorn Durham cows and two registered bulls; and to make sure that they would be well cared for en route, he requested his cousin, Frank Lassiter, to travel with them to Dallas, the terminal of the road, then drive them through by easy stages to Foyle creek.

Nick and one of the negro men took a wagon loaded with supplies and met Lassiter at Dallas, the nearest railroad point. In due time the outfit arrived at the Foyle creek ranch with the shorthorns.

And from that moment the troubles of James A. Brock began, that came near sacrificing his life to the vengeance of the Vigilance Committee, and resulted in the loss of all his money and property, besides causing him to spend years wandering in search of the author of his misery.

Through the generous offer of a half interest in the cattle and the ranch, Brock induced his cousin, Frank Lassiter, to remain and take charge of the property, and Brock agreed to pay Nick's salary and share the expenses of keeping up the ranch and improving the cattle.

Everything moved along smoothly until the time came to attend the fall round-ups. There were only a small number of the Brock cattle on the range, and Frank Lassiter attended the round-ups alone, leading a pack-horse and carrying his blankets and the necessary "grub" from place to place.

One morning Lassiter left the ranch on Foyle creek and struck out across the prairie in the direction of Fort Phantom Hill, to attend a round-up at Mode Johnson's ranch. That was the last time he was seen for a period of five years. The next evening old Nick discovered the pack-horse grazing on the home range. For several days a searching party rode the prairie looking for traces of Lassiter, but nothing was discovered to throw any light on the mystery.

In the meantime enemies of Brock were busy circulating a rumor of foul play, reporting a conspiracy between Brock and Nick to kill Lassiter and secure all the property. The continued absence of Lassiter gave credence to this rumor, and Brock and Nick were arrested and held on suspicion. Hot-heads among the Vigilantes were determined to hang them at once, but the more conservative members counseled to wait until the remains of Lassiter were found, or at least some evidence of foul play, arguing that it would be a dangerous precedent to hang the prisoners without proof of their guilt.

During the incarceration of Brock and Nick, communication was opened with Brock's relatives in Ohio. Frank Lassiter's brother Ed and wife came to Texas and took possession of the Foyle creek ranch, and began to aid the enemies of Brock to push the prosecutions, going so far as to aid them to take old Nick away from the guards and swing him to a tree three times, in an effort to make him fasten the guilt upon Brock and save himself. But the faithful old negro refused to lie.

Knowing the desperate efforts being made to destroy him, Brock communicated with his father and secured the services of an eminent lawyer, who, in company with Brock's brother, came to Albany to defend him. As soon as the lawyer arrived he sued out a writ of habeas corpus

and Brock and Nick were released on \$5,000 and \$3,000 bail.

As soon as they were released, Brock, who became convinced during his incarceration that it was a conspiracy hatched up by the Lassiters to swindle him out of his property, hired a detective and began to search for Frank Lassiter who he believed was alive and in hiding.

This was the beginning of a series of remarkable incidents, covering a period of five years, wherein James A. Brock persistently carried on a systematic search for Frank Lassiter. When he exhausted his money sending out descriptions and photographs, paying detectives and other necessary expenses, he would go to work and save his means until he secured sufficient funds to enable him to once more start on the trail of the missing man. The grand jury failed to secure any evidence to indict Brock, but this did not influence him in prosecuting his search.

Brock traced one clue after another, only to be disappointed.

After the first twelve months people lost interest in the mystery, and many believed Brock was losing his mind through continually brooding over the affair. But he never gave up the search, following clue after clue into the Indian Territory, New Mexico, and Arizona, returning to Texas; then into Arkansas, where a man answering the description of Lassiter was located at the town of Bentonville; and, notwithstanding he wore a full beard and was otherwise changed, Brock recognized him.

Lassiter was living under the assumed name of Laycock, and had lived in Bentonville for three years prior to his discovery by Brock. He had learned the pottery business, married the widow of the proprietor, and was carrying on the business.

When confronted by Brock, Lassiter denied his identity.

"Frank Lassiter, I know you," said Brock. "For some reason you disappeared from the ranch on Foyle creek, leaving the impression that you were murdered. Some one in your interest cast suspicion on me, and I came near being hanged without judge or jury by the Vigilantes. If it had not been for Uncle Joe Matthews and Judge J. C. Lynch, I and that faithful old negro, Nick, would have swung into eternity. Subsequent events led me to believe that it was a conspiracy between you and Ed to deprive me of life and property. You had neither respect for our relationship or gratitude for my generosity for giving you a partnership interest in the ranch."

"You are mistaken, sir my name is not Lassiter," said the assumed Mr. Laycock. "I never saw you before."

"Oh, yes, you know me, Frank Lassiter, and I am going to take you back to Ohio and have you identified. Officer," turning to the detective, "lift his hat and you will find an ell-shaped scar over his right eye near the hair."

The officer lifted the hat, revealing the scar, as described.

"Now, Lassiter," said Brock, "if you don't want a scene in the presence of your wife, Detective Ward will accompany you to the house while you pack up a grip and make any excuse you care to for your absence for the next week or ten days."

During their absence in Lassiter's residence, Brock sauntered through the pottery, where, from appearance, Lassiter was doing a prosperous business.

When they returned the three went to the depot in time to catch a northbound train.

When seated in the smoking room of the sleeper, Lassiter looked at Brock a few minutes, as if debating a problem in his mind.

"Brock, there is no use longer denying my name. I will be recognized by the people in Oberlin when we arrive. Now, I have a remarkable story to tell you; believe it or not, as you please. But, strange as it may sound to you, it is nevertheless true.

"When I left the ranch on Foyle creek, five years ago, with the pack horse, bound for Mode Johnson's ranch, I never dreamed of going away and leaving things in a muddle. But, while descending the rocky trail leading to Salt Creek valley, my horse stumbled, throwing me over his head. I fell head foremost into a pile of rocks and was knocked senseless; must have sustained a fracture of my skull, for I awoke in a dazed condition, without any knowledge of my surroundings or who I was. In this condition I managed to crawl upon my horse and lapsed into a semi-conscious condition. As you well know, the horse that I was riding was purchased from a cow puncher returning from Kansas, who traded for the animal at Venita in the territory. I suppose that accounts for the direction he traveled with me.

"From that time on, for two years, I lost all remembrance of my past life. I could neither tell my name or where I had lived.

"The same evening of the accident my horse stopped in front of a ranch house, and I indistinctly remember eating supper, staying all night and leaving after breakfast the next morning. But whose ranch and where it was I have no idea. In this manner, from day to day, the horse made his way to his old range in the territory.

"I don't know how I drifted to the coal mines at McAllister, but I labored at the coal screens six months, answering to the name of Laycock, because some of the miners said I looked like a brother of a man by that name who was killed before I arrived. Then I have no recol-

lection of my wanderings until I arrived in Bentonville. I remember one morning of applying for work, and began driving a horse to a mud mill. About this time my mind began to clear, but I was still unable to recall the past. I began to take an interest in my occupation, and extended my observations to other parts of the pottery business. And when a better place became vacant, I applied and was promoted along the line until I became the manager. A few months later, Mr. Watkins, the proprietor, died. His widow insisted on me taking entire control of the plant. Our business relations ripened into affection and we were married after the expiration of twelve months. I never suspected that I was Frank Lassiter until I saw my portrait in the papers and read the description. Then, not knowing what I was accused of and how serious the consequences might be, I was afraid to communicate with you. Now, Brock, this is the truth, so help me God."

"Well, I believe you, Frank," said Brock, "and if you will go to Oberlin and be identified, so that my name can be cleared from all suspicion, I am not inclined to prosecute you, notwithstanding all the humiliation and money it has cost me."

"I agree to do so," said Lassiter, "because it is only justice to you. And if I had possessed the moral courage to have faced exposure and prosecution, you would have been vindicated long ago. I never had any communication with Ed, consequently had no knowledge of the part he played in the game."

"Well," replied Brock, "I suppose he saw a chance to secure the ranch."

"What became of Ed?"

"He died on the ranch and his wife shipped his remains back to Ohio."

When the trio arrived at Oberlin, Frank Lassiter was identified by his relatives and all his old associates, completely vindicating James A. Brock. After a few days, during the time they remained, Lassiter made amends by deeding back to Brock all of his interest in the Foyle creek ranch, then returned to his home in Bentonville.

Brock was congratulated and returned to Texas with Lassiter's confession and the affidavits of identification signed by the county officials and prominent citizens, as proof of his innocence.

After disposing of the Foyle creek ranch, he settled in El Paso, where he engaged in the real estate business and prospered.

Old Nick was not forgotten, and was substantially rewarded by Brock, and found employment with a large ranch owner.

And thus ended one of the most peculiar chains of circumstances that ever threatened the life of an early settler on the frontier.

Kentuck was one of the few who always believed in Brock's innocence during the darkest hours of his persecution, and assisted him in every way possible to trace the missing Lassiter.

CHAPTER XI

INDIAN BATTLES ON THE FRONTIER

With gun, and steel, and flaming torch, and blood-curdling yell;
White men and Red men, in deadly conflict met, fought and fell.

The writer makes no claim that the incidents under this head have historic value, but they are nevertheless based upon facts related by trustworthy people, who took an active part in the events, or were contemporaneous neighbors with those who did.

Kentuck, with a propensity for delving into the past, found ample opportunity listening to the old settlers whenever they assembled for business or pleasure.

These old veteran frontiersmen during their leisure moments related many exciting events that have never been published in song or story by fiction writers.

But it would require several volumes larger than this to contain the facts relative to the almost continuous warfare between the settlers and the Indians.

One of the strange characteristics of the Comanches, Apaches, Kiowas and other Indians that lived on the plains was that their raids were confined to daylight or moonlight operations, when they could see as well as be seen by the settlers. And even then they refused to follow the retreating whites into a thicket or grove, fearing an ambush. Many a fleeing pioneer owed his life to the friendly shelter of the underbrush along the margin of a stream, or the thickets among the mountain breaks.

This was so well understood by the early settlers that their houses were built in close proximity to the rough breaks and mountain streams that afforded excellent protection in a raid.

And now, reader, from a series of notes compiled by Kentuck during those days, and from the best data and information obtained from all sources at his command, the writer of this volume will attempt to set before you in brief a series of battles, raids and thrilling events in the history of Northwest Texas.

Due credit is given to other writers, who were fortunate to secure better data than the writer could, of the great battles of Antelope hills and the Adobe Walls, describing heroism of individuals who participated in those conflicts. But at the same time the writer will interpolate whenever he finds omissions or irregularities in the recitals that can be amended and give a more satisfactory retrospect.

JOE LOVING AND JIM SCOTT'S FIGHT WITH THE COMANCHES

There can be no doubt that every story told around the camp fire had its foundation laid in facts, but time, the great magnifier, and the propensity for hero worship, always exaggerates the prowess of men who take part in the exciting dramas that are enacted on the frontier, to the extent of painting graphic pictures in melodramatic colors.

Therefore, it will be more interesting reading to give the story-teller license for his emotions and allowance for supplying the missing links in the chain of circumstances that he has forgotten. Especially when he tells the oft repeated story of Indian forays, the temptation to enlarge must be forgiven.

With this understanding the writer submits the stories

that Kentuck heard in the cow camps and around the firesides of the settlers.

During the long winter evenings the bunk house where the cow punchers lounged away the dull hours was naturally the place where one could hear the hair-raising stories of Indian raids.

