

University of Montana

ScholarWorks at University of Montana

Graduate Student Theses, Dissertations, &
Professional Papers

Graduate School

1940

Hundred years on the Ishawooa

Alphin T. Gould

The University of Montana

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/etd>

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation

Gould, Alphin T., "Hundred years on the Ishawooa" (1940). *Graduate Student Theses, Dissertations, & Professional Papers*. 2613.

<https://scholarworks.umt.edu/etd/2613>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Student Theses, Dissertations, & Professional Papers by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact scholarworks@mso.umt.edu.

A HUNDRED YEARS ON THE ISHAWOOA

by

Alphin T. Gould

B.A., Dartmouth, 1926

Presented in partial fulfillment of the
requirement for the degree of Mas-
ter of Arts.

Montana State University

1940

Approved:

Edmund L. Freeman

Chairman of Board
of Examiners

W. G. Bateman

Chairman of Committee
on Graduate Study

UMI Number: EP36279

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



UMI EP36279

Published by ProQuest LLC (2012). Copyright in the Dissertation held by the Author.

Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

All rights reserved. This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code



ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 - 1346

FOREWORD

The pioneers did not look at themselves as heroes of romance or as sociological forces of the winning of the west. The pioneers were men. They lived the life of their choice without analyzing it.

In the following pages I have tried to picture a few of these men as they passed through one of the valleys of the west. They are pictured as they seemed to themselves, not as they may seem to those who view them today against the backdrops of history and fiction. The sketches following are based on recorded fragments of fact. I have tried to add only the details necessary to transform names to men in action.

It can be objected that my treatment slights dramatic incident and characterization. To the individual pioneer, moving alone through a wilderness, there is no past and his only future is the morrow. He has no feeling of relationship to other men, which is characterization; no feeling of destiny which is the seed of drama. The pioneers of these sketches are conscious only of themselves and the moment --- and in such consciousness alone I have tried to picture them.

The Author

CONTENTS

2	I. JOHN COLTER, 1807
12	II. WYETH'S NEW ENGLANDER, 1835
34	III. WASHAKIE'S GUEST, 1845
47	IV. ISHAMOON HOLIDAY, 1848-49
	PART TWO. SOLDIERS AND GOLD
74	V. EMPTY PANS, 1864
82	VI. BIG HORN MINING EXPEDITION, 1870
92	VII. WHITE SOLDIERS HEAR POOLS, 1877
102	VIII. THE LAST SCALPS GO OVER THE ISHAMOON, 1878
	PART THREE. THE OLD DAYS WERE ONLY YESTERDAY
118	IX. THE CHANGE, 1885
126	X. THE WIND, 1896
143	XI. CITY OF CODY, 1902
157	XII. THE FRONTIER, Today
167	MAPS
169	BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SOURCES

PREFACE: THE RIVERS

Into the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains the Ishawcoa reaches its forked tongue towards the top of the world. Those mountains on which its southerly fork rises are the hub of a great pin-wheel from which spin down the rivers of the West.

To the east the glistening headwaters of the Graybull drop into the Big Horn Basin.

Southeast from the hub the Wind River flows between long ranges of mountains. It swings to the north in a great arc to cut a narrow canyon. It then becomes the Big Horn as it flows north through the basin to dísappear into the Big Horn Mountains on the north on its way to join the lower Yellowstone.

Westward from the hub of rivers the Buffalo and Grosvent flow into the Snake which twists southward on its tortuous course to the Columbia and the western sea.

Northwest, the headwaters of the Yellowstone spin their intricate pattern into a great lake from

which the river flows again northward into narrow canyons. From these it emerges in a curve and flows east across the great plains of the north.

Northward from the hub the Ishawoca plunges for fifty miles to join the Stinking Water just before it rushes through its short canyon and then winds through the benchlands to the Big Horn.

On the north bank of the Stinking Water a little apart from the main Rockies Heart Mountain raises a huge block of stone against the western sky. This peak was known to the first white men by name, and recognized by all men as the marker of the trails leading from the Big Horn Basin to the headwaters of the rivers of the West.

PART ONE

FUR

I

JOHN COLTER

On a clear December morning of 1807 John Colter, explorer, trapper, and fur trader, crossed the Stinking Water below the boiling spring. He was bound from Fort Lisa on the lower Yellowstone River southward to tribes, rivers, and mountains unmapped and unknown. What he had discovered since leaving the fort had been about what he had expected to find from the information he had gathered in talks with Indians.

He strode steadily along towards the mountain ahead of him which he supposed must be the Mountain of Cedars that the Shoshones had told him of. If he could reach the top before the clear morning turned to a squally afternoon, he would be able to get a view of the country to south and west that would enable him to check his further information.

Reaching the top, Colter lowered his pack to the ground, sat on a rock with his rifle across his knees, and mopped his forehead with the fringed sleeve of his buckskin shirt. Beyond and below him

Colter noted two irregular lines of bare cotton-wood trees marking the course of rivers from the south and west. Undoubtedly the bottoms below him must be the Shoshones' plain where two rivers meet. The river coming from the west must be the one they said would take him beyond their hunting ground to the land of evil spirits.

He might take a look at the evil spirits if his return route took him that way, but now he was more interested in the possibilities of the river that came from the south. His eye followed its course till arrested by an isolated spire of rock that rose from the bare slopes of its further bank. That was an odd-shaped rock. What was it the Indians had called this river anyway -- something like Isha-woo-a: The Coyote that Bays at the Moon. Why yes, it could look like a coyote baying at the moon -- pretty big coyote, but no bigger than a Shoshone's imagination.

Farther on to the south, possibly thirty miles from the mountain where he was sitting, Colter saw where the visible valley ended in three, great, rounded mountains, divided by narrow canyons cutting back into seemingly endless ranges beyond. The whole western wall of mountains rose over three thousand feet from the floor of the valley and the only wide

break was here in front of him where the other fork of the Stinking Water flowed in from the west.

From the plain where these two rivers met, Colter turned his attention to the southeast where a rising series of yellow benches and rolling hills were dotted with small herds of buffalo. Beyond these open benches the massive end of the east wall of the valley rose towards the morning sun. From this wooded mountain, an uninterrupted bare ridge ran back to the end of the valley. Its face was composed of great buttresses of solid gray rock which seemed to hold the east wall in place, now and again rising above it in pointed spires.

Colter sat in the warm December sun and made a rough sketch of what he saw. There was not enough breeze where he sat on the low mountain to ruffle the edges of his crude map. But way to the west he saw the top of the valley's walls crested with silver feathers, where the ceaseless higher wind whipped spirals of snow over from the country beyond.

The explorer shouldered his pack, took up his gun, cast a last glance back at Heart Mountain, and was on his way to find which seen or unseen canyon brought the Ishawooa down from what unknown country.

His descent was toward the river plain where he could look for "sign". This he found in plenty. There were many tepee rings, Nearer the river, piles of blackened boulders told of sweat lodges. The Shoshones had talked true when they had said that many different tribes came here to camp. The sun flashed on vari-colored chips of obsidian, quartzite, and agate where Indian hunters had laboriously shaped their arrow and spear heads. Here and there near the tepee rings Colter found the hollowed rocks and grinding stones used by the squaws in preparing berries and seeds for food.

The Indians who came here would certainly be rich in robes. Colter remembered the herds of buffalo on the benches to the southeast. He moved to the river's edge and found many peeled, tooth-marked sticks, beaver "cuttings", left on the banks by spring flood waters. Beaver lodges would be found up-river somewhere. Along the water's edge were many trails, trails everywhere, trails leading back and away toward the mountains. These were twice good medicine for the mountain man. He would find not only plenty to eat on the Ishawooa, but somewhere back in the

mountains these trails would find him a route leading out on top to the remote summer pastures of the game.

Colter knelt and gingerly tasted the river water. It was sweet. He must be above all the sulphur springs which gave the name, Stinking Water, to the river below the canyon. He turned his steps to the south. Watching the partly frozen river for beaver lodges, he occasionally flushed a ruffed grouse from the water-side thickets. He ranged back from the river on both banks looking for tracks. Many elk had come to graze on the bottoms. Deer he occasionally saw in large herds. Big Horn Sheep had crossed from one mountain wall to the other. No, there was no danger of his going hungry in this valley.

He was glad for he ate meat and plenty of it. Meat gave the energy which he used to climb mountains, and the warmth which supplemented his one blanket when he slept. Nights were cold in these high altitudes and drop of seventy degrees from dark to dawn was not uncommon.

When the sun slid behind the western wall of the valley, Colter had neared the Ishawooa rock

which he had noticed from his mountain lookout. He laid aside his gear and built a fire of driftwood. Picking up a couple of short heavy sticks, he crept through the cottonwoods towards a willow thicket and disappeared.