Cal Greer crossed the Staked plains with a herd in the summer of 1869, following closely the trail made by Joe Loving and Charles Goodnight the previous season, when they were under contract to deliver 4,000 head to the Navajo Indian agency at Fort Sumner.

Therefore, Greer was well informed about the desperate fight at Loving's Bend on the Pecos, between Joe Loving and Jim Scott and a fierce band of Comanches.

Joe Loving was one of the old-time cattle men who staked his life on the hazard of the frontier and lost it.

And on this occasion he was unusually alert in pushing the herds across the plains. It was a ninety-mile drive without water. It was three nights and four days from the time they left the edge of the plains until they arrived on the Pecos and drove up the valley in the direction of Sumner.

Realizing that they were in the hostile Indian country, every precaution was used to prevent an ambush. Four days out from the Horsehead crossing Loving decided to go on ahead of the herds and make arrangements for the delivery of the cattle.

Picking out Jim Scott to accompany him, they started after dark and rode all night, lying in concealment during the day. This plan was followed until the morning of the third day when they decided to push on to the hills above the mouth of Dark canyon. They were then about fifteen miles below where the town of Carlsbad, in New Mexico, now stands.

The country was a perfect level, with an unobstructed view for miles. Loving and Scott were riding in the direction of a low, flat hill when they discovered a band of Comanches charging down upon them.

In their efforts to reach the hill for protection Loving was shot in the thigh and his horse killed. Fortunately this happened on the edge of a buffalo wallow, and Loving was pitched into it. Jom Scott hastily dismounted and began firing his Henry rifle at the approaching Indians. Two Comanches were killed and this checked the charge.

The Indians drew back out of range of Scott's fire for a few moments, giving him a chance to tie his handkerchief around Loving's wound.

The siege was kept up during the remainder of the day, but the concentrated fire of Loving and Scott was too hot for the Comanches. They raced around the cattle men several times, shooting from beneath their ponies' necks, but the fire from the buffalo wallow compelled them to retire. Scott killed his own horse to make their breastworks more secure. Three Indians were wounded and six horses killed in the last charge made on the buffalo wallow.

As soon as it was dark enough to conceal their movements, Loving and Scott, relying on the traditional tactics of the Indians of awaiting daylight before renewing the attack, crawled several hundred yards to the Pecos river.

Finding a place where they could slide down the steep bank, they lost no time in slaking their thirst and hunting a place of concealment. This they found in a deep cave cut by the swift water during the flood tide. The steep bank above afforded protection, compelling the Indians to cross the river before renewing the attack.

At daylight the next morning the Indians followed the trail made by Loving and Scott to the bank of the river, and two of them were killed before they discovered where the cattlemen were concealed.

During the entire day the Indians used all of their methods of warfare to dislodge them, but found the opposite bank too exposed to a direct fire to permit of an attack. For a while the Indians threw burning bushes over the bank in an attempt to smoke them out, but this proved a failure and they resolved to starve them out.

In the meantime Loving was suffering from his wound and they were out of "grub." This forced Scott to agree to try to escape during the second night and go back down the trail to meet Goodnight's outfit and secure assistance.

As soon as it was dark enough to elude detection, Scott pulled off his clothes and waded out into the stream and moved silently down the river about one-half mile before attempting to climb the bank.

He was on the trail two nights and one day without resting until he fell from weakness and went off into a troubled sleep. Bill Scott, who was out hunting stray ponies, found Jim and thought that he was dead, but after shaking, succeeded in arousing him. Taking Jim up behind him, Bill galloped his horse back to camp, and Goodnight ordered six men to saddle up their broncos and they started out to rescue Loving.

The next morning after Scott's departure Loving had a close call, and had to keep up a continuous firing to prevent the Comanches from capturing him.

Realizing that it would be impossible for him to stand them off another day, he resolved to escape.

Fortunately, though he did not know it, the Comanches abandoned the fight. Painfully he floated down the river

a few hundred yards and crawled up the bank, and, though weak and starving, dragged himself along the rough trail to a bend in the river, where he swooned from loss of blood.

Here Goodnight found him and hired a Mexican outfit with a cart to haul him to Fort Sumner.

When they arrived at the post the surgeon was on a scout with a squadron of cavalry and it became necessary to send a rider to Las Vegas to secure a surgeon, 130 miles distant.

Scott Moore performed the feat, notwithstanding the country was alive with hostile Indians, covering 260 miles in thirty hours, but the amputation of the leg did not save Loving, and he died a few minutes after the operation.

THE BATTLE OF ANTELOPE HILLS

Although the battle of Antelope hills was fought seventeen years anterior to the time that Kentuck arrived on the frontier, the details were fresh in the memory of the Tonkawa warriors who took part in the sanguinary conflict.

And notwithstanding it has been exploited by writers heretofore, by reason of it being one of the most important battles fought in Northwest Texas, it properly belongs at the head of the list of this series.

Colonel Buck Berry, though he did not participate in the battle, and at the time was assigned to other duties, was afterward associated with both Col. John S. Ford and Capt. S. P. Ross, Sr., who were in command on this memorable occasion.

This was the first great battle that the Tonkawas participated in since their terrible conflict with the allied tribes.

The scenery on the South Canadian at the foot of the Antelope hills was rough and almost inaccessible. And this was the home of the fierce Comanches when not raiding the frontier settlements.

When pursued by the government troops or the Texas' rangers they invariably retreated to this refuge, where they felt secure from attack, by reason of the natural fortifications and the difficulties presented to an invading force.

It was the spring of 1858 after returning from a very successful raid that the Comanches rendezvoused in their favorite retreat.

During this period the Comanches were led by their great chief, Pohebits Quasho, better known as "Iron Jacket," because he wore a coat of mail beneath his hunting shirt, which rendered him safe from the arrows and rifle balls of his foes. Where the old chief secured this coat of mail was a mystery, though some writers claim that it was an heirloom captured from the Spanish invaders by "Iron Jacket's" father. Be that as it may, no doubt it gave him great power over his tribe, more than had ever been exercised by any other chief who preceded him.

"Iron Jacket" was not only the head chief, but also the great medicine man and prophet of his superstitious tribe, who were ignorant of the real cause of his immunity from death in battle.

He was idolized like some heathen god whose charmed life belonged to the supernatural power of the Great Spirit.

The sub-chief, or second in command of the Comanches, was Peta Nocona, the son of "Iron Jacket," and husband of Cynthia Ann Parker, a white girl captured at Parker's Fort in the year 1836. (Quanah

Parker, now chief of the Comanche Nation, is the son of Peta and Cynthia Ann.)

It was during this year of 1858 that the Comanches became so troublesome to the white settlers on the border, especially along the Brazos and its tributaries, that the State government determined to follow them to their stronghold in the Antelope hills, and if possible drive them out, capture their women and ponies and destroy their tepees.

For this purpose Col. John S. Ford was directed by the government to coöperate, make up an expedition, follow up the raiders and make a war of extermination on the "red devils," as the settlers called them.

According to data published by Col. Ben. C. Stewart, of Galveston, this expedition, made up of soldiers, rangers, settlers and a band of Tonkawa scouts under Chief Placido, started for Antelope hills about May 1st, Capt. S. P. Ross second in command.

The incidents of this march to the Canadian, and the skirmishes with the straggling bands en route are not worth the space required in the telling.

About a week after the command began the march the Tonkawa scouts discovered the main body of Comanches near the foothills of the mountain range.

Contrary to their usual vigilance, the Comanches were caught napping, and did not know of the approach of Ford's command until the day of the battle, notwithstanding they were camped within a few miles of the stronghold the day previous.

Consequently, a complete surprise was sprung about daylight, and before sunrise a fierce battle was being fought.

The best account ever published of this battle, when the famous "Iron Jacket" met his death and caused a

panic among his followers, was written by Victor M. Rose, at one time connected with the *Victoria Advocate*, published at Victoria, Texas. The writer of this volume esteems it a great privilege to reproduce Rose's article in this connection:

"The panorama thus presented to the rangers," writes Rose, "was beautiful in the extreme, and their pent-up enthusiasm found vent in a shout of exultation, which was speedily suppressed by Colonel Ford. Just at this moment a solitary Comanche was descried riding southward, evidently heading for the village that Placido had so recently destroyed. He was wholly unconscious of the presence of the enemy. Instant pursuit was now made. He turned and fled at full speed toward the main camp across the Canadian, closely followed by the rangers. He dashed across the stream and thus revealed to his pursuers a safe ford across the miry and almost impassable river. He rushed into the village beyond, sounding the note of alarm, and soon the Comanche warriors formed a bold front of battle between their women and children and the rangers. After a few minutes, forming a line of battle, both sides were arrayed in full force. The friendly Indians were placed on the right, and thrown a little forward. Colonel Ford's object was to deceive the Comanches as to the character of the attacking force and as to the quality of the arms possessed. Pohebits Quasho, arrayed in all of his gaudy trappings, coat of mail, shield, bow and lance, completed by a headdress decorated with feathers and long red flannel streamers, and besmeared with war paint, gayly dashed about on his war horse, midway between the opposing lines, delivering taunts and challenges to the whites. As the old chief dashed to and fro a number of rifles were discharged at him at point blank range without any effect whatever, which

seeming immunity from death encouraged his warriors greatly and induced some of the more superstitious among the rangers to inquire within themselves if it were possible that old 'Iron Jacket' really bore a charmed life. Followed by a few of his braves he now bore down upon the rangers, described a few circles, gave a few necromantic puffs with his breath and let fly several arrows at Colonel Ford, Captain Ross and Chief Placido receiving their fire without harm. But as he approached the line of Tonkawas a rifle ball directed by the steady nerve and unerring eye of one of their number, Jim Pockmark, brought the 'Big Medicine' to the dust.

"The shot was a mortal one. The fallen chief was instantly surrounded by his braves, but his spirit had winged its flight to the happy hunting grounds. These incidents occupied but a short time, when the order to charge was given, and then ensued one of the grandest assaults ever made against the Comanches. The enthusiastic shouts of the rangers and the triumphant yell of their red allies greeted the welcome order. It was responded to by the defiant war whoop of the Comanches, and in these virgin hills, remote from civilization, the saturnalia of battle was inaugurated. The shout of enraged combatants, the wail of women, the piteous cries of terrified children, the howling of frightened dogs, the deadly reports of rifle and revolver, constituted a discordant confusion of infernal noise. The conflict was short and sharp. A charge, a momentary exchange of rifle and arrow shots, the heartrending wail of discomfiture and dismay, and the beaten Comanches abandoned their lodges and camp to the victors and began a disorderly retreat. But sufficient method was observed to take advantage of each grove of timber, each hill and ravine, to make a stand against their pursuers, and thus

enable the women and children to make their escape. The tumult of battle now diverged from the common center like the spokes of a wheel, and continued for several hours, gradually growing fainter, as the pursuit disappeared in the distance.

“Another band of Comanche braves numbering 500, under command of the noted chief, Peta Nocona, distant ten miles from the scene of the first engagement, heard the sounds of firing and were soon on the way to the relief of their comrades. About 1 o'clock in the afternoon, as the last of the Texas rangers returned from the pursuit of the band of Pohebits Quasho, they found the force under Colonel Ford arrayed in line of battle, and on inquiry as to the cause, Colonel Ford, pointing to the hills, replied: ‘Look there and you will see.’ A glance in that direction disclosed a force of 500 Comanches drawn up in line of battle. Colonel Ford, with 221 men, had fought 400 Comanches, and now he was confronted by a much stronger force fresh from their village higher up the Canadian. They had come to drive the palefaces and their hated copper-colored allies from the captured camp, to rescue prisoners and retake over 400 horses and a large amount of plunder. They did not fancy the defiant note of preparation awaiting them in the valley, however, and were waiting to avail themselves of some incautious movement on the part of the rangers, when the wily Peta Nocona with his force would spring like a lion from his lair, and with one combined and desperate effort swoop down and annihilate the enemy. But his antagonist was a soldier of too much sagacity to allow any advantage to a vigilant foe. The two forces remained thus, contemplating each other for over an hour, during which time a series of operations ensued between single combatants, illustrative of the Indian mode of warfare and the marked

difference between the nomadic Comanches and the Tonkawas. The Tonkawas took advantage of ravines, trees and other natural objects. Their arms were rifles and revolvers. The Comanches came to the attack with shield, bow and lance, mounted on gaily caparisoned, prancing steeds, and flaunting feathers and all the gorgeous trappings incident to savage display and pomp. They were probably the most expert equestrians in the world. A Comanche warrior would gaily canter to a point halfway between the opposing lines, yell a defiant war whoop and shake his shield. This was a challenge to single combat.

“Several of the friendly Indians who accepted such challenges were placed *hors de combat* by their more expert adversaries, and in consequence Colonel Ford ordered them to decline the savage banter, much to the dissatisfaction of Placido, the Tonkawa chief, who had conducted himself throughout the series of engagements with the bearing of a savage hero. ‘In the combats,’ said Colonel Ford, ‘the mind of the spectator was vividly carried back to the days of chivalry, the jousts and tournaments of knights, and to the concomitants of those scenic exhibitions of gallantry. The feats of horsemanship were splendid, the lance and shield were used with great dexterity, and the whole performance was a novel show to civilized man.’ Colonel Ford now ordered Placido with a part of his warriors to advance in the direction of the enemy, and, if possible, to draw them into the valley, so as to afford the rangers an opportunity to charge them. This had the desired effect, and the rangers were ready to make a charge, when it was discovered that the friendly Indians had removed the white bandages from their heads because they served as a target for the Comanches. Consequently, the rangers were unable to distinguish friends from foes. This necessitated the entire

withdrawal of the Indians. The Comanches witnessed these preparations and now commenced to recoil. The rangers advanced; the trot, the gallop, the headlong charge followed in rapid succession. Lieutenant Nelson made a skillful movement and struck the enemy's flank. The Comanches' line was broken. A running fight now ensued for three or four miles. The enemy was driven back wherever he made a stand. The most determined resistance was made in a timbered ravine. Here one of Placido's warriors was killed, and one of the rangers, young George W. Paschal, wounded. The Comanches left some dead on the field and had several wounded. After routing them at this place the rangers continued to pursue them for some distance, intent upon taking the women and children prisoners; But Peta Nocona, by the exercise of those commanding qualities which had often before signalized his conduct on the field, succeeded in covering the retreat, and thus allowed them to escape. It was now about 4 P. M., both horses and men were almost entirely exhausted, and Colonel Ford ordered a halt and returned to the village. Brave old Placido and his warriors fought like demons. It was difficult to restrain them, so anxious were they to wreak vengeance upon the Comanches. In all of these engagements seventy-five Comanches bit the dust. The loss of the rangers was small—two killed and six wounded. The trappings worn by Pohebits Quasho, or 'Iron Jacket,' the noted Comanche chief who was slain, consisting of lance, bow, shield, headdress and the celebrated coat of mail, were gathered up on the field and brought to Austin, where they were deposited by Colonel Ford in the old State capitol. Placido, the chief of the Tonkawas, fell a victim of the Comanche vengeance the latter part of the Civil war, being assassinated by them on the government

reservation at Fort Sill. He had always been the friend of Texans, and rendered invaluable service to the early pioneers, by whom he was implicitly trusted."

Several years rolled along the pathway of time after the sanguinary battle of Antelope hills before the wily Comanches recovered from the effects of their severe punishment at the hands of Colonel Ford's command. In the meantime their brave chief, Peta Nocona, seemed to be thirsting for revenge, and lost no opportunity to attack an isolated ranch house or kill a lone traveler.

Encouraged by his success attending these raids, he grew bolder and bolder, until he started out with a picked band of red warriors on an extended raid upon the settlements along the Brazos and Red rivers, even going as far east as Jacksboro.

During this raid the settlers lost large bunches of cattle and horses, besides the willful destruction of their houses and barns.

It was during the closing years of the Civil war that Peta Nocona's band grew so dangerous that it threatened to depopulate the frontier of white settlers.

Consequently, notwithstanding the scarcity of any kind of troops in Texas, the authorities at Austin saw the necessity and determined to send out an expedition against the Indians. For this purpose a squad of fifty Rangers were placed under the command of Lieutenant Sul P. Ross, with orders to secure the aid of the Tonkawas and the settlers enroute, and take the trail of Peta Nocona's band, and either destroy them or drive them beyond the borders of the State. It matters not for the purposes of this story the exact date of Ross' expedition, for it is more with the results than the details that the readers are concerned.

At this time Peta Nocona was in the zenith of his

power, and was not only the chief of his own tribe, but by reason of his dashing bravery was often chosen to lead the allied forces of the Comanches, Apaches, Kiowas and Kickapoos.

On the occasion of Ross' expedition that culminated in the battle of Soldier's Hole on Peas river, Chief Nocona was leading an unusually large band of warriors on a successful raid, laden with booty. He was also accompanied by his wife and children; Cynthia Ann Parker, two sons, Pohibit and Quanah; and a daughter, Prairie Flower. Quanah, the oldest son, was acting as sub-chief.

Lieutenant Ross, schooled in all the tactics of frontier warfare, and acquainted with the habits of the Indians, avoided the trail and made a cross-country march ahead of Nocona's band, and lay in ambush near Soldier's Hole.

The unsuspecting Indians, flushed with the spoils of the raid, rode down the peaceful valley to their doom.

The rangers and Tonkawas opened up on them at close range and, though surprised and thrown into confusion, the Comanches fought like demons, with their gallant chief, Peta Nocona, in the thickest of the fight. But the superior equipment of the rangers and Tonks, armed with Spencer carbines, was too great an advantage to overcome with spears, bows and arrows, and a few old pistols and guns.

At last when hope fled and the warriors began to retreat, Peta Nocona tried to shield the women and children, but was killed while covering the retreat of his own wife and children. Quanah Parker and his brother Pohibit, mounted on fleet-footed ponies, escaped, but Cynthia Ann Parker and her daughter, Prairie Flower, were captured, notwithstanding Cynthia Ann made a

brave resistance, and but for the fact that her blue eyes attracted the attention of Lieutenant Ross and proclaimed her to be a white woman, she would have been killed by the Tonks.

The fight terminated in a rout, and the fleeing Indians and pursuing rangers carried on a running fight for several miles.

On the return of the expedition east, Cynthia Ann and her daughter, Prairie Flower, were sent to relatives in Parker county. And though everything was done to reclaim them, they longed for the wilds, where their relatives and companions among the Indians still lived. The beautiful Prairie Flower withered and died before she bloomed into womanhood. Cynthia Ann, though never entirely satisfied with her environments, gradually submitted to the influence of civilization.

With the blood of heroes coursing through his veins, the young chief, Quannah Parker, was not content to remain idle, but thirsting for revenge he determined to organize a band of select warriors and avenge the deaths of his father, Peta Nocona, and grandfather, Pohebits Quasho. Young Quannah became chief by right of succession, and acknowledged leader by reason of his skill and bravery.

And, dear reader, this is a place in the narrative where we can afford to pause a moment and moralize, and, if needs be, philosophize over the conditions that make us fiends or saints in the drama of life.

According to his training and the lights set before him, Quannah Parker measured up to all the brave manhood that characterized his father and grandfather—that made them the ideal leaders of the tribe.

And to-day, when the fleeting shadows are growing dim and the memory of the frontier is melting away,—Quannah Parker still lives, an interesting figure that links

the past and present history of Northwest Texas, and many are the white as well as red men who are proud to do him honor.

THE SIEGE OF ADOBE WALLS

One evening Kentuck found old Sam Smith leaning back in his chair smoking a briar-root pipe near the entrance to his wagon yard.

"Say, Uncle Sam, I have heard that you took part in the battle of Adobe Walls."

"Well, son, I reckon I was there."

"Tell me about it, Uncle Sam."

"Well, son, it was this way. Those durned Comanches had it in for the hunters, 'cause we were killing all the buffalo, and when a friend of Quanah Parker was killed by a hunter, the straw was put upon the camel's back, and the Indians went on the war path.

"I was making headquarters at the Adobe Walls when the shindy came off.

"You will better understand the situation when I explain that during the beginning of the systematic killing of the buffalo for their hides, several firms in Fort Dodge, Kan., sent out an expedition consisting of a long wagon-train loaded with supplies with instruction to locate in the center of the range.

"Arriving on the upper Canadian in a valley making into the Staked plains, they found the ruins of an old mission once occupied by the Spanish friars, where a trading post and a mission school stood in the days when Texas belonged to Mexico.

"The walls of three buildings were in excellent preservation, and without great expense were made to accommodate the agents of the Kansas firms to store their goods and open supply stores.

"The two largest buildings were occupied by James Langton and Fred Leonard, and the smaller one taken possession of by Jim Hanrahan with a general store. Tom Keefe started a blacksmith shop in the old chapel. Fred Leonard also erected a stockade and ran a wagon yard and a mess house for the freighters and hunters.

"This trading post grew into importance and soon became a center for traffic in hides.

"Roving bands of Indians became troublesome and began to attack isolated camps, and rumors were afloat that a concentrated attack would be made on Adobe Walls. The medicine man of the Comanches was conjuring up 'good medicine,' that would allow the Indians to kill the hunters while they were sleeping.

"Captain Arrington, with a squad of Texas rangers trailing a band of rustlers, passed through Adobe Walls and reported that the Comanches, Cheyennes and Arapahoes were concentrating for some purpose on the Deep creek of the Colorado river.

"It was during the moonlight nights in June, 1874, and the hunters were so busy killing and drying hides that they paid no attention to the rumors. The storekeepers at Adobe Walls sometimes discussed the topic, but came to the conclusion that the Indians would confine their raids to outlying camps and not attack so formidable a place as Adobe Walls.

"Consequently, they were not prepared when Quanah Parker led 900 painted warriors down the peaceful valley about two hours before daylight, and cautiously approached Adobe Walls—nine hundred well-armed and mounted red men eager for the foray—perhaps the largest body of Indians that ever charged upon a white settlement.

"With their front ranks formed into a phalanx and

disguised to resemble a herd of buffalo, they hoped to approach without being discovered. The plan of attack was to take possession before the inmates could organize a defense.

"Now, son, when you take into consideration the disparity of numbers between the small band of hunters and traders and the overwhelming force of warriors engaged in the ten days' siege of Adobe Walls, it was greater than the battle of Antelope hills.

"But for an accident at Hanrahan's at 3 a. m., the plans of the wily foe would have succeeded.