In a little while he returned to bury three Fool-hen Grouse in the coals of his fire. It was a good land, if you took it as it was, by a fire, watching the sunlight recede up the ever reddening snow drifts along the top of the eastern wall. And when Colter rolled in his blanket to sleep by the coals of his dying fire, suddenly the mountain walls echoed and reechoed with the coyote's weird, melodious wail, as if the Shoshones' Ishawooa itself were speaking.

Another noon found Colter again wiping the perspiration from his eyes as he reconnoitred his position. A deep, narrow canyon came in diagonally on his right. Signs showed that both game and Indians had trailed up and down this creek. Beaver lived on it too. Though smaller than the big valley that turned further towards the south here, it must be the continuation of what the Indians called the Ishawooa. They had said that it would take him di-

rectly to the upper waters of the Elk River, the white man's Yellowstone. But if the wider valley toward the south showed lesser Indian trails, there were certainly more signs of game and beaver.

The wider valley looked more inviting, Colter decided. Besides, the Yellowstone River would doubtless wait for him. If he missed its source, it did not matter, he could turn north and somewhere find it again. The other deep canyons he had seen from Cedar mountain were on the wider stream too and ought to be examined. And here was a nearer one breaking through the east wall of the valley that had not been visible from the mountain.

This new canyon as he approached its mouth revealed way aloft through its crooked gorge a piece of wind-swept grassy ridge -- ten, maybe fifteen miles away. The creek that had cut this canyon must have a considerable basin behind the ever closer valley wall. Though insignificant game trails showed among the boulders near its mouth, many animals had come down over the tumbled, sage-brush-covered hills beyond. Somewhere, through the pines and rim rocks on the almost perpendicular wall towering above him, he could find a game trail descending from the

hidden basin. But tomorrow would be soon enough, the day was about over.

Colter noted that the wind had shifted to his back. It was now moving slowly up the valley bringing ever increasing cold. Narrow bars of fleecy clouds were moving with it along the walls above the river. The sun had lost its warmth in high formless haze. Colter entered the heavy cottonwoods along the river and made a careful camp.

He ate, slept, and woke -- not surprised, not concerned by a near-zero temperature. The fleecy clouds of the night before were now gray banks of mist obscuring the tops of the ridges altogether. Maybe it would ne a good idea to lay over a day. But if he could succeed in examining the other canyons above him, before the threat of snow became a reality, he would better know which way to go on the morrow when new snow had covered all trails.

Reaching the first canyon he found that many deer and elk had come down over the high bench on the near side of the stream. The second canyon though having a much larger stream, showed little sign of travel along its course. There were probably

steep rim rocks on its course not far above. The third canyon held the main river. From above the east side of its probably long and certainly rugged canyon many kinds of game had descended from its distant headwaters. Undoubtedly the main river gave the most promising route for the morrow.

Colter turned back. By the time the threatened snow had caught up with him, he had killed an elk and was back in camp roasting a tenderloin steak. When he had eaten, there was plenty to do while the afternoon light lasted. His gear needed a repair here and there. He made some notes for a future map. He prepared a few choice cuts of his meat against a possibly less fortunate tomorrow and started a long sleep in his tiny shelter with the snowflakes whispering on the glowing heap of embers at its front.

Morning brought the discovery of four inches of snow and clearing skies. Wind came before the late sun, rising with the passing hours, roaring through the skeleton branches of the cottonwoods along the river, and lifting clouds of blinding crystals into the cloudless, blue sky. But Colter was up and gone. He was steadily pressing into the ever narrowing mountains, an irresistible dark speck moving into the clouds of whirling brightness.

Why should he stop longer in any one valley? The continental divide was just as good a place to him. So long as a region was marked "unknown", it drew him. On the high shoulder above the canyon he turned back to the wind and looked down. It was a good valley. Maybe he would come back and trap its beaver himself another year. He turned and passed beyond the ridge, climbing steadily, pushing into the mountains where the rivers of the west spin away to opposite seas.

II

WYETH'S NEW ENGLANDER

Where the western rivers rise, just below the peaks that form the continental divide, nestle little glens. In the winter when Colter passed over the hub of the world, he found such glens filling deeper and deeper with drifting snow. In the years that followed, other trappers found the same during the long winter months. But those who crossed the divide from late spring to early autumn found these glens to be minature meadows of paradise, lush with thick grass and painted with wild flowers.

In such a mountain paradise, the first light of a summer dawn in 1835 revealed two figures sleeping by a burned-out camp fire. A little way above the sleepers in the glen two mules cropped the frosted grass.

The sleepers twitched restlessly and at length one of them awoke and sat up with a shiver. He glanced quickly around the glen till his eyes fell on the mules. Then he returned his gaze reproachfully to the flaky ashes of the dead fire.

He reached for a stick and meditatively stirred the ashes, finding a few embers underneath. He added a few twigs and blew on the pile till flames appeared. He heaped on larger sticks and made ready to lie down again on the saddle pad that was his only mattress and blanket. . . .

One saddle pad certainly made a poor bed when it was soaked with mule sweat. It got cold on these mountains at night even though on the plains somewhere beyond them, it was probably too hot to sleep. The fire felt good. It beat all how Allen over there, could go on sleeping and shivering at the same time. It was getting too light to go back to sleep, anyway. He'd just set some meat to broil and have a smoke while Allen finished out his sleep.

When the man had finished putting the strips of meat to broil on sticks around the fire, he filled his pipe, lit it with a brand from the fire, and then seated himself so that the fire would soak into the stiff muscles of his back. He puffed contentedly, blowing out clouds of smoke that moved slowly away from him in the still air towards the mountain peaks that rose as far as the eye could see.

The sun was beginning to touch the snow drifts on this wilderness of mountains making them appear like the white-capped swells of the ocean.

This was better than the sea, though. He'd always wanted to be a sailor, till he had run away from home and been one for a month. That was enough, he'd jumped ship at the first port after sailing, and come west. On ship he could never get away from the bull-headed, bullying skipper. Here in the mountains, a man could get away, if only for a few hours. He and Allen had gotten away from "skipper" Gale ever since he had told them to climb this mountain and find out where they were.

They'd climbed the mountain all right -- just like the old bear; and here they were, on the other side. But what could they or anybody else tell Gale that would help him find Yellowstone Lake? In the first place the two of them hadn't seen anything from the top of the mountain that would give them a clue as to where either they or the lake were. And even if they had seen the lake there wasn't any guarantee that he would believe them or follow their directions to it. Gale had had good directions when they started but hadn't thought it worth while to follow them.

Even with all his pig-headedness Gale wasn't the only wooden nutmeg in this trading company. The whole company was crazy from old Nathaniel J. Wyeth at the top to himself, practically at the bottom. They said Wyeth had read about the fur trade in a book. So he'd left his nice comfortable colonial fireplace in New England and headed for the frontier. Well, he'd been crazy himself to sign up as a camp tender for three years with such an outfit, and wouldn't have probably if Wyeth hadn't been a New Englander, too.

That had been over two years ago in Independence, Missouri. They'd crossed the plains from there to the Green River. There Wyeth had left a dozen of them under his majesty Mr. Joseph Gale of Washington. They were to build a fort while the rest of the party went on to the Columbia River to catch a fish or something. That was all old history now, too; though why the whole crew that had built the fort hadn't been killed, was a miracle. There wasn't one of them far enough past the tenderfoot stage to be able to tell a friendly Shoshone Indian from a scalp-thirsty Blackfoot or Bannock.

The hunt they were on now was typical of all the land or sea voyages of Wyeth's New Englanders, as the other trappers called them. They'd started out with a good outfit, fourteen trappers and ten camp tenders. First they had run into the Blackfeet in Pierre's Hole -- lost one man and were packing another, wounded so he could hardly ride. Then they'd celebrated the Fourth of July by shivering in the rain all night in the happy thought that all their belongings and equipment were at the bottom of the Lewis River. Well, they'd been lucky that time. The raft had lodged high and dry on a sand bar a mile or so down river, and the sand bar had given them a good crossing to boot.

A week later they had reached the head of the Grosvent River. Gale had written down Jim Bridger's directions for getting from there to Yellowstone Lake. These directions had told him to go straight north from the Grosvent. But autocrat Gale hadn't been able to see any pass through the mountains from where he was sitting so he had said the directions were wrong. Too bad he hadn't sent him and Allen exploring then instead of waiting till everyone was hopelessly lost.

Well, he hadn't; and the party had gone on eastward over a divide and come on some streams flowing southeast. Gale had claimed the streams were the headwaters of the Yellowstone. But some of the trappers had been there before and had said the streams were part of the Wind River. They had even pointed out their old camp. But Gale was the boss, and if he said it was the Yellowstone, by God it was the Yellowstone. So there had been nothing left for the Wind River believers to do but quit. They'd done that all right and pulled out, but not before they had told the chargé d'affaires a few trivial things about where he could go.

The rest of them had then crossed another divide to the east, rougher than the first one. But the streams on the other side still persisted in flowing southeast. Gale had sure been mad. It was funny the next morning when Gale had come around and routed him out before the camp was astir and said:

"Russell, old man, you get Allen and the two best mules and climb this mountain. See what you can see from the top."