"A cottonwood beam used as a ridge pole in the end of Hanrahan's store began to give way with a crackling sound that awakened every one in the room. The danger of the dirt roof falling upon them forced the men to take steps to prop up the beam, and two of them mounted the roof and shoveled off the dirt to lighten the weight.

"The stir at Hanrahan's aroused Tom Keefe, who raised himself upon his elbow and gazed at what he supposed to be a buffalo herd about one-fourth of a mile northwest. He watched them intently.

"While he was looking, not satisfied in his mind that everything was all right, two men by the names of Watson and Ogg started out to hunt their horses, intending to get an early start for the range.

"They, too, saw the supposed herd, but on closer observation discovered that it was a band of Indians. They at once gave the alarm, and the Indians realizing that they could no longer keep up the deception, uttered their blood-curdling war whoop and charged down upon the settlement.

"Tom Keefe, who was sleeping outside of his blacksmith shop, ran to Langton's and aroused the inmates, and was admitted as a volley of arrows and bullets struck the wall of the building.

"Watson and Ogg turned and ran to Hanrahan's and closed the door in time to escape death or capture.

"When the sun arose that morning every house at Adobe Walls was in a state of siege, and the occupants fighting for their lives.

"Quanah Parker with his warriors made a dash for Leonard's open door to force an entrance while I was making an effort to close it.

"Some one pushed the barrel of a gun over my shoulder and fired, and the big Comanche chief fell off his horse with a bullet hole through his breast, which confused the warriors long enough for us to close the door.

"The roar of the battle became incessant. The Indians had divided into bands, and were using every device known to savage warfare to dislodge the defenders.

"There were ten men in Hanrahan's, five men and one woman in Langton's and twelve in Leonard's. Ike and Shorty Shadler were sleeping in their wagon, and were killed and scalped before they could escape.

"Again and again, many times during that long hot day, the Indians tried to force the doors, but could not withstand the destructive fire of the buffalo guns.

"Fortunately, the houses were so situated that the men could keep up a cross fire and concentrate on any given point. This gave them a decided advantage and proved very disconcerting to the Indians.

"When Quanah was wounded and put out of commission, the command devolved on the sub-chief, Stone Calf's nephew. Becoming exasperated at the many futile attempts to force an entrance, this brave young chief led fifty picked warriors in an attack on Hanrahan's house, and tried to break down the door by whirling and backing the weight of the ponies against it. But the withering fire from the Sharpe's rifles killed the chief and many of his braves, and forced the remainder to retreat.

"The Indians then withdrew out of range and held a council. During this charge a man named Tyler was mortally wounded and died before the sun set.

"A young Kiowa chief then took command and led sixty warriors in a fierce charge on Leonard's corral, but was killed when he dismounted to open the gate. Six braves fell across his body during this destructive firing.

"The Indians then withdrew and kept up the battle from long range. The ground around the adobe buildings was strewn with dead and wounded Indians and ponies. During the remainder of the day the Indians tried to carry off their wounded.

"At the base of a low rough hill Adobe Walls creek ran through a grove of trees, which proved an excellent concealment for a band of Indian sharpshooters, who peppered away at the windows where the defenders delivered their deadly fire.

"The Indians gave up their attempt to capture Adobe Walls by direct attack and resorted to strategy.

"Under cover of the buffalo grass some of them gained the rear of Leonard's store behind a pile of buffalo hides and prepared to set the building on fire, and force the defenders to come out in the open.

"The men in the building could hear the Indians behind the hides talking to those concealed in the grass, and believing that some devilry was being hatched, Bill Dixon and Fred Leonard began firing their high power guns into the hides, and the force of the charge drove the bullets through the pile, killing a pony and driving the Indians from concealment.

"In the meantime the sharpshooter Indians kept up such a hot fire at the windows and loopholes that the inmates could not venture within sight of their wily foe.

Under cover of this fire the Indians removed their wounded.

"The warriors then formed a distant line of battle and came swooping down and began circling the building at full speed, shooting from beneath their ponies' necks.

"During this maneuver the chiefs gathered on a distant mound to view the situation and hold a council of war.

"This attracted the attention of Billy Dixon and Bat Masterson, who elevated the sights of their guns and blazed away at the bunch.

"One chief fell from his horse and the medicine man's horse was killed. This broke up the council.

"When the Indians desisted from their direct attack the hunters began to sum up casualties. They found Tyler dying from his wounds, and the two Sadler brothers dead and scalped. They were buried in one grave at the close of day.

"During the night Hanrahan's was abandoned and all the hunters concentrated in Leonard's and Langston's stores, dug wells and barricaded in anticipation of the renewal of the battle.

"A man by the name of Reed was sent to Dodge City for assistance. Very little fighting was done during the second day, the Indians maintaining their distance and keeping up a state of siege.

"The third day the battle was carried on at long range, the Indians keeping up a fire from Adobe Walls creek, and the hunters replying from the windows.

"William Olds was killed while taking observations from the roof of Leonard's house. He fell through the trap door at the feet of his wife.

"During the third night the besieged were reënforced by the arrival of about 100 men from the surrounding range.

"After two more days without any open demonstra-

tion, the hunters supposed that the Indians had given up the siege, and two hunters by the name of Huffman and Roberts walked out to an elevation to take observation.

"Huffman was killed and Roberts escaped to the protection of the defenders at Leonard's.

"It was ten days before the Indians, after losing eighty-five warriors killed and wounded, withdrew and raised the siege of Adobe Walls.

"My son, the siege of Adobe Walls will live in history, long after the men who participated in the battle are dead and forgotten.

"Fearing a renewal of hostilities the hunters marched out, and the majority of them went to Fort Dodge, and some of them to Fort Griffin, to reorganize their outfits for the winter's hunt.

"They met A. C. Myers, Leonard's partner, on the trail with eighty wagons after the stores, which he hauled back to Fort Dodge.

"The commanding officer at Fort Leavenworth refused to believe Reed's story that twenty-eight white men were fighting 900 Indians, and sent no soldiers to relieve the situation.

"Governor Osborn, of Kansas, was willing to arm the citizens at Dodge City if they would send out a relief party, and forwarded a thousand guns and ammunition, but before any relief could be organized, couriers came in and reported that the hunters had abandoned the Walls.

"The Indians returned after the hunters left, and destroyed and burned everything, leaving the old walls standing like mourners at the graves of the departed.

"Yes, my son, those red-devils made it very interesting for the boys during those ten days' siege, and if the Indians had all been armed with guns, there might have been a different story to tell.

"It was a long time before Quanah Parker was able to head another war party. The alliance of the Indians was broken up, and each tribe went back to their own hunting ground.

"The next season the hunters, with but few exceptions, made Fort Griffin their headquarters, securing their short order supplies from Conrad & Rath's branch store on the Deep creek of the Colorado.

"Many of the outlying camps owed their safety to the severe lesson the Indians learned at the siege of Adobe Walls, who were taught to respect the long range guns and superior marksmanship of the white men."

REMNANT OF THE LIPAN INDIANS

Seven tepees in a grove of pecan trees one mile southwest of Government hill, in a bend of Collin's creek, was the camping ground of the remnant of the Lipan Indians—seven tall, sinewy warriors, their squaws and papooses, and their chief, "Apache John," his three squaws and his papooses—twenty-five all told—the population of the village where the human mementoes of a once proud tribe of people lived almost an isolated life on the frontier of Texas during the rapid changes following the white man's invasion of the Free Range country in his onward march toward the land of the setting sun.

The condition of this little band of dark-skinned, bright-eyed people appealed to Kentuck's love for the curious, and he determined to delve into the unwritten history of the Lipans, who seemed content to avoid both their white and red neighbors.

"Apache John" was a misnomer for the copper-colored chief who directed the destiny of his dark-colored followers, and raised them above the low level of filth and degradation of the Tonkawas, three miles distant on the Clear Fork.

John was a Mexican by birth and a Lipan by adoption.

When a toddling lad of three years he was captured by the Lipans in an attack on his father's hacienda, in the State of Senora, Mexico, and saved from the massacre by Sub-Chief Black Horse, who grasped the lad by the hair and swung him behind the saddle upon his horse, as he charged through the thickest of the fight around the adobe building.

John was turned over to Black Horse's squaw, who was childless, and later, when the tribe returned north to the Kickapoo Valley with their booty, John was adopted as the son of the chief, with all the ceremony of the Indian rites.

John grew up to young manhood, and by force of his position as the sub-chief's son, and his natural ability, became the leader of the young bucks, and when he married the beautiful princess, Ojos Brittianta (Bright Eyes), daughter of the war-chief, Wild Horse, he was in line of succession and trusted to lead the small bands of scouts during a raid on the settlements.

In those days, except on special expeditions, each tribe was the enemy of all the other Indians. Consequently, on one occasion when John was returning from a raid with his little band he met a band of Apaches twice his number; there was a running fight, John was taken prisoner and carried into captivity and given up for lost by his tribe.

But twelve months later John escaped and came riding into the Lipan village, amid the shouts of welcome:

"Venire acquie, Apache John!"

And from that time on he was known and loved as "Apache John."

The "hand of fate" or the "finger of destiny" seems

to have directed the downfall of the Lipan Indians, and in the year 1876 the little village on Collin creek was the home of the only members of the tribe in Texas, though it was known that a small band lived in the mountains of Old Mexico.

Following the dictates of his nature that prompted an investigation of the romantic history of this fallen people, Kentuck accompanied Chief John to the village one July evening, and made friends of the members of the tribe by a free distribution of tobacco and candy.

John would not talk much about the past, but pointing to his squaw, Bright Eyes, said "She heap know."

The old squaw, too, was reticent, but after being presented with a cheap brooch and a bunch of blue ribbon, nodded her head and smiled, in token of her consent.

Her bright little grandson, Sparkling Water, interpreted the following story:

"When the Spanish king sent his warriors across the big waters, and the white wings of their canoes were seen far out where the blue water melted into the blue sky, my people were fishing at the mouth of the Rio Grande, and my grandfather, the great chief Roaring Wind, walked up on a knoll where a live oak tree stood and remained there a long time watching the big canoes come nearer and nearer toward the shore.

"My mother was a little girl then, and they called her Pajaro Pequeno (Little Bird), because she sang sweet songs to the mocking birds when the bright face of the moon smiled on the water of the bay, and the white sand looked like silver where the waves washed the shore, and Little Bird was happy and danced to the song of the birds.

"And while the big chief was shading his eyes with his hand, Little Bird came and stood beside him, watching the big canoes fold their wings.

“‘My father,’ she said, ‘where did the big canoes come from that are resting on the waters of the bay?’

“‘Many, many miles over the blue water, from a country far, far away, my daughter.’

“‘Then they must be tired and hungry, and we will give them fish, and buffalo meat, and maize to eat, and make them beds of skins, and they can rest and sleep under the trees.’

“‘Yes, my child, if they come in peace and will be friends with the Lipans, we will give them to eat and make them soft beds under the trees. But if they come as enemies the Lipans will fight and drive them away.’

“And while they were watching, the strangers put little canoes in the water, and men entered the little canoes and began to paddle to the shore.

“Then all the Lipans quit fishing and came to where the big chief and Little Bird stood, and they all waited for the strangers to land.

“And the white chief in the bow of the first canoe, raised his hand with something white that fluttered in the breeze.

“And Chief Roaring Wind say: ‘They come as friends; ’tis well; we will go down to the shore and meet them.’

“All the Lipans go down to where the waves wash the sands, and the white chief and the red chief shake hands and all the people rejoice, and march to the grove of live oaks, where the Lipans built their tepees. And the big chiefs smoke the pipe of peace, and the red warriors and the white warriors dance and sing, and eat and drink, to make a bond of friendship.

“And Don Enriqua, the son of the white chief, he come and play with Pajaro Pequeno on the white sands near the laughing water, and she was so happy, and the white

boy was heap happy, too, and all the people rejoice that day, many moons long ago.

"And the Lipans give the white chief much maize and much buffalo meat, and much water for the big canoes. And the white chief and the white warriors stay six days with the Lipans and then sail away.

"And Pajaro Pequeno she remember Don Enriqua for many, many moons, and wish that he come back and play some more by the big waters, where the laughing waves wash the white sands and the mocking birds sing in the trees.

"And summer was come and gone and the leaves had fallen; the north wind's icy breath made the water angry and the sky was gray, and Pajaro Pequeno shivered in the wigwam.

"Then Chief Roaring Wind say, 'The water is too rough and the canoes too light, and the fish no bite when the wind is angry, and the time is now come when the Lipans must cross the Rio Grande and follow the trail to the warm country far down the Sierra Madre mountains.'

"So the warriors and the squaws pack everything upon the ponies and start on a long journey.

"By and by they come to a rich valley between high mountains, where the tall pine trees grow along the banks of a swift running river, and many deer and bear make their homes in the big rocks, and beautiful birds with red and green feathers make their nests in the woods. And the chief say, 'This is a pleasant place for the Lipans to rest.' And the tepees were built near the running water where the golden rays of the setting sun played on the tree tops and the breeze from the south rustled the leaves overhead. Here the Lipans lived many moons, fished, hunted and were contented.

“But when the spring was come and the Lipans began to plant maize, Don Juan de Carizo, the owner of the valley, come from the great city with many men, and horses, and cattle, and he say: ‘Lipans, vamos pronto.’

“And Chief Roaring Wind go to the hacienda where Don Juan lives in the big white casa, and he say to Don Juan, the Lipans no give him any trouble; no kill his cattle; no steal his horses; no hurt his men, but that the Lipans will kill the bears and the mountain lions, so they no kill his cattle, because the Lipans like to stay by the running water.

“But Don Juan he say, ‘No, you vamos pronto! or I take my warriors and drive you away.’

“Then Chief Roaring Wind called a council of all the warriors and they smoke and smoke heaps of tobacco, and heap pow-wow, and shake tomahawks high over their heads, and the chief say:

“‘Lipan warriors brave, no sneak away like cowardly coyotes; they go when they want to go, and they stay when they want to stay, and not go ’cause Don Juan say, vamos pronto!’

“Then Don Juan he much mad, and send his warriors and kill Lipan ponies.

“Chief Roaring Wind he, too, much mad, and say he want fifty brave warriors to mount their ponies when the sun goes down, and they will ride to the casa grande and fight the warriors of Don Juan.

“And when the evening was come, and the sun hid his face behind the mountain, the Lipan warriors followed the chief down the valley to where they could see the casa in the moonlight.

“There in the shadows of the tall pines, at the edge of the hacienda the chief called his warriors around him for the last consultation before charging the stronghold of Don Juan de Carizo.

"Extending his right arm and pointing his finger at the casa, the chief said:

"Lipan warriors, yonder dwells a proud and arrogant man; a man who scorned our friendship and commanded us, like so many dogs, to vamos pronto; and not satisfied with showing his contempt, he answered our petition to be allowed to dwell here and protect his herds by sending his warriors and killing our ponies. Shall we bow our heads in shame and skulk away like so many animals before the lash of a master, or shall we, in the true spirit of Lipan warriors, strike back and take vengeance on the tyrant who dared to heap this insult upon us?"

"Every warrior grasped his scalping knife in his hand and raised it above his head to signify that he was ready to strike a blow in honor of the tribe.

"The chief then led them around the margin of the forest, to where a lane shaded by trees led to the casa.

"In the moonlight they could see the family of Don Juan and a score of his followers frolicking on the lawn.

"The chief commanded his warriors to form single file in the shadow of the trees, and to advance slowly and quietly until discovered, then to charge at full speed before Don Juan's men could form for defense.

"They advanced within 100 yards before the cry of alarm was raised.

"Then the Lipan warriors charged down upon them, shouting their terrible war whoop, before they could form for defense or escape to the casa—down among the frightened men, women and children the Lipans dashed, killing without mercy and taking many scalps.

"It was then that Sub-Chief Black Horse saw a frightened little boy standing all alone in the path of the charging warriors, and he urged his horse to the rescue,

grasping the lad by the hair of his head as he rushed by, and swung him behind his saddle. And there is the boy," she said pointing to Apache John.

John was proud of his squaws and papooses, and by thrift and business enterprise, accumulated several thousand dollars' worth of cattle and mule teams.

It was said that he had a standing legacy to give any white man that would marry his daughter, Wild Flower.

The last fight between the settlers and the Indians in the Kickapoo valley was in September, 1869, on Robinson's creek, five miles east from where the town of Lipan now stands. The Indians had been stealing horses and murdering whites on Squaw creek, when a posse of settlers started after them and chased them up Robinson's creek, and surrounded them in a gulch, where they fought all day, and seven bucks and one squaw were killed, and one white man named Weir.

No one could tell whether they were Apaches or Lipans, as the warriors of both tribes resemble each other.

Bob Foster and Marion Self, a few years ago, were the last members of the band that fought these Indians.

DEATH OF CAPT. ALLEN S. ANDERSON

In connection with the many events contemporaneous with the career of Col. Buck Berry, was the tragic death of Capt. Allen S. Anderson, who was shot by Dick Cox, one of his own scouts, during a raid after a thieving band of Indians in the month of June, 1864.

Captain Anderson was one of the pioneer settlers of McLennan county, and moved to Bosque in the spring of 1864, settling in the town of Comanche.

On the night following his arrival, June 14th, the Indi-

ans silently entered the town and stole all the horses, with the exception of the splendid animal owned by Captain Anderson. During the following morning while the inhabitants of the little hamlet were discussing the situation, several men from the adjacent country arrived with a bunch of horses, and it was decided to organize a scouting party. After all the preparations were completed, Captain Anderson was selected to lead the men on the trail of the Indians. Among those who accompanied Captain Anderson were Captain Cunningham, Aaron and Dave Cunningham, Elias Denton, Dick Cox, Bob Marshal, W. H. Kingsburry, A. C. Pierce, and others not remembered at this late day.

The main object of the scout was to ascertain the direction the Indians were traveling on their raid, and, if they were traveling south, to circle in ahead of them and warn the settlers living in the valleys below the town.

Failing to discover any signs leading south, Captain Anderson led his men in a wide circle, carefully scrutinizing the surrounding country. At last the scouting party found signs leading west, and followed the dim trail five miles beyond Salt Creek peak, a noted landmark used by the Indians for building signal fires.

A brief consultation was held and it was decided that by reason of the fact that no one was known to live west, in danger of being attacked by the marauders, that it would be useless to follow the trail farther, especially as no preparations had been made for a long journey.

On the return of the expedition, when the men were within fifteen miles of Comanche, one of the scouts saw a loose horse with a rope around his neck, and he reported that possibly there were Indians in hiding in the thicket near by.

Acting on the strength of this report, Captain Ander-

son led an attack on the supposed Indians and, as his horse outdistanced his command, he made a run for the opposite side of the thicket to cut off any chance of the red warriors' escape. The thicket was so dense that he was obliged to dismount before he could enter. By this time Captain Cunningham and Dick Cox had arrived, and entered the thicket from the other side. Cautiously approaching the center, Dick Cox saw what he believed an Indian crouching down as if to avoid detection, and raised his gun, took deliberate aim and fired a load of buckshot, striking Captain Anderson under his left shoulder near his heart. He uttered a loud scream of pain as he bounded to his feet, and exclaimed "I'm killed," and Cox realized the horrible fact that he had shot his captain. Anderson walked about thirty feet and was caught in the arms of Cox, who was frantic with grief. Cox gently laid him upon the ground and he expired in less than a minute. It was a sorrowful little band of men that carried their captain back to Comanche.

Captain Anderson's wife and two children settled in Bosque county, where his son, Archibald D., was elected sheriff at the age of twenty-two. And at one time he owned a half interest in a herd of cattle that ranged in the valley of Bitter creek west of the Double Mountain fork of the Brazos river. Later Archibald D. married Miss Bertha Thompson.

Flora, the daughter of Captain Anderson, married Joseph A. Kemp, a successful merchant of Wichita Falls, Texas.

Both of the families of Archibald D. Anderson and Joseph A. Kemp settled in Wichita Falls and became prominent in the development of that flourishing little city.

The wife of Captain Anderson died at Clifton, Texas.

ATTACK ON THE OLD STONE RANCH IN 1867

Though of not as much importance, when compared with more sanguinary fights with the Indians, the attack of the Comanches on the Old Stone ranch, in the southwestern part of Throckmorton county, is worthy of mention, especially to illustrate the bravery of the frontier women, who shared the dangers and hardships incident to the settlement of a new country.

The ranch at that time was the home of B. W. Reynolds and family. The father and his two daughters, now Mrs. J. A. Matthews and Mrs. N. L. Bartholomew, were absent at the time of the attack, on a visit to Weatherford, and Mrs. Reynolds and her two sons, Phil and Glen (both young lads), remained at home. George T. and William D. were on the range looking after the cattle.

The evening before the fight a couple of hunters halted at the door and were extended the usual hospitality of supper, bed and breakfast. This proved very fortunate for the inmates, for at an early hour the next morning, while the hunters were saddling their horses preparatory to taking their departure, a band of the red devils came charging down upon them, with that hair-raising war whoop that has struck terror into the hearts of so many frontier families.

But the hunters escaped into the house, and with the aid of Glen and Phil gave them a warm reception, though the Indians circled the house several times on their ponies at full speed, pouring a continuous volley of arrows and bullets at the windows and doors.

But it soon became evident that the Indians were more concerned in rounding up a bunch of saddle ponies than any attempt to capture the house.

After the fight was ended and no one hurt, and the Indians had disappeared with their stolen horses, the two hunters went on their way, leaving Mrs. Reynolds and her brave sons to hold the ranch against the possible return of the Indians.

This old ranch is situated about twenty miles north-east of Albany, and near the old overland trail to California, once the famous highway to the Golden Gate, now grass-grown and almost obliterated by the hand of time. A stranger might stand on Round mountain, look down over the peaceful valley and never dream of the stirring scenes enacted within sight of this lonely peak.

The writer of this story attended the reception given to George T. Reynolds and his bride, nee Miss Bettie Matthews, in the winter of 1877. And it was here, too, that George T. was nursed back to convalescence while suffering from almost a mortal wound received in an Indian fight at Double mountain elsewhere described in this volume.

Before the war the overland trail was a much traveled route, across Texas by emigrant trains bound for the golden regions of the Northwest and California. And many are the sad stories told of those who perished from thirst and hunger, on the Staked plains and the Arizona desert, or fell victims to cruel Indian attacks, leaving their bleached bones on the prairies. But time has smoothed the wrinkles out, and those who dwell amid peace and plenty along the old trail, can not realize that the want of water and food was once the price of life.