Even then their man-at-the-helm wouldn't admit he was on the Wind River. Instead, he'd muttered something about having to lay over a day on account of the wounded man.

It had taken him and Allen all morning and more, too, to reach the top. Every time they'd think they'd got there, another higher peak would appear ahead of them. Finally, they had gotten up among snow drifts as hard as glaciers. They had had to cut toe-holds for themselves and the mules. They'd damn near worn their hunting knives down to the "Green River" trade mark. And when they finally reached the real top, it had been the north pole sure enough, in spite of it being the middle of July and a bright sun shining. And they had seen nothing that would do anyone any good. Just mountains and more mountains rose one after the other to north and west, and over the lower country to south and east was a deep base.

The drifts they had climbed up had been too steep to risk sliding down; so they had circled around onto the north face of the mountain and there found a drift over which they had coasted into something a little softer than boulders, but

not much. Why complain? They'd ridden down into this paradise and butchered a fat mountain sheep before dark. The Garden of Eden couldn't have been any better than this glen if they'd just brought along their blankets.

While the smoker had been meditating, the sun had climbed above the mountains and was reaching down into the purple half-lights of the confused, lost valleys below the snow-capped summits. It topped the ridge behind the philosopher and added its warmth to that of the fire. He sat idly watching the two mules who had moved into his vision but had stopped feeding to stand sleepily in the new sunshine.

The hanging heads of the mules jerked suddenly up and the great ears pointed down the mountain. Where the end of the glen fell away out of sight two Indians were coming into view, their heads lowered, momentarily intent on their footing. The right hand of the man by the fire exchanged pipe for rifle; his left brought his companion from his sound slumber. The Indians climbed into the glen and raised their eyes to find two rifles pointed at them. One of the Indians spoke in the Snake tongue:

"Shoshones. Friends of Long Knives."

The white men relaxed and laid aside their rifles.

"Shoshone always welcome at our fire."

When Russell's pipe had been refilled and passed around, and the meat on the sticks around the fire all consumed, the white men, or Long Knives as the Indians called white trappers, questioned their guests.

The Indians said that their lodges were below on the same stream that ran through the glen. The stream was joined by others and flowed north two or three sleeps. There the river joined another from the west and turned towards the rising sun through plains where were many buffalo, many Crow Indians. The Shoshones added:

"Buffalo heap good. Crow Indian heap bad medicine. We come mountain, hunt sheep."

Russell and his companion then told their guests that their people were camped on the other side of the mountain which they had climbed the day before. The Indians expressed great astonishment at this feat, saying that they believed the mountain

could be ascended only from the place where they now were. Russell then pointed to the northwest and asked what was there.

"What you see, many mountains. Beyond all mountains, great lake."

"If our Shoshone friends guide us to great lake, we will lay many gifts on the prairie."

"Long Knives climb mountain where no Shoshones climb. No need guides. Our lodges empty. Our squaws hungry. We hunt sheep."

The Indians then told the Long Knives that "their people" must either retrace their trail to the Grosvent and go north from there; or they must cross the divide and descent the river they were now on to its forks in the great plains, then ascent its branch from the west. They pointed out where the trappers could find a pass through the mountains and added:

"Tobacco heap good."

So, before the two scouts parted with their Indian friends, they gave them most of their tobacco. Reluctantly they saddled up and trailed off around the mountain leaving the Shoshones to hunt sheep in their lofty paradise.

The return to camp was little easier than the mountain ascent of the day before. The only time that they found a trail was in traversing the pass between the north and south flowing streams. Here Russell and his companion noted with surprise great castles or "hoodoos" of sand and gravel mixed with sea shells, and set as if with concrete. On the south side of the pass, in a creek bottom they found a great jar, neatly hollowed from a piece of solid granite -- relic of some prehistoric Indian tribe.

This was their only bit of interest on the trip, however. Judging themselves to be as low as the camp, and not knowing whether the stream they were descending joined the one on which the camp was located, they left the creek and began to flank the wooded ridge. They had not gone far until they encountered "down timber". This took the rest of the day to negotiate, and they arrived back in camp only a little before dark. They were scratched, hungry and weary. But head-man Gale gave them no time to eat and rest before they told their tale.

"What did you find, Russell?"

"A million and one mountains all just alike covered with glaciers and sea shells, a three gallon jug without any cider in it, and enough down timber to fill all the fireplaces in the States . . . Oh yes, there were two Shoshone Indians on the mountain."

"What did they say?"

"Big lake beyond all mountains to northwest. Long Knives no need guide. Go back to Grosvent, go north from there, ugh! Go north to great plain, go west."

"Fine. We'll start in the morning." And Gale departed as abruptly as he had come.

When Gale had retired out of earshot, and the two scouts were spearing lumps of meat from the pot which one of their fellow camp-keepers had left on the fire, Allen grumbled:

"We sure got big thanks for our trouble. Why didn't you tell the old bastard that he had to go back to the Grosvent, and there was no other way? It stands to reason that route would be days shorter."

"Gale'll not go back over those mountains and take the chance of a horse-laugh from those

Wind River mountaineers that quit us over there," answered Russell.

"No I suppose not. Well, this is the last year I'll be shoved around the mountains by some pilgrim captain of the Columbia River Fishing and Trading Company. There isn't one in the whole company that knows anything about the mountains, and all of them are too damned proud to listen to any of their men who do know anything."

The late eaters finished their meal and turned in. Rolled snugly in his blanket, Russell was dreaming . . .

He was back in Maine floating down the sunny Kennebec. He had shipped his oars and was leaning back in the bow of the dingy listening to his sister who was seated in the stern, prattling on about what had happened since he left home. Suddenly a cold wind began to blow. His father who always worried if his children ventured into water over ankle deep appeared on the shore and yelled for them to bring the boat in. The wind had increased and was rocking the boat so that it nearly capsized. Russell sat up and grasped an oar which felt oddly like a gun, and his sister had a thick greasy beard. . .

Oh yes, he was on the head of the Wind River in the Rocky Mountains, and in the cold dawn one of his fellows was shaking him awake. He felt like he'd been asleep about ten minutes. But if it was light enough to tell the mules from the trees, it was time for a camp-keeper to go to work.

The earliest risers had already rounded up the carvyard and were catching the pack animals. Others were building fires and cooking breakfast. The first camp tenders through breakfast began to put the packs on the mules. They struck the tents of the trappers, as soon as those aristocrats of the mountains left them vacant. By the time the trappers had finished eating and had started to catch their riding animals, everything was packed except the "kitchen", and even that was safely lashed on the mules by the time the trappers were ready to start.

The riding animals caught and saddled, the trappers tied their blankets behind their saddles, hung their rawhide sack of traps over the horn, mounted and laid their rifles across the saddle before them. They were ready for the trail.

Gale mounted his horse and took the lead towards the rough, craggy spurs of the mountain above the camp to the northeast. The trappers swung into single file behind him. Russell followed at the head of the pack string, with the other camp tenders taking places at intervals among the packs or bringing up the rear.

Plodding along behind the last trapper, Russell had nothing to do. He knew that either he or Allen should be up ahead with Gale to spot the few landmarks that the Indians had pointed out, or that they had discovered themselves on the way back to camp. But of course Captain Gale would never openly allow a subordinate to tell him anything. Where they would end up, Russell had ceased to care. Wherever it was, it was his business to get the pack string there, and that was all. Beyond that he had ceased to worry so long as there were plenty of Big Horn sheep for him and thick grass for the cavvyard.

Thus musing, Russell drowsed in the saddle. His mule needed no guidance and followed the animal ahead steadily while Russell slept. If the mule

stopped to feed, Russell paused enough to kick it, and the mule went on. But he'd kicked it several times now and the animal had refused to budge. Russell opened his eyes. The trappers ahead had come to a stop. Beyond them was a place where a landslide had removed the covering of the mountain leaving a bare sloping ledge of rock exposed. This bare ledge extended from steep crags above to about twenty yards below where the trail had been. There the sloping ledge dropped away sheer for a hundred feet or more into the tangle of rocks and trees which the slide had piled into the chasm below.

Gale had dismounted and was leading his horse across the bare ledge, finding what cracks and crevices in the face of the rock he could to keep him from slipping into eternity. When he gained the other side, the trappers followed one at a time. After the trappers Russell negotiated the bare ledge and turned to watch the pack animals. These, with lowered heads, almost felt their way across with their noses. Nearly all had crossed safely when one clumsy old mule missed a foot-hold and in trying to recover it lost his balance altogether, and

fighting to keep his feet under him slid towards the abyss.

Just above the dropping off place one twisted cedar had resisted the force of the landslide that had cleaned the rock all about it. Its roots, fast in crevices of the rock were almost torn loose but still held strongly enough to stop the mule when he came to rest against the torn tree. The balance was precarious, a struggle by the mule might still pry the tree loose and send them both over the edge below.

Russell went into action. He called for ropes and tied them together until he had three long enough to reach from trail to mule. One man was then lowered down the bare cliff with these ropes and worked out along a crevice until he reached the stranded animal. Here he attached the ropes to mule and pack and climbed back to safety. Russell and two others then mounted, wound the upper ends of the rescue ropes around the horns of their saddles, and pulled the mule across the remaining bare rock until he hit soft ground and could get to his feet.

The momentary danger and action had gotten Russell awake. As the party resumed its march he looked about him. The sun looked as if it were noon, or past. Somehow the mountains did not look just like he had expected them to look. Gale had probably gone way beyond where the two Shoshones had told him and Allen to pass to the north. No doubt Gale had again failed to see a pass from where he was sitting. It would ^{be} no use to say anything. Heavens knew, now, where they'd end up, or on what river. If this kept up, it would more likely be the River Styx than the Yellowstone.

The next few days after crossing the slide were a nightmare. They hadn't reached the Styx -- though they might yet, because they hadn't reached the Yellowstone either.

They were at the forks of the Stinking Water, so some of the trappers said. It was without a doubt the forks of the river which the Shoshones had described as the place to turn west. But where they'd been since they crossed that slide, or how they'd arrived here was beyond him. He'd given the whole trip up as a bad job. It wasn't so bad after all, except the flies in this lower country. He'd fix a smudge and then catch up on his journal.

Russell rose and drew his long knife.

After cutting several green branches he returned to the fire and lopped off a few green twigs onto the blaze. Depositing the remaining branches near at hand, he stuck the long knife in the ground by them and retrieved his journal from his tent.

Let's see, the night after they had crossed the slide they'd stayed in a narrow gorge up near timber line. Then they had climbed a mountain side and slid down the other side into a glen over a snow drift. Getting the wounded man over the mountain and down the drift had crippled him again so that they had rested the following day in the glen.

That was the day Allen and the Irishman had laid a bet as to which would bring fresh meat into camp first. The two had made him judge, which suited him, and he had gone to sleep in the sun. The crash of a gun had wakened him. Darned if Allen hadn't knocked a sheep off the top of the mountain right above him so that it had fallen right into camp. It took Allen a couple of hours to get down though, and in the mean time the Irish-

man had packed in another sheep. He'd been pretty mad when he found out how Allen had beaten him.

Well, they'd continued their march the next day, seventeenth, he guessed it was. They'd got down out of the glen through a narrow, twisting canyon, and then gone up another branch of whatever creek it was to another high glen. The next day they'd had to cross another mountain range. But after that the route had been down hill all the way, and they had camped in an enormous gorge. The traveling from there on had been easier, and the next afternoon the valley had begun to widen out. It was a lot lower and the gnats and flies had given them so much hell along the bottoms that he had forgotten to look ahead and see what there was to be seen.

They had all been fighting flies and cussing. But the next morning before the flies took after them, he'd begun to realize that they were on the edge of plains country. And then a couple of the trappers had come up to him and said they were certain that they were just above the forks of the Stinking Water. The men pointed out where another branch of the river came in from the west and where

the two forks joined and disappeared through the last mountains into the plains beyond.

That had been yesterday morning, and the trappers who knew where they were were all for going to Gale and telling him. But he had talked them out of doing that. Gale would have got mad, he always did when anybody knew more about the country than he did. Then they'd put their heads together and figured out a way to keep their skipper from deciding that this was the Yellowstone too.

The result had been that two of the trappers had fallen in line next to Gale and had talked about where they were as if he knew all about the place too. That way no one knew, not even the commander himself, probably, that the trappers were telling him something he did not know. When they had reached the plain where the two forks of the river came together, Gale had called a halt, told the men where they were, and decreed a day and half of rest for man and mule. He had strutted around his trappers and showed them what a fine leader he was. But he had not dared to look Allen or old man Russell's son in the eye -- not after crossing three

or four divides when he should have crossed only one.

Well, they'd be on their way again in the morning. It was a wide, pretty valley here -- green as a New England meadow after a thunder storm. The rim rocks were spectacular with the odd streaks of red and yellow in the gray stone. The flies and gnats, though, were too much. By tomorrow night he would be far enough up the other branch of the river to be away from them.

The smudge had stopped smoking and the insects were at him again. Russell reached for his knife where it stuck in the ground. Just as he grasped the handle a deer fly started to work on his ear. In the instant of indecision as to whether to "get" the fly first or last, Russell jerked the handle a little sideways. The blade cracked and fell in two pieces.

But it didn't matter. Allen had an extra one he could get. He wanted to see him anyway and find out what he would bet that Gale would still miss Yellowstone Lake somehow. Probably Allen wouldn't bet though. It would be something to hear what he would say on the subject.

III

CHIEF WASHAKIE'S QUEST

A long file of Indians rode down off the high benches and headed across the open plain towards the shelter of the bare cottonwoods along the river. At the head of the column rode a young Indian and a white man. The Indian pulled up his horse long enough to transfer his beaded pipe sack to a branch on a nearby bush. He and his friend then continued on towards the river alone.

The white man pointed to the sign of former camps everywhere on the plain, and asked:

"Your people always come here to hunt buffalo?"

"Heap good camp," asserted the Indian.

"When buffalo on Ishawoa or upper Stinking Water we camp here. Many tribes come too. Crow come here often. Stoux drive him from Power River. Hannock come down Ishawoa from beyond mountains. Hannock and Blackfoot come down Stinking Water

trail from beyond land of evil spirits."

The Indian suddenly drew rein and pointed to the handle of a "Green River" knife with a bit of rusty blade.

"Your people, Long Knives, come here to trap beaver and trade with many tribes who camp here."

At the river's edge the two dismounted and drank. Turning as they remounted they could see the last remnant of Washakie's band trailing down off the bench-land to the east. The winter's sky above the bench-land was beginning to be streaked with crimson by the sun that had long since left the river plain. The riders paused awhile watching the color become deeper and then fade.

When they had returned through the bare trees to the place Washakie had marked for his lodge, his squaw already had the lodge in place and a fire burning within. The two men sought the warmth of the fire where Washakie's squaw was preparing the evening meal.

Seated on his buffalo robe bed, the white man watched the flames of the fire. He ran the palm of his hand over his bearded cheek. Well,

here he was on a real Indian hunt. He'd never expected anything like that a few years ago. Why, less than four years ago he had been beardless, young Bill Hamilton, handsome dandy of St. Louis. He'd been spoiled rotten by his parents, too, because he was half sick all the time. Then old Doc Jones had suggested sending him west for his health. Old Doc had guessed right that time. From the day young Hamilton had left Independence, Missouri, he'd been too busy keeping out of the way of Indians, grizzlies, and Canadian trappers to worry about health. If a boy kept his hair on his head in this country, he was healthy. If he lost his hair, his health didn't matter.

Well, that young dude Hamilton he'd been only a few years ago had caught on quick, and it was lucky he had. He'd certainly thought he was some punkins when he left St. Louis for Independence. He was all dressed up in a brand-new suit of store clothes. He'd looked so much better than his new boss, Bill Williams, that he had thought he was a better man. But in a saloon in Independence he'd seen an old trapper sidle up to his boss and say,

"What you going to do with that there city lad in the mountains, Williams?"

That had been the lowest moment in his life. He had gone out of that saloon as fast as he could and swapped his new clothes for some buckskins. Even then he hadn't dared to appear in the saloon until he had rubbed some dirt on his new outfit. When Williams had seen him after the change he'd driven his elbow into his drinking partner's ribs and said:

"Do 'ee see that now, old hoss? That lad's going to learn too fast for any darn Indian to catch up with him. Wagh!"

He had to learn fast to stay with Williams and his old Nez Perce pony. Horse and man were never more than a hundred yards apart. Together, they had developed a sixth sense about Indians. Whether asleep or awake, in camp or on the trail, members of Williams' party might expect his characteristic remark:

"Do 'ee hear now, boys, thar's 'sign' about? This hoss feels like cache."

Throughout the fur country this was known as the judgment between the quick and the dead.

Having uttered this, Williams would speedily get get his outfit together and cache -- disappear completely. Let any who were quick, go with him; those too slow would surely have a fight with the Indians.

Well, thought Hamilton, he had always been lucky enough to be one of the quick and had never been left behind to have his hair lifted by Crow, Sioux, or Blackfoot. Instead, he'd raised a few Indians' scalps himself. He'd learned the Snake or Shoshone tongue, too, and, best of all, he had caught on to the sign language used by every tribe in the west. He and Washakie had struck it off at first sight when they'd met at the trappers' rendezvous that fall. He'd always wanted to go on a hunt with the friendly Shoshones, and when young Chief Washakie had suggested it, he couldn't have asked for anything better.

Hamilton's meditations were interrupted by a grunt from his host. The pot had boiled, Washakie's squaw had retired to the shadows, and the men could eat. Hamilton unsheathed his long "Green River" and speared himself a chunk of meat from the boiling pot.