FIGHT NEAR THE COPPER MINES IN ARCHER COUNTY

The only protection afforded the early settlers from the predatory raids of the Indians during the closing years of the Civil war, was the Texas rangers, with headquarters at Austin.

On one occasion a large band of Comanches overrun the country down as far as San Saba and Coryell counties, driving off horses and cattle, attacking ranches and burning the houses.

Capt. Sul Ross was dispatched with a company of rangers, with orders to drive them out, and, if possible, punish the marauders.

After a long march and several skirmishes with stragglers, he finally drove the main body into the hills of the unorganized county of Archer, near where the Boston-Texas Copper company, after the war, attempted to work a copper mine.

The rangers with an auxiliary force of settlers numbered about thirty, and the Indians between two and three hundred.

When the Indians found that they were cornered, they turned on their pursuers and a fierce battle was fought, lasting about two hours, during which both sides resorted to all the tactics of border warfare.

Finally the Indians were repulsed with heavy loss and several rangers and settlers killed and wounded.

The Indians retreated northwest, carrying with them their dead and wounded, but owing to the long forced march of the rangers and settlers and the fatigue of the battle, Captain Ross desisted from following the Indians, and he ordered his command into camp.

It was while camped near this rough range of hills that one of the rangers discovered the copper ore that laid in detached lumps along the breaks. On the strength of the judgment of several old miners, Captain Ross loaded several hundred pounds of the ore into an empty wagon accompanying the command and hauled it to Austin on his return, where it was tested and proved so pure that it was melted and used for making caps for the guns of the Confederate forces then in the State.

Since then, from time to time, the land upon which the copper was discovered has passed into the possession of several companies, and is now owned by the Texas-Boston syndicate.

As usual with the Indians after a severe chastisement, they remained quiet for several months and returned to the breaks of the upper Canadian.

THE FIGHT NEAR THE CALIFORNIA RANCH

One of the most severe punishments ever administered to a roving band of Indians occurred near where the Matthews & Reynolds Cattle company built their stone ranch house on California creek, in the southeastern part of Haskell county.

The fight took place several years before the building of this stone house.

The Indians had raided a small settlement at the mouth of Bufford creek, in the northern part of Shackelford county, and killed a young man named Joseph Browning. Five men, John R. and George B. Baylor, Elias Hale, Num Wright and John Dawson, followed the Indians and overtook a small band near where the ranch house now stands. From the shelter of rocks and a live oak thicket the settlers were able to watch the movements of the Indians without themselves being seen.

From their point of observation the men were soon convinced that this place would prove to be the rendezvous of the whole band of raiders, who had followed their usual tactics of breaking up into small bands when on a successful raid, then meet at a common point before crossing the plains.

The white men having the advantage of being armed with Henry rifles while their foes were only armed with

bows and arrows, soon disposed of the small band of six. Again concealing themselves, they repeated the victory by killing eight more, who arrived on the scene an hour later. In this way they were enabled to wipe out of existence half a dozen bands during the day, until the main body appeared, and they were compelled to make their escape. It is reported that these five men killed forty Indians without losing a single man.

Either of the bands would have put up a strong fight if they had known the smaller number opposed to them. But fighting an unseen foe always proved a weak point with the Indians. A dash into a thicket saved many settlers when alone on the prairie, for they rarely followed a white man into concealment, for fear that it led to an ambushade.

“A MISS IS AS GOOD AS A MILE”

The old saying “that you cannot count your chickens before they hatch” was exemplified on one occasion in the year 1864.

The Indians were unusually active, and raided the scattered settlements along the Brazos, Red river and all the tributary streams.

Texas at this time was under the Confederate flag and, beyond a few small commands, was without protection.

Urgent appeals to headquarters was of no avail. All the troops that could be spared were sent to the front to support the retreating army. Here and there, it is true, could be found a small squad of rangers who, though called into the regular service, were detailed on scout duty.

One of these squads was stationed on Red river in Montague county, to coöperate with the settlers in protecting their lives and property against the redskins.

But notwithstanding their united efforts, the Indians made several successful raids, killing men, women and children, and driving off bunches of horses and cattle, leaving the ashes of their homes as a sad evidence of their cruelty.

One evening a scout returned and reported a band of Comanches camped in a grove a few miles down the river, near the mouth of Three Forks on Farmer's creek, not far from the present town of St. Joe.

Guided by the scout, the rangers were led to where, at a safe distance, they dismounted and approached cautiously on foot to where they could see the Indians lying under the embankment near the creek.

Every man in the ranger force was an excellent marksman, and would have resented any intimation that he would miss an Indian at so close a range. Consequently, the word was passed along the line in a whisper to take careful aim and fire at the word of command.

It looked like the chance of wiping out of existence one band of red marauders was ten to nothing. But the deceptive firelight, flickering low over the dying embers, played them false, and every man overshot the Indians, who aroused of their danger, hastily made their escape down the bed of the stream into the darkness beyond. And with a sheepish look of chagrin, the rangers were compelled to return to their camp, having lost a golden opportunity to punish the Indian raiders.

It was during these raids that Chester Dobbs was overtaken in the Hitson mountains, in Palo Pinto county, while he was hunting horses. He was riding leisurely along through a gap usually traveled by the ponies to enter a small valley where the grass was rank and furnished excellent pasture.

Without any warning, two Indian warriors rode into

the trail in front of Dobbs and raised their tomahawks and approached to take him prisoner. But preferring death to capture and torture, he whirled his horse and dashed for liberty. The fleet-footed ponies of the Indians showed greater speed than Dobbs' pony, and they soon overtook him, one riding on either side, shooting arrows at the flying horseman, while Dobbs, only armed with an old cap and ball six-shooter, could not turn far enough in his saddle to take accurate aim, consequently was at the greatest disadvantage in the running fight. He was disabled by an arrow cutting his belt and entering his abdomen. As he fell from his horse one of the Indians struck him with a tomahawk near the base of his skull. When found his scalp had been torn off.

THE FIGHT ON DOUBLE MOUNTAIN FORK

Perhaps the most sanguinary battle ever fought between the Indians and the early settlers on the frontier of Northwest Texas was on the Double Mountain fork of the Brazos river, in what is now known as Haskell county. This bloody conflict took place on the 3d day of April, 1867. The Indians had been on a successful raid in Stephens and Shackelford counties, then attached to Palo Pinto for judicial purposes. On their return with a large bunch of stolen horses the Indians killed and scalped a white girl near J. C. Lynch's ranch. This aroused a spirit of vengeance among the neighboring ranchmen, and ten settlers, including George T. and William D. Reynolds, and T. E. Jackson, followed the Indians' trail. Knowing the general direction the Indians would take in their efforts to escape with the stolen horses, the white men pushed forward with all possible speed to overtake them. It was the morning of the third day's pursuit when the signs became so fresh that the

men would not stop to take the trouble to cook, or time to eat the necessary meals to sustain their strength, so eager were they to overtake and punish the marauders. It was about 3 P. M. when the little band of settlers rode up on an elevated plateau overlooking the valley of the Double mountain fork of the Brazos. With the aid of a spyglass the Indians were discovered about a half-mile from a deep water hole, engaged in killing buffalo. Quickly retreating down the opposite slope of the plateau to the brakes of the stream, the white men were enabled to skirt the timber and make a dash at close quarters.

The Indians, though taken completely by surprise, put up a fierce and stubborn fight. Outnumbering the whites three to one, they depended on strength of numbers to win. Being at a disadvantage on horseback against their wily foe, the white men dismounted and fought from behind their horses, while the Indians followed their well known tactics of riding their horses at full speed, encircling their foes, swinging their bodies on the opposite side of their animals, and shooting from beneath the pony's neck. The battle lasted during the remainder of the evening, and when the Indians drew off, taking their dead and wounded with them, the white men were so badly disabled that they could not have defended themselves much longer, much less to have followed the Indians, T. E. Jackson being the only man not killed or wounded. Out of the ten who started out to punish the red devils and recover the stolen horses, six lay dead on the prairie and three were wounded. W. D. Reynolds sustained a flesh wound in his left arm, John Anderson was severely wounded in his right arm and George T. Reynolds was shot through his body with an arrow, suffering much pain. Jackson pulled out the shaft, but the arrow head remained in Reynolds' body and caused him

a great deal of trouble for sixteen years, until he finally had it removed in Kansas City in 1882, and keeps it as a relic of this memorable fight. The herculean task of burying the dead and making a litter for George T. Reynolds fell to the lot of Jackson, with what assistance W. D. Reynolds could give him. George T. and William D. Reynolds are prominent citizens of Fort Worth, and so far as known are the only two living participants in the Double mountain fight. No doubt if the Indians had possessed more guns there would have been no survivors to relate the story of this fight. One thing was demonstrated in this fight, and that was that the Comanches were the fiercest and most intrepid foe that faced the white settlers of Northwest Texas in the '60s and '70s. They were a tall, lithe, manly race of warriors, intellectually superior to the other tribes that inhabited the Plain's country. They were also a cleanly tribe, and their warriors dressed in buckskin shirts and leggings, similar to the white hunters.

BATTLE OF COTTONWOOD HOLE

Another desperate battle took place at what is known as the Cottonwood Hole in Young County. A bunch of cow punchers consisting of Bill Couch, Henry Harmison, Shap Carter, Bill Crow, Rube Secrets, George Lamley and a negro cook, were surprised by the Indians and took refuge in a hole made by an uprooted cottonwood tree. The only weapons in the bunch were a couple of cap and ball six-shooters. Ira Graves did the shooting and Henry Harmison did the loading. Every time the Indians charged the natural fortification, Ira would rise with a six-shooter in each hand and repulse them. Four men were killed in this fight, and Perry Harmison was sent with an ox cart to haul them to the settlement for burial.

Perry Harmison is a successful farmer living in Wichita county, not far from Wichita Falls.

FIGHT AT COX MOUNTAIN

A desperate duel took place in Los valley, not far from Fort Belknap, in Young county, between a band of Indians and Jack Cox and Jim Peveler. Cox and Peveler were out on the range cutting firewood when they were surrounded by a band of Kiowas. Both were armed with Sharp carbines and put up a bloody fight until their cartridges gave out. Cox was killed and Peveler escaped, after killing about six Indians. Cox was buried at the base of a mountain that bears his name until this day.

About the same time Jim Hart and Bill Hitson were surprised by a band of Comanches on Mahar creek, near where Albany is located, in Shackelford county. After standing the Indians off for several hours they managed to escape without being hurt.

During these years, between 1863 and 1876, the country was overrun with bands of hostile Indians, and it sometimes appeared that the settlers would be exterminated or compelled to move back East.

But there was always one dominant characteristic exhibited by the early settlers of Northwest Texas, and that was a tenacity to hold on under the most trying ordeals. Women became brave defenders of their homes in those days, as many a dead Indian might testify.

As late as the year 1878 George Halsell and Ed Derrett were rounded up by the Indians on Pond creek, about eight miles from where the city of Wichita Falls now stands. Halsell was killed and Derrett ran his horse to a clump of trees near the creek bank, and escaped into an old dugout, where he remained until night, then went back and carried Halsell's body to the dugout and then went for assistance.

The chain of government posts from Fort Richardson on the east to Fort Bliss on the west proved of very little protection to the settlers and ranchmen scattered over the great western range. Miles and miles of this vast territory was ravaged by the Indians and renegades, with no protection save the small bands of Texas rangers, aided by the settlers themselves. Many large claims have been paid by the government to the early settlers for horses stolen by the Indians during these predatory raids, when they were supposed to be on the reservation. One of the pathetic mistakes of the government's Indian policy in those days was the neglect of the little band of Tonkawas who camped near the post at Fort Griffin for protection.

APPEARANCES WERE DECEPTIVE

One delightful day in the fall of 1877 Kentuck mounted his buckskin pony and rode west toward the old Salt Works. With a Henry rifle in the scabbard beneath the stirrup-strap and a six-shooter at his belt, he felt armed for any emergency, and capable of taking care of any kind of game that by chance he might discover.

The ride was more in the nature of an outing than any desire to kill game, or any desire to travel to any objective point. He was out for a half-day's recreation and was content to let the little wiry mustang select his own gait, while he breathed the fresh air of the prairie and admired the beauties of nature, clad in russet-brown hues.

Kentuck was somewhat of a dreamer, and prone to worship the ideal, and on this occasion engaged in "castle building" to the extent of losing sight of direction and surroundings. But his faithful little pony, trained to follow the trail, plodded patiently along until he had covered about six miles from town.

The pony had climbed to the top of a knoll and, without warning, stopped and gave a snort of alarm.

This brought Kentuck back from the land of dreams with a rush, and he began to take observations.

About six hundred yards up the trail in the direction he was traveling he saw a band of about twenty Indians, painted warriors decked in all the gay colors of Indians when they go forth to battle.

They were too far away for Kentuck to determine the tribe to which they belonged.

It was a critical moment in the life of the man from the mountains of Kentucky, and he realized that his life hung in the balance, depending entirely on the attitude of the Indians—were they hostile or friendly? As if in answer to his mental question, the Indians spread out in open formation, and it looked like they were making preparation to capture him. Kentuck had no doubt of it from appearances, and knowing the futility of trying to outrun them on the open prairie, dismounted and prepared to sell his life as dearly as possible.

Drawing his rifle from the scabbard, Kentuck stepped behind his pony and laid the barrel across the saddle to steady his aim, and waited for them to approach within good range, watching their movements in anticipation of a flight of arrows or a shower of bullets.

This attitude had its effect on the Indians, and their war chief threw up his hands and shouted:

“Me Tonkawa! Me Tonkawa!”

The reaction from that tense feeling keyed up to take desperate chances when driven to the last stand on this side of eternity, left Kentuck for the moment unnerved. But recovering himself with an effort, anger came to his relief, and it required the greatest effort to keep from discharging his gun at the red joker.

And right here let it be understood that those who believe that the Indian has no sense of humor are very badly mistaken.

Whether Old Charley had been long enough in contact with the white men to cultivate a sense of humor, it matters not, but certain it is that his broad smile showed an appreciation of the situation, as the Indians approached to where Kentuck was remounting his pony.

"Charley, you blamed old fool, I came near sending a bullet into your worthless carcass. What in thunder do you mean, you old rascal, by playing bad Indians?"

"Umph, me heap big ingun; me no hurt him white brother. *Sabe*, you heap brave; no run away; heap brave; heap want to fight."

"Y-e-s; maybe; but don't you ever run that bluff again, Charley, or you will take a flying trip to the happy hunting ground. See!"

"Yes, me *sabe*; heap *sabe*; white man shoot Indian." And the unmitigated old rascal actually winked one eye.

And the band of Tonkawas went on their way toward Fort Griffin leaving Kentuck to reflect on the situation that presented a condition, false in facts, but embodying all the elements of the real.

And this is as near as Kentuck ever came to participating in an Indian fight, notwithstanding there were several raids in that section after he came to Northwest Texas. But, as he often expressed it, the experience with Old Charley and his band of scouts had all the elements of the real thing.

COL. J. B. (BUCK) BARRY

Next to Gen. Sul Ross, Col. Buck Barry, of Walnut Springs, was one of the most interesting figures in defense of the Texas frontier against Indian raids. His

home ranch was near Walnut Springs, and in the early '70s he sent a herd of cattle in charge of his son-in-law, John Shelton, to the Griffin range, near Albany.

Shelton and his wife Sallie located in Albany, and during the fall of each year Colonel Buck visited them for two or three weeks.

Being one of the pioneers as well as colonel of a regiment of rangers during the Civil war, he could relate many interesting incidents of border warfare.

On these occasions he always had an interesting audience, Texas and Kentuck generally included.

Especially interesting was his description of Black Eagle's attack on the little settlement on Elm creek, near Fort Belknap, in the valley across the Brazos on the trail to Fort Griffin.

In anticipation of Black Eagle's raid, Colonel Barry's command was ordered from Harrisburg to Belknap, to cooperate with White's company of Bowlin's regiment, sent on ahead to reconnoiter. By the time that Barry's command arrived at Weatherford the Indians, 1,000 strong, had pushed south as far as Fort Murray, on the Brazos river, and after a fierce attack had captured the fort and massacred the garrison. They then pushed on toward the small settlement on Elm creek. Three miles north of the little town they encountered Captain White's company, and a spirited fight took place and White was driven across the Brazos. Not far from Boggy creek, where this fight took place, the Indians discovered old man Harmonson and his son Perry, and gave chase. The Harmonsons were fortunate enough to escape to the brush and stood the Indians off, killing three of them. The Indians then came in sight of the string of houses along the bank of Elm creek.

A man by the name of Doc Wilson sighted the Indians

a mile away and ran with all his strength to the upper end of the town, then down the creek from house to house, giving the alarm. Just as Wilson ran into the yard of George Bragg's house at the end of the row, he was shot and killed outside of the door, by the Indians close upon his heels. Bragg ran to his rescue and was also shot, but not killed. Two cowboys dragged him inside and barred the door. The rest of the inhabitants of the little town escaped to the brush and hid. The cowboys and Bragg put up a bloody fight and killed several Indians. In the meantime the Indians pillaged and destroyed everything in the other houses.

About a mile from the town on the trail toward the river lived a widow named Fitzpatrick, a married daughter and three children; a girl and two boys. The only defense that the family possessed was a large brindle bull dog. This faithful old dog confronted the Indians and died in defense of his mistress.

Colonel Barry and his rangers arrived on the scene the next day, and when they rode up to the Fitzpatrick house they halted and gazed with astonishment at what they saw. There sat the faithful old dog outside the door, his fore feet braced against the ground and his glassy eyes and grinning teeth, even in death, glaring defiance at his red enemies. Fifteen arrows were sticking in his body. In the back yard lay the bodies of Mrs. Fitzpatrick's daughter and her two sons. The old lady and the little girl had been carried away into captivity.

Colonel Barry's command dug a wide grave in the garden and buried the mother and her two sons and the faithful dog in the same grave.

"Boys," said Sergeant Christal, "that poor old dog died in defense of the lady and her children, and I move that we bury him with them." All voiced their approval. The

arrows were pulled from his body and his remains were laid at their feet.

Black Eagle's band disappeared in the northwest, and though Colonel Barry's rangers followed the trail for some distance, they were never able to overtake them.

Col. Buck Barry possessed all the characteristics of the ideal rough rider of the frontier—tall and lithe, with piercing eyes and daring written in every feature; his long hair falling over his shoulders, he was sure to attract more than the ordinary notice when he appeared in public.

MASSACRE OF THE LEE FAMILY

During the time that Col. Buck Barry's command occupied Belknap as headquarters, he sent out from time to time scouting squads to look for signs of hostile Indians.

Sergeant Christal with ten men rode as far south as the Lee settlement, twenty miles below Fort Griffin on the Clear Fork of the Brazos river, where Lee and his family made their home in the valley, cultivated a small farm and owned a herd of cattle.

For two years they had remained unmolested, notwithstanding bands of Kiowas and Comanches raided the adjacent country. The family consisted of the father, mother, two daughters and a son.

Christal and his squad camped over night near the ranch house and were shown all the courtesies and hospitality of the frontier.

And the saddest part of this massacre was that the rangers had departed only a few hours when a band of Kiowa warriors came dashing up while the family were enjoying their noonday meal, and before they could close the door and defend themselves the father, mother and son were shot down and scalped.

The girls were captured and carried away with the band, and years afterward they were discovered with the tribe on the Fort Sill reservation. Negotiations were carried on between the agent of the reservation and the Indian chief that finally ended in securing the freedom of the Lee girls, and they were sent to relatives in a distant State where, if living, they are nearing three score and ten years.

Many other thrilling adventures were related by Colonel Barry that would make interesting reading, but as many of the details are missing, especially names and dates, the writer cannot afford to tire his readers with generalities.

No doubt many incidents that possessed all the elements that make border life so fascinating have been lost in the march of the years, because those who participated considered that they were only the commonplace conditions of a frontiersman's life.

Men and women in those days lived plain, simple, honest lives, and were too modest to boast of their achievements.

CHAPTER XII

TEXAS' WEDDING DAY

The vanishing shadows are slowly fading, growing blurred and dim;
There is something on my glasses and there is moisture on the rim.

It was a few days after Texas and his companions had returned from their outing on the buffalo range, and they were assembled in Tennessee's drug store talking about the incidents of the past month, especially speculating on the truth or falsity of Smoky's story of Jeff Turner, "the Indian hater."

"Well, boys," said Kentuck, "that Smoky was a queer duck, and no mistake. Evidently a man of finished education, from the polished language he used during his recital, and his appearance denoted a mysterious past that he was trying to make a sealed book, and no doubt came to the frontier to bury his identity, that those that knew him might also forget. Whether true or fictitious, his story of Jeff Turner made a deep impression upon me. His recital of the ravings of Turner in the rattlesnakes' den was dramatic in the extreme."

"Yes, he was an odd character all right," said Texas. "The first and the only frontier tramp that this part of Texas can boast of, if that can be considered a distinction. And his disappearance at Sand Rock springs, on our return, was in keeping with all his other characteristics."

While engaged in this conversation, Ranchman Lyle

made his appearance in the door, and after the usual salutation of "Howdy," approached Texas and said, "It is all right, my boy; the fight's all off between you and me, and you have my consent to visit the women folk when you like—here's my hand on it, my boy."

"Glad to meet you halfway, Lyle," said Texas, as he advanced and grasped the extended hand. "I have always admired you, Lyle, in spite of your unreasonable prejudice against me."

"Well, my boy, we will let by-gones go and look ahead; we understand each other now. Come and see me soon; and you, too, boys; adios—this is my busy day."

"Well, Texas, congratulations are in order," said Kentucky, as he grasped his comrade's hand and gave it a hearty shake. "The brave deserve the fair, and I hope you will find true happiness, health and wealth all along the pathway of life—you deserve it."

One after the other his companions advanced and congratulated Texas over the happy ending of the fight to win the girl he loved.

Current events moved smoothly along for the next three months, and men and women lived a dreamy existence as the summer dragged, and the cattle grew fat and lazy while the cow punchers lounged in the shade of the trees and their ponies ambled around, cropping the mesquite grass.

In the meantime the preparations for Texas and Mollie's wedding went merrily along. Every cowboy on the range was a committee of one to invite all the cow punchers to come and see the parson tie the matrimonial knot.

The ranch house had been converted into a bakery, and every woman within twenty miles lent her neighborly aid to make it a success.