In the morning the buffalo hunt began in earnest. Washakie and Bill watched the sport till the shooting was over and the squaws had begun to skin the animals and cut up the meat. Then Washakie invited his friend to ride over and smell the stink at the Stinking Water.

When they reached the springs nothing would suit Bill but a bath in one of them. Washakie tried to dissuade his friend, saying the sulphur springs were bad medicine. But Bill told Washakie to watch for the evil spirits, and to drag him away if the fumes were too much for him. Then he stripped and let himself into one of the cooler pools --feeling the prickly sensation on his skin, especially on lips and in a scratch or two on leg and arm. Washakie was worried all the time Bill was bathing and even after he was dressed. As they were riding back to camp, Washakie kept on shaking his head, saying that they would have to make heap big sweat lodge and get rid of Hamilton's evil spirits that way.

The hunt went on for a week, during which time Hamilton hunted down several black bear and

generally explored the country. In the meantime the Indians got all the meat that they needed and new robes for their lodges. The squaws had a good time, too, preparing the meat, curing the robes, and cutting up the old super-smoked tepee covers for moccasin soles and other articles that demanded well-smoked leather.

The braves had long ago finished their work of hunting and were bored waiting for the squaws to get through with the meat and hide curing. Even the ceremonial baths of the sweat lodges had taken up only a day. Life was about to become seriously monotonous when a diversion occurred.

With loud cries of "Ab-so-ra-ka! Ab-so-ra-ka!" a handful of young Crow Indian bucks came riding into Washakie's camp to make a friendly visit.

The Crows said that their people were hunting buffalo on the Sun Dance (Clark's Fork) River. They too had had good hunting. Their lodges were covered with new robes and were filled with pemmican. They had therefore come for a friendly feast with their brothers, the Shoshones.

They had brought fine horses and would race with their friends.

"Heap good!" replied the young Shoshone braves.

Washakie turned from welcoming the new comers to his friend, Bill, and asked:

"You know Crow people?"

"I scalped one once."

"Maybe best thing for Crow. Crow borrow everything. Borrow shirt off back. Sleep one eye open."

Bill Hamilton certainly had no trouble keeping his eyes open the next two nights. The young people, both hosts and guests, celebrated till all hours of the night and most of the intervening day that was allowed for the Crow ponies to rest from their trip over. On the second day the races were held.

Bill found that the Indian method of racing horses was so simple that the best horse usually won the race. The Indian boys marked a starting line and about a mile away set up a stake for the finish. The "track" between start and finish was

left as nature and the elements had arranged it -- strewn with sage brush and occasional boulders, with maybe a sand pocket for extra hazard.

But Indian betting was much the same as among the whites, except that with the Indians, "right down to the shirt" was a literal expression for a proper bet. The betting was heavy on both sides, Shoshone as certain of success as Crow. Bill, however, bet lightly. He had a fair acquaintance with the Shoshone horses after a month or more in their camp. Undoubtedly the horses led out by the Shoshones for the race were the best looking ones in the cavvyard, and much better looking than those of the Crows. But Bill recognized at least one notorious "counterfeit" in the bunch. But as no bet at all on the White Chief's part might arouse suspicion, Bill put up a couple of scalps that meant nothing to him except their commercial value, but would be highly prized by any Crow possessor.

The betting over, the riders in the race stripped down to nothing and got on their horses. These were led to the starting line. There was no jockying, but a good war whoop for a starting

signal. Heels pummeled ribs, sticks and quirts descended on flanks, and away the cayuses went toward the finish stake.

The race was soon over, with no doubt as to the winners. The Crow ponies led all the way. Two Shoshone ponies bucked long and high instead of running, and a third, in spite of everything his rider could do, turned at the start and headed back through the middle of camp to the herd. The Crows felt pretty good. In fact they obviously felt better than they looked, sounded, or smelled.

"Ugh," commented the Shoshones, "ponies heap bad. Find better maybe. Eat now, race again."

"Heap good," thought the Crow bucks who were forming visions of taking the whole Shoshone camp back to their people as spoil. Why shouldn't they dream? Hadn't their rivals already used up their best horses, and the Crow ponies were hardly more than warmed up?

When the Crows had been stuffed with fat buffalo, and warmed by the warm winter's sun slanting down the Ishawoca, they were even more certain that nothing could beat them. The Shoshones did

nothing to disillusion them when they produced their "maybe better" ponies for the second race: wooly-coated, chalk-eyed, dusty, sleepy-looking cayuses.

Bill, however, had not eaten enough buffalo fat to dull his powers of observation. He knew the difference between cayuse and blooded stock. He knew by sad experience that the mark of form, breeding, or eye that might prophesy speed in blooded stock, would be looked for in vain in the cold-blooded, poker-faced, hammer-headed cayuses of the western plains and mountains. He watched the riders, who alone can judge a cayuse, and bet as they bet. He decided that it was time to bet his shirt.

The Crow riders, flushed with their early, easy victory, were fit victims for an ambush. They gave any odds asked, bet heavily, and asked for more.

"White Chief bet?"

"Wagh! White Chief bet, yes. Bet tabacco, bet powder, bet ball, bet shirt."

"Ugh, good! Shoshone brothers bet ponies again?"

The Shoshones not trusting their voices,

noded their heads in assent, as dejectedly as they could.

At last the betting was finished. Good-looking Crow and sleepy-looking Shoshone ponies were led to the start. Old and young braves, squaws, and papooses gathered along the course to be run. The Crows were yelling in anticipation of victory. Shoshones were looking on in stolid silence. White Chief Bill was asked to fire a shot to start the big race.

Bill ceremoniously primed his old musket, looked to the flint, aimed the gun aloft, and pulled the trigger. The woolly-coated ponies of the Shoshones woke up and almost before the echo of the gun had ceased among the mountains, the finish mark had been passed. The poor, deceived Crow riders had had to eat dust the whole way.

The Crows did not even stay for the big feast after the race -- very unusual omission for a Crow. Their hearts were heavy. Crestfallen, riding the counterfeit Shoshone ponies won in the first race, they trailed off towards Heart Mountain and their people on the Clark's Fork beyond.

They carried no spoils but cold thoughts: small comfort against the night wind edging down from the land of perpetual snow.

But the Shoshones and their white guest feasted with good appetite in their new lodges. Bill was surprised to find that he and not the winning riders was guest of honor in Washakie's big lodge. Washakie, the medicine men, and head chiefs made long speeches to him:

"White Chief of the Long Knives bring good medicine to our lodges. He bring good hunting. Our lodges have new covers, our beds have new robes. Our people have meat for long winter. White Chief medicine heap strong. Make Crow blind. Make our ponies run like wind. Our hearts are full for our White Brother."

Bill made the customary speech in reply. But his mind was outside of the tepee. He was thinking of the beaver sign he had seen on the Ishawooa, of the bears he had killed and the tracks of many more that he hadn't. He was thinking he'd return again in the spring, or another year to this land of plenty, where his medicine was good.

IV

ISHAWOOA HOLIDAY

Bill Hamilton did not get back to the Ishawooa that winter or the next. When Washakie's band returned southward, Bill met some of his friends and the talk was all of the Mexican War. Many of the trappers went to the war and Bill among them. When it was over, Bill took a trip in the summer of 1848 to St. Louis to see his folks.

In the late summer he drifted west. At Independence he found an emigrant train headed across the plains, and agreed to command it as far as Fort Hall. This was the fort originally built by Russell and the others of Wyeth's New Englanders, but had long since been sold to the Hudson Bay Company. Bill and his emigrant train reached the old fort on the first of October. Leaving the train there, Bill drifted to Brown's Hole where he found his former partners of trapping and war days. His bunch of independent trappers was known in the mountains as the Tartar Outfit. They were probably well named. They were a thorn in the side of the great fur

companies who wanted monopoly of all the fur-bearing valleys in the northern Rockies.

The reunion of the Tartars cannot be done justice in prosaic words separated from the mountain atmosphere and background. Imagination must reconstruct the friendly, unintelligible jargon, the swapping of news and tall tales, the exchange of experiences.

Gold had been found in California. California might be a good place to spend the winter, better anyway than the wind-swept, snow-blanketed valleys to the north. Gold was as good as furs to the Tartar Outfit. The old friends argued the point.

The argument was spoiled, however, by the arrival in camp of three sportsmen of means. These men possessed an inflexible determination to go hunting in the Big Horn Mountains. They wanted to see for themselves whether the stories were true about these mountains. They wanted to hunt big game and thought maybe they'd write a book about their experiences when they got back to St. Louis.

"You mean when and if you get back", interposed Hamilton, who had listened politely to what these tenderfeet wanted.

"All right, when and if, since you want it that way", one of the men answered; "we're ready to take the chance."

"Hadn't rather go to California and make your fortune?"

"No, we got one of them back in St. Louis."