"Blessed is the bride the sun shines on" is an old

proverb, and, if true, Texas and Mollie's wedding day dawned clear and cloudless, and the sun's rays flooded the landscape like a sheen of gold.

All the ranchmen and cowboys within 200 miles were present to witness the ceremony that united Texas and Mollie in the bonds of holy matrimony. The ladies from Albany, together with those from the scattered families on the range, added to the enjoyment of the occasion.

The two-story ranch house was thrown wide open, and if there was a cow puncher in all that vast expanse of prairie land known as the "free range country" who was not present on this brilliant occasion it was his own fault, for the wholesale hospitality of Lyle and his wife was as broad and as long as the range itself.

Of course, negro Andy was present with his violin to make music for "da white folk." And he was proud of the privilege, and his ebony face beamed with satisfaction as he sauntered around watching the boys unsaddling and huppling their bronchos.

"Here, you imp of Satan, who invited you to the wedding?" exclaimed Texas.

"Bless your heart, boss, I don't specs I needs a' invitation to yourn and Mis' Mollie's weddin', does I?"

"No, Andy, you have a black skin, but your heart is in the right place, and you are always welcome."

"Dat's de way I likes to hear you talk it, boss."

"All right, Andy; I expect if you are around near the storeroom in five minutes, there will be something to warm your insides."

"Thank'ee, boss; I'll sure be dar."

FAREWELL TO THE FORT AND THE FLAT

It was the month of November, 1882, when orders were received to abandon the fort and move the troops to Fort Clark, near the town of Brackettville.

The old trading post of Fort Griffin that had stood for so many years on the frontier of Texas, the rendezvous of the cattle men, trailmen and buffalo hunters, was to be dismantled, and all the stores and equipments transported to other points.

All the business men, hotel men, saloon men and artisans in the Flat were hunting new locations, and an air of dejection pervaded the whole community.

'Tis true that the buffalo hunters had killed all the large herds that once grazed in the Panhandle, and the remnant had drifted north and the business was no longer profitable.

'Tis true, also, that the trunk lines of railways from the East had extended their lines into southern and western Texas, giving quick transportation to the stockyards in the big cities, and that the old overland trail no longer resounded with the shouts of the cow punchers and the clattering hoofs and horns of thousands of heads of cattle.

A transformation was taking place on the range, too, and wire fencing was being used to fence in pastures, and the homes of settlers were dotting the prairies, and there was little free grass left.

Consequently, Albany began to take on new life and clamor for recognition among the towns of Northwest Texas.

Business men with large local interests offered inducements to the Texas Central railway to extend its line to the town.

Everything looked prosperous, and F. E. Conrad moved his general supply store from the fort to Albany.

The prosaic commercialism of the East was fast pushing the old romantic "Wild West" into the background, and the "bad man" was hunting more congenial associa-

tions, while the *bona fide* citizen was assimilating ideas in harmony with the new conditions.

And yet there were spasmodic outbursts of lawlessness that required the brave effort of efficient officers to suppress.

One event at least deserves mention in this connection before the author bids adieu to the readers of this volume.

Texas and Kentuck belonged to the official family of the county, the former guarding the money bags and assisting the clerk, and the latter prosecuting offenders in the name of the State.

One morning a deputy sheriff from Brown county arrived with warrants for two men, named King and Lewis, charged with theft and murder.

From the description of the men, Sheriff Green Simpson located them at the Millet Brothers' ranch in Baylor county, near the town of Seymour. The ranch was in what was known as the Griffin range, and the two men had often engaged in drunken rows in the Flat, and helped to "shoot 'em up."

After a consultation with his deputy, Henry Herron, Simpson agreed to assist Phillips in the capture of the criminals.

Knowing the reputation of Millet ranch as a rendezvous for all kinds of desperadoes trying to escape from justice, Kentuck urged the sheriff and the two deputies to arm themselves with shotguns loaded with buckshot, in addition to their six-shooters. But Sheriff Simpson, a brave man, though often reckless to foolhardiness, decided to wait and summon a posse at the ranch, if in his judgment it became necessary.

"Green," said Kentuck, "you seem to forget that the Millets have always employed the most desperate men

they could hire. A shady record was always a good recommendation. Among all the outfits that visit the Flat, none can raise more hell and stand more punishment when arrested than the Millet gang. I don't want you to think that I assume to advise you, but I fear that there will be serious trouble when you attempt to arrest any of that outfit."

"Never fear, Kentuck; we will use all necessary caution, but I don't anticipate any trouble. I know the Millets are a tough lot, but they can't afford to buck against the law."

"Oh, the Millets themselves will not take a hand, but they will stand back and turn the gang loose. Better summon a posse at Griffin to go with you."

"All right, Kentuck; I'll think about it on the way over. Come on, boys, we must be moving. We will camp on the Clear Fork to-night and pull into the ranch in the morning."

The sheriff and the deputies departed, and Kentuck sauntered into the clerk's office, where Texas was recording deeds.

"Say, Texas, I feel uneasy about Green, Henry and that Brown county deputy. Green's too durned stubborn for his own safety."

"I believe you, Kentuck, but what's the use of worrying when you can't help it?"

"True, Texas, and as a rule I don't. But it is too blamed bad to sacrifice those brave deputies because the sheriff is bull-headed."

"Oh, maybe it will not be a sacrifice, Kentuck."

"Let us hope so, Texas. I'm not superstitious—don't believe in omens and signs, but somehow I've a premonition that there will be serious trouble at the Millet ranch when our boys tackle those desperadoes. But I'm due at

Justice Steele's court at 2 P. M., and had better hunt up my bronc. Griffin is not like it used to be, Texas. When I was first appointed county attorney, to fill out Jim Browning's unexpired term, and the next three years, including my first elected term, the court averaged ten cases every morning, but now it has dwindled to two a week. The old town is going to pieces, Texas."

"Tis strange, but true. And yet if we had paused for a moment during the past six years we could have predicted the present. The government post was never on a permanent basis; simply a temporary outpost to scare the Indians and cause the settlers to feel a certain degree of safety. Now that the buffalo are all killed, and the building of railways makes it no longer necessary to drive cattle up the trail, the local trade of the ranchmen is not sufficient to support the business men, and they are forced to hunt new locations. Therefore, the hangers-on must go too, Kentuck."

"I never realized it before, Texas, but I can see the inevitable, the evening of the old and the morning of the new Texas Northwest. We are at the parting of the ways, between the free range and wire fence, Texas, you and I must look into the future if we desire to keep up with the procession."

"Well, Kentuck, Mollie and I are married and settled down—go and do likewise, my son."

"I'll think about it, Texas. So long, I'm off for the fort."

In the meantime Sheriff Simpson and the two deputies were on the trail, headed for Millet's ranch. At Fort Griffin they picked up a man named Dotty, who knew and could identify the two desperadoes, King and Lewis. But Dotty accompanied them under protest, and when they came in sight of the ranch, and discovered the two

men riding a short distance from the corral, carrying Winchesters and six-shooters, Dotty deserted the posse and made back tracks for Griffin.

Leaving Herron and Phillips to watch the maneuvers of King and Lewis, Sheriff Simpson went to the ranch house for assistance. But the desperadoes suspecting that they were the object of attention, quirted their ponies and cut in between the sheriff and the deputies and followed Simpson to the house, Herron and Phillips bringing up the rear. In this formation they arrived at the stone fence inclosing the buildings.

Simpson dismounted and jumped over the fence, then ran into the house. King and Lewis also dismounting, climbed the fence and remained in the yard facing Herron and Phillips when they rode up.

The sudden arrival of the sheriff and the hostile attitude of those on the outside created intense excitement among Millet's men.

John N. Simpson (now a prominent banker of Dallas, Texas, and erstwhile candidate for Governor on the Republican ticket) was present negotiating for the purchase of the ranch and cattle.

"Give me that gun," shouted the sheriff to Peeler, the range boss, pointing to a double-barrel shotgun in the corner of the room.

Peeler made no move to obey, and the sheriff grabbed the gun and rushed to the door, exclaiming, "I summon you all to help me arrest these men!"

King and Lewis were standing near the stone fence with their Winchesters in their hands, watching the deputies, when the sheriff appeared in the doorway and pointed his gun at them.

"Throw up your hands and surrender," he commanded.

But the only answer from King and Lewis was a movement to elevate their guns.

This caused the officers to open fire, and the fight was on.

Unfortunately for the sheriff, his gun was loaded with birdshot, and at the distance of thirty yards was not capable of deadly execution. And when he attempted to discharge the second barrel, King fired a Winchester bullet that passed through both of his arms, leaving him helpless and at the mercy of his antagonist.

Lewis, using the fence as a breastwork, was battling with Herron and Phillips, who were using their six-shooters and trying to force their ponies closer to the fence.

A ball from Lewis' rifle shattered the handle of Phillip's pistol, disabling his right arm, and the weapon fell to the ground.

King, after Sheriff Simpson fell, turned his attention also to Herron and Phillips, and the superiority of the Winchesters over the six-shooters was soon demonstrated.

Herron was shot through both hips and fell from his horse.

Phillips was wounded five times before he too fell from his horse.

King and Lewis were not seriously wounded and were preparing to finish the helpless officers, when John N. Simpson picked up a gun and stepped to the door and exclaimed, "Cap Millet, you cannot afford to permit those men to kill the wounded officers!—call them off!"

"Here, you, King and Lewis; let up on that shooting!" commanded Lon Millet, "or we will be compelled to take a hand in the game."

The two ceased firing, turned around and let the muzzles of their rifles rest on the ground.

"All right, boss; pay us off and we'll vamos. Don't think it will be healthy for us around here after this racket."

"Well, come in and git your money."

"Excuse us, boss; you bring it out. We are a little particular about the company we keep to-day."

Holding their guns in readiness to defend themselves, King and Lewis waited until Cap Millet gave them their money. Then King mounted the sheriff's horse and Lewis one of the deputies and rode away.

A cowboy was sent to Griffin for a doctor and an ambulance. Both arrived in the evening and the wounded officers were taken to the government hospital.

Kentuck met the ambulance as the wounded men and their escort came up Griffin avenue.

"Don't say I told you so, Kentuck," said Sheriff Simpson, as he smiled grimly over the sad greeting.

"No, Green, old man, I won't take such a sneaking advantage of you. I'm very sorry to see you boys in this condition, and I hope for your speedy recovery."

"Oh, I deserve to die, Kentuck, for leading Herron and Phillips into that death trap."

"Never mind, Green; you did what you thought to be your duty."

"Glad to hear you say so, Kentuck!"

Six weeks later all three of the officers were convalescing, and in two months were able to leave the hospital for their homes.

And now, lest the recital of events set forth in this volume become tiresome to the readers who have followed the true story of the men, as they quirted and spurred their wiry little bronchos over the great free grass cattle range of Northwest Texas in the early days of the frontier, we will do well to let the vanishing shad-

ows fade once more into the hazy distance of the long ago, and return to our present daily life.

FINIS

He was reckless in his speech and uncouth in his dress,
That old time Texas cowpuncher, and, we must confess,
When mounted astride of his broncho, made a display
That looked dangerous to those who disputed his way.

With spur to the flank and his quirt upon the withers,
A wild yell of defiance that gave you most awful shivers,
Dashed down the street, shot after shot, emptying his gun,
But, when arrested, says, "Pard, it's only in fun."

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