"Oh you have! Let's hear you make it talk."

"What's it worth to you and your friends to take us on a hunting trip to the Big Horn Mountains?"

"Well, now, it ain't worth our scalps, especially since we been there before. Nor it ain't worth any number of fortunes, however big, if there's no chance of spending them in this life."

"Well?"

"Dead set on going, ain't you?"

"That's right."

"Hah -- Now let's see. The west slope of them mountains is Shoshone country. If that was the whole story, it would be easy. Me'n their chief, Washakie, are blood brothers. But them Big Horns have more war parties in winter than they have rattlesnakes in summer, 'n I prefer the rattlers because the Indians don't give no warnin' till they got one hand in your

hair and have begun to cut it loose with the other. The Sioux sneak into that country from the east. The Blackfeet steal horses and scalps from the west. The Crow claim the country and everything the find in it. With all the doin's your're likely to have in the Big Horna, you got to fixed to entertain company right."

"How many men do you need?"

"Me and my partners is only five. That ain't enough. We ought to have at least ten more good men -- trappers, the best mountain men. And we'll be lucky if we can find half that many with all this gold news coming in from California.

"Now I ain't trying to hold you up, gentlemen. I'll just make you a proposition. You can take it or leave it. I won't be sore if you can get somebody to take you where you want to go for less.

"Me and my pals have all been to the war. We ain't got no outfit. We got to have that and a good one. We have to hire the best mountain men. And we'll have to pay them more than the American or Hudson Bay Companies will, and furnish them with traps. You'll have to pay a good trapper a hundred dollars

a month to take his mind off California; AND let them keep their beaver catch too. Now if you want to put up for all that, I'll guarantee you some real country, plenty of good hunting, and better than a fifty-fifty chance of telling your friends about it afterwards."

"We'll go."

"Will we, now? It's late in the year already. We'll have to hunt for a spell and lay in pemmican against the trapping season when the game gets poor. Then, maybe you're tired of hunting and want to go home. But we got to trap some, or we won't get good men to go with us, or they'll leave us to come home alone after we get there. It may be March before we get back here."

"You're the boss."

"All right, mister, me'n the boys will get an outfit together."

In the two months following this conversation Bill Hamilton and his Tartars made good their word to the tenderfeet who wanted to hunt. They had enlisted a full outfit of seasoned trappers. The party had hunted along the east side of the Big Horn

River to the lower canyon. There they had crossed the river and by Christmas had a "permanent" camp established in the northern Big Horn or Pryor Mountains. The hunters had killed many buffalo and elk. The squaw wives of the trappers had prepared a good supply of pemmican and depuyer, the trappers' bread, which the hunters persisted in calling dried meat and plain elk-fat.

The tenderfeet had proved good hunters of everything from grouse to Blackfoot. A war party of the latter had raided Bill's camp, but had been outwitted and driven off. A council of war was held and the decision was reached that either the Blackfeet must be pursued and "rubbed out", or they would return with their whole village and rub the camp out.

Even in this form of hunting the tenderfoot hunters were apt pupils. But they were not up to the fine finishing touches. When the last Blackfoot had been sent to his happy hunting grounds, the trappers invited their guests to help them lift the hair of their victims. The men lost interest, then, saying they just couldn't seem to take to the idea. So the scalps, which had a trading as well as a

sentimental value, fell to the lot of the trappers. Nevertheless, the tenderfoot hunters had done deadly execution on the Indians, so by tacit agreement all designation of them other than "hunter" was dropped.

Old Bill ~~said~~ better did better than he had promised as far as the hunters were concerned. But the trappers had had lean doin's, as they said. The creeks of the country around Pryor Gap had been too recently trapped to yield up many beaver pelts. Bill remembered the Ishawooa and its many beaver signs of a few years before. The winter was comparatively mild, and he figured the chances of the swift Ishawooa being fairly free of ice were good. Early in February he proposed that they move camp.

The hunters were beginning to hope for new worlds to conquer, and the trappers were ready for any change that promised more beaver. The party packed up and left the Pryor Mountains, heading for the sentinel Heart across the Big Basin at the base of the main range of the Rockies.

They met no Indians on their trip. When they

reached the hot springs on the Stinking Water, Bill offered his guests the luxury of a hot bath. February's wind that whistled down to the springs through the canyon discouraged the idea. So the party pushed on and pitched camp on the old camping spot at the forks of the river, where Bill had camped with his friend Washakie three years before.

The next day the party ascended the Ishawooa past its marking rock and up towards the narrow canyons where the wide valley ends. On the South Fork Bill picked his camp site. There were plenty of beaver lodges in the river and side streams. The low point of mountain between the main Ishawooa and its South Fork offered an ideal lookout from which one might watch any movement in the main valley below, or in either branch above the fork.

The party had seen no Indians on the way across from the Big Horns. But Bill never took a chance on not living to a ripe old age. Having determined on where to pitch his permanent camp, he sent out scouts to make doubly sure that the valley was free from Indians before he even started unpacking the horses and mules.

By the time the lodges were up and the Ute squaws had something boiling on the fire, the scouts were back in camp with reports of no sign of Indians having been in the valley for many moons.

Such precautions in a country where they had seen no Indians at all prompted one of the hunters to ask:

"Is this country more dangerous than the Fryer and Big Horn mountains?"

"No", answered Bill, "the Indians can't kill us any deader here than there. But that canyon angling off there to the southwest, which the Indians call the main Ishawooa, is a regular Indian thoroughfare whenever the snow don't block it; and it's a mighty mild winter we're having. Bannock and Neg Perce war parties come and go over the Ishawooa trail from their country beyond the headwaters of the Elk or Yellowstone River."

"But this branch where we're camped is larger and seems to carry more water," objected one of the hunters.

"Water don't mean nothing to an Indian. The Ishawooa carries more scalps; that's the important point."

"Well, we're all safe tonight."

"Yea, I guess we'll wake up in one piece if the wolves or bear don't get us. But things is just too quiet on the Ishawoca. It makes me nervous."

Hamilton had learned never to believe in luck in the Indian country, no matter how much of it he had. Morning light discovered him planning precautions against any change of fortune. He sent two men to round up and hold the cavvyard of horses and mules until a log corral could be made ready for them. A scout was sent to the point between the Ishawoca and South Fork where both valleys could be watched. Two more men were sent to scour back into the foothills down river to look for Indian sign and watch for suspicious movements among the herds of game.

When Bill and the others left in camp had cut and dragged trees to form a corral stout enough to hold stock against any war-whooping attempt to stampede them, Bill pronounced himself satisfied. The animals were brought in. The trappers scattered to reconnoitre the beaver colonies and set their traps, and the hunters took to the hills to hunt.

The trappers were the first to return after making their sets. They reported many lodges with large families of beaver. The down-river scouts were the next to return. They rode into camp just after the sun had slid behind the western wall. They reported large herds of buffalo were moving up the valley which would probably be followed, before many days, by Indians. The hunters were last back and noisiest. They had brought four bear skins to show for their first day's work. They talked big to the empty-handed trappers who must sit around and wait for a night to pass before their beaver take would begin.

The camp settled into a pleasant monotony. The nights were cold, but the weather stayed clear, and the afternoon sun gave the illusion that spring had come. Every morning before light the trappers were gone to their sets to make sure that any beaver caught and not drowned would be dispatched before increasing daylight should frighten him into biting off his trapped leg and escaping. After the round of traps, the men spent the rest of the day skinning their take, stretching the hides, and then sleeping in the afternoon sun.

The hunters never tired of their hunting. Some days they hunted for the wolf and the lynx cat; other days, for fresh meat. The hunters learned "to know fat cow from poor bull", as the mountain man expressed the difference between good meat and bad. This knowledge was another compliment to the hunters, for it was not easy to tell the difference in the late winter when all fur coats are shaggy, when fat cow is scarce, but when lean bulls were everywhere. At the end of the first week in the new camp, the hunters told Hamilton that, besides the meat killed, they had shot twelve bear and four mountain lion.

"The bear in this valley do beat all", replied Bill. "Now who ever heard of raisin' any number of bear this late, even in an open winter? I'm goin' to write that down in my log book or I'll be calling myself a liar next year when I tell it to someone else."

Bill got out his book and made his entry. One of his gang asked how the beaver tally was coming.

"Oh the beaver tally's good. Let's see -- since we got here, the boys have caught -- Say now, Tomorrow's the twenty-second of February. Any of

you boys remember George Washington?"

"Never was much at books," answered a Tartar named Dockett, "but George was a real mountain man, from what I've heard tell."

"What do you do way off here to celebrate George's birthday?" one of the hunters wanted to know.

"Well", answered Bill, "I guess I'll celebrate tomorrow just like I would any other day. But then, something in the way of doin's might turn up. I can't figure why we ain't had no company since we camped here."

"Seems as if we ought to have some special doin's though", said one of the squaw men. "I'll tell you men what, now -- you go up there in the timber and see if you can raise another mountain lion. If you'll fetch one back before sundown, my squaw will fix you a real mountain feast. There ain't no meat will shine with painter stew when it's cooked right."

This remark precipitated a discussion of feasts and feast days that ended in an agreement to treat Washington's birthday like anybody else's, except that they would finish it with a feast. The hunters

went off towards the high timber on the morrow, and the trappers went to work a little faster. But the extra speed of the trappers was less on account of Washington than because the day itself promised a still, sunny afternoon to sleep through. But the afternoon sun had hardly toasted one side of the sleepers when the down-river scouts rode into camp.

"Wake up now, boys. There's going to be big doin's after all."

The sleepers roused grumblingly, gauged the height of the sun speculatively, and turned to the riders.

"What Indians and how far away?" demanded one of the trappers.

"Crows. Down river -- about fifty of them, maybe more."

"Well, seein' how I'm really awake now, I'll just put me a new flint in my gun."

"One of the scouts turned towards Hamilton who had been brought out of his lodge by the early return of the down-river men.

"Everybody in camp?" the scout asked.

"Except the hunters, but they're up-river."

Get the stray mules into the corral and tell your squaw to throw some wet bark on the fire. That'll start the hunters in, and you'd better ride out and meet them."

The trapper who was fixing his flint observed: "Now it's too bad those hunters who wanted some celebrating didn't go down river instead of up. If they had run into those Crows, they'd have wished old George had given the country back to the Indians before they were born."

The ever vigilant camp of Bill Hamilton showed no excitement at the news of Indians. The trappers had rearranged themselves a little perhaps. Each was now near a rock, stump, or tree that he could find protection behind if he desired it. Bill alone moved about. As white chief, he must have his lodge ready for ceremonious speeches of welcome.

At length twelve of the party of Indians came into view. Bill recognized them as a Crow band under old chief Iron Bull, whom he knew. When the Indians had approached near enough for a perfect shot, Bill signalled them to stop. He had little confidence in any Indians other than Washakie's

Shoshones, and in Crows none at all.

After a pause Iron Bull and two sub-chiefs advanced. Bill invited them into his lodge while the trappers lounged around the camp as if nothing were happening, and they had not a care in the world beyond the polishing of their spotless guns.

Within the lodge Bill ceremoniously filled a pipe with real tobacco, lighted it, touched the bowl to the ground and offered the stem to the sky for "medicine", and passed it to Iron Bull. When the pipe had gone the rounds, Bill spoke:

"Iron Bull and his chiefs are welcome to the lodge of the Long Knives. From where do our Crow brothers come?"

"Grey Bull Creek."

"Where to?"

"Blackfeet steal many Crow horses. We find track of horses this way. We follow trail, find Long Knives, not find Blackfeet."

"No Blackfeet on Ishawooa."

"White Chief has many horses. My people very poor, have no horses."

"Long Knives have to horses to give or trade."

Bill realized that it made no difference to the Crows whether they recovered the horses lost to the Blackfeet, or stole a brand new string. It was clearly time to put a bee in the old chief's bonnet. He rummaged around in his parfleche sacks till he found three of the scalps taken from the Blackfeet in the Pryor Mountains. Each chief was made a present of a scalp. Then Bill asked what tribe the scalps belonged to.

"These scalps make our hearts glad", answered Iron Bull. "Your people take them?"

"Yes. These Indians come to steal our horses. They did not return to their people."

"Where was this?"

"Pryor Mountains."

"These, Blackfoot scalp!"

"Horse thief scalp", Bill reminded the Crows.

"Blackfoot heap robber, heap horse thief. Iron Bull and White Chief brothers. Crow not steal Long Knives' horses."

"Chief Iron Bull speaks true words. Young Crow chiefs hot headed. Long Knives hot headed. Crow braves stay their camp. We stay ours."

"Iron Bull's people poor. No horses. No sugar, tobacco, powder. No meat in our lodges."

"White Chief poor too. But here is tobacco. Iron Bull can smoke the pipe of peace with his white brothers. We keep ammunition. We keep horses."

"Tobacco makes the heart of Iron Bull glad."

"That is good. Tomorrow we give feast. Iron Bull and his chiefs come. We trade for beaver."

The interview concluded and the proper impression of no fooling having been left by Bill's big talk, the chiefs and their following withdrew. Later, the trapper scouts reported twenty-five lodges, probably fifty to sixty hunting men. The hunters had returned in time to hear the tally and remarked that was two or three to one.

"Two or even three to one isn't bad in an open fight, if you're ready", explained Bill. "But if you ain't watching, Crows will just naturally take possession of you, including your scalp."

"You men were wanting a little celebration", added one of the trappers. "Stick around tomorrow. It may be a day late for Washington, but you can change the date when you tell the folks back home about it."

"Yea, and be sure to notice how much a stinking Crow buck can eat when somebody else is furnishing the meat."

Another added, "I hate to ask my self-respecting Ute squaw to cook for lousy Crows. But it's better than going to the Crow camp and eating boiled coyote because the coyote was easier to kill than a buffalo."

Bill then explained to the hunters that if they had anything that they did not want, it would be a good opportunity to trade it for Crow furs. To the objection that they did not know how to trade with Indians or know their language, Bill answered that all they had to do was to hold out what they wanted to trade and point to what they wanted in return. The Indian would first pretend that the thing held toward him was gift, was "on the prairie" as he termed it. When the trader had gotten the Indian over that delusion by hanging onto his object tightly, then the trading would really begin.

Everybody had to work hard the next morning. The trappers had to visit their traps, and then bring in any small game they happened to find enroute. The hunters were instructed to get an elk or deer. The

squaws, as usual, did the most work. They filled every pot in camp with some savory mess, and spitted additional meat on stakes by the fire to broil.

About noon Iron Bull and a few of his braves arrived in Bill's camp, trailed by their squaws who carried a meager dozen beaver pelts and a few otter skins. The hunters traded for the best of these, giving two knives, some salt and sugar, and a few knick-knacks in exchange. One of the trappers came along later and traded a Blackfoot scalp for the rest of the skins. When he noticed that the hunters had been trading, he remarked:

"Hell, men, wish I'd known you were really going to trade. I could have swapped that scalp for the whole pile of pelts as easy as for what I got."

"You could! Do they put so much store by a scalp they haven't taken themselves?"

"It don't make no difference to an Indian who raised the scalp, so long as he has it. I was out scouting last night, and the young Crow braves danced all night over those scalps that Bill gave them yesterday."

The feast was fun to watch. All hands fell

to the feast prepared by the squaws. Somehow the hunters didn't feel hungry enough to climb into the pots with the Crows, but they forgot whatever squeamish hunger they might have felt when Bill pointed out the Crow and Ute women taking stock of each other.

The Utes were neat and clean and dressed with more taste than the Crow squaws. The former consequently took no pains to hide their contempt for their slovenly, and rather ugly Crow guests. Practically no conversation, either by word or sign, passed between the two groups although they had nothing to do but sit around and watch, until the braves had had their fill. But the Crow squaws were doing their best to get back at the Utes by disparaging with grunt and gesture everything that belonged to their rivals.

Bill joined the hunters in their enjoyment of watching the eaters.

"Them Crow bucks sure eat like pa and ma and the dog, don't they -- only they mostly take bigger mouthfuls than the dog."

It was a relief to Bill and the camp when the Crows at length had had their fill of meat and big talk, and withdrew. Entertaining guests that might

decide to scalp their hosts at any time was exhausting work. Besides this worry, the trappers had been getting ready to move camp by the twenty-fourth, and they begrudged the time they had spent feeding Indians whom they particularly despised.

On the following morning all the traps were brought in. The green hides were bound in pairs and packed as best they could be. The cured, bailed skins were packed two bails to the mule. Camp was raised and the party was on the trail in the late morning. But the Crows still needed horses, and the young braves watched and resented not being invited to the feast of the day before.

Bill's outfit had proceeded only a few miles from camp when they ran into forty Indians mounted across the trail in full fighting regalia. There were ten of the trappers in front with Bill and the rest were in the pack string or bringing up the rear.

The white men drew closer. The Indians motionless held their ground, trying to look as much like violent, certain death as they could. It would not do for the whites to go around. The Indians would

have immediately taken such action as cowardice, and been among the packs with their war whoops.

The pack train stopped and Bill stepped forward:

"Yesterday Iron Bull said that his people and my people were brothers. I gave him tobacco. We smoked the pipe of peace together. We gave his chiefs scalps. We filled their bellies with Buffalo meat. Today we find his braves across our path. Our hearts do not understand this."

To this one of the young chiefs replied in as haughty manner as possible.

"Our old men are foolish to call the Long Knives brothers. The White Chief's heart is bad. White Chief comes to our country, catches beaver, kills buffalo. He gives us a little tobacco. In laying the chief's gift on the prairie, the Long Knives have not opened their hands but have squeezed out the gift between their fingers. This is not right. Give us blankets and guns. The White Chief's heart is bad. His heart is a snake's heart. Ugh!"

Bill took these insulting words for what they were worth. Crow taunts meant as much to him as

pleas to a Crow dog. They were a nuisance, but not worth bothering about when a second of divided attention might cost him his scalp. But the situation was getting out of even Bill's cool control. The trappers and hunters had drawn in behind Bill. The Indians sat taut on their ponies, their hands ready on guns or bows. There was angry muttering among the whites. Eyes flashed along the Indian file, selecting targets for the first volley. A shot, or even a quick movement on either side would precipitate a bloody battle. Bill had no doubt of winning, but he did not consider that even forty Crow scalps were worth the price of one of his men.

The strain was at the breaking point when Iron Bull, himself, rode into view. He stopped a moment to consider the situation. He saw no good in losing many young braves in a doubtful battle. This White Chief's reputation was known too well by his people. He had worn Crow scalps as well as Blackfoot. The story of the Blackfoot scalps, too, had made the desired impression on the old chief.

He rode slowly between the two lines and addressed his warriors.

"My heart is heavy at what I see. Yesterday we smoked with our white brothers. Our bellies are full of the buffalo and venison cooked by their squaws. Today our hearts are still good. My braves should not see blood in their eyes because the Long Knives have killed a few buffalo. There are plenty of buffalo. But there is no meat in our camp. Why should we waste ammunition of our white brothers. We cannot eat them. We can eat the buffalo. The buffalo are plenty. My young braves should get meat for their people. I have spoken."

The young bucks were reluctant to give way. But under the compulsion of their chief, they grumblingly moved out of the trail, looking defiance and muttering insults. Bill took a deep breath and started the party on over the trail towards the base of the mountain that divides the Ishawcoa from the Grey Bull valleys

Bill's friends, the Shoshones, would be on the Grey Bull. They would have no more fighting or threats on this trip. A handful of the trappers and hunters dropped behind to watch the movements of the changeable Crows. The Crows had vanished but where they were in the foothills that dropped to the river must be learned.

Across the Ishawoca by the spire of rock the watchers saw a small herd of buffalo grazing in the sun. Over the river hung a great bald eagle, soaring slowly in intersecting circles. Above him the western wall of the river was deeply drifted with snow where its mesa-like top reached back from the crest of the rim rocks.

The buffalo, below, were moving; something had startled them. From the shelter of the trees along the river the file of warriors rode fast among the specks of buffalos. The trappers turned and galloped after the pack train out of sight around the mountain.

PART TWO

SOLDIERS AND GOLD

V

EMPTY PANS

In April 1864 deep snow blanketed the high mountains that held the sources of the Stinking Water. Snow covered the cap and streaked the brown sides of Heart Mountain. And the empty plains that stretched eastward from the mountains were dotted with dirty piles of snow in the lee of every boulder and sagebrush. In the chilling emptiness a circle of tents clung to the edge of the cut that carried the river invisibly eastward.

Within the circle of tents a group of prospectors huddled as closely to a fire as the eddying, ground-driven smoke allowed. One of the men stood braced against the wind:

"Those of you who were with me last year know what happened. From the time we crossed the Bozeman Pass into the Yellowstone Valley to the time we left the Big Horn Basin, we found a thousand Indians for every grain of gold.

"This year we came into the country again,

and with enough men to make good Indians out of all the Crows and Blackfeet together, and we don't find one Indian. This year we've come right to the place where four years ago Lieutenant Maynadier claimed his soldiers found gold. We've panned the damn Stinking Water from the canyon above to the Big Horn below. But there's no more gold in the Stinking Water than there was in the Big Horn.

"There is no secret about why I'm saying this. I've got business in Virginia City. We all know that there's gold in the diggings there. But I'll stick it out here as long as you want -- even if we never got enough gold to buy a square meal and all our mules die of starvation."

The miners heaped more wood on the fire and argued whether to go or stay. Finally one of the men said he didn't see why everyone couldn't be satisfied. The Crows and Blackfeet were away to the north somewhere and probably wouldn't be back till summer came. If there were no hostile Indians in the country, there was no need to keep the whole party together. Let those return with Captain Stuart who wanted to. Those remaining would be in no danger of losing their scalps

as long as they moved southward when warm weather came.

Stuart wandered away from the group to the edge of the bench above the river. His work was going to end in nothing here at the Stinking Water just as Lieutenant Maynadier's had four years before. He'd heard the Lieutenant tell his brother, Granville, about that expedition to reconnoitre the Big Horn Basin. Maynadier and his party of army engineers had started north into the Basin from the Win River Country. They'd had plenty of troubles too. By the time they reached the Stinking Water rippling shallowly below him here they had lost all their wagons except one.

It had been June then, instead of April. And from Maynadier's description the river must have been a wild, raging flood. His party had lost their last wagon trying to make a ferry out of its box. Then after he had moved all his tents and supplies across on pack mules he loaded his precious instruments and survey records into an ambulance. Maynadier had then watched ambulance, mules, and load all roll together under the flood.

But Maynadier had insisted that there was gold

in this country -- he must have been crazy, or his men had pipe dreams. Well, he was crazy himself to spend two years chasing the rumor. It was all over now, anyway. He and the others who'd had enough of prospecting would be off for the Gallatin and home in a day or two.

It was about the first of May when Stuart at the head of about twenty-five men headed north around the mountains. The rest of the original party sat in the warm sunshine and made fun of those departing. The weather had "broken" and they were full of what they would do now that spring had really come.

Spring had not come, however. The next day again brought cold and wind. It was useless to start on further gold hunts till the freezing weather was over. It was a country that had nine months of winter and three of damn late spring. Two of the men volunteered to find a buffalo or something with a little meat left on its bones, if such an animal was left anywhere in the country.

When these two hunters had gotten well back among the ridges and gulches east of Heart Mountain,

the wind shifted to the north and it began to snow. And it continued to snow steadily for three days. In the driving snow the two became separated. One of them drifted past Heart Mountain and against the main wall of the Rockies. Figuring that it would be impossible to lose such a guide even in the worst blizzard, the hunter headed north along the base of the mountains. Stuart had been right after all, the sooner a man got out of this country the better. He'd just catch up with the departed prospectors and go along with them. His resolve came too late. He blundered into a camp of Crow Indians on the Rosebud and remained their "guest" for over a year.

In the meantime the other hunter had struck a draw that led him toward the Stinking Water, but at the same time into a small war party. Mortally wounded in the encounter that followed, he managed to crawl into some brush near the river where the Indians dared not follow him. A year later his horse was seen among those of the Crows, and his skeleton, guarded by its rusty rifle, was discovered by prospectors of later years.

The men in camp ate lean mule meat and kept to their tents. While the blizzard whirled by they debated what they would do if it ever stopped. One group, convinced that the Stinking Water somewhere above would yield the long-sought gold, elected the Ishawoca for their future operations.

They waited only for the snow to melt and the mud of the plains to dry. Then they headed out for the forks of the river above the canyon. Winter had changed directly to summer. Grass quickly turned the brown and gray slopes along the Ishawoca to a deep, lush green. Small game and birds were fat enough to eat. The prospectors began to fill out their clothes, even if their gold sacks remained as flat as ever.

They progressed slowly up the Ishawoca, carefully panning the mouth of each creek, little or big, that they crossed. When they reached the narrow canyon where the wide valley ended, and found still no trace of color, they held a council. Stuart had been right, there was no gold worth anything in this country. May had passed into June and the river was steadily rising as the warm weather cut more deeply into the drifts

of snow high on the mountains. The prospectors decided to descend the South Fork to its junction with the Ishawoca and take the old Ishawoca Indian trail into the mountains, cross the headwaters of the Yellowstone, and descend on the other side of the mountains to the more profitable diggings of Virginia City.

The river swirled wide and deep as they rode down the South Fork. The crossing at the forks was almost a swimming matter. Men, horses, and packs emerged dripping on the further shore. They proceeded up the Ishawoca only far enough to find a good camping place and stopped to dry themselves out before the night winds should begin to edge down from the heights above.

In the afternoon sun, men sat about drying their buckskin garments, working the leather from time to time so that it would not shrink or stiffen. Between rubbings one man idly picked away at a sandstone rock. After a while the point of his pick began to trace definite patterns. His clothes were still dampish and the cooling air was unpleasant to one sitting still. His pick chipped away again. He paused to put on his clothes, but the cook had not

yet roared a summons to the evening meal. The pick rose again. After a while the man stood back and contemplated his work:

J A M E S A N D E R S O N

1 8 6 4 J U N E 1 4

"Come and get it," sang a voice from the fire. The artist dropped his pick and took his place before the steaming kettle.

VI

BIG HORN MINING EXPEDITION

"Load the cannon, boys, there's Injuns comin' over the ridge."

"Indians, Hell! That's Commander Kuykendall, himself, or I'll owe you all the gold we haven't found from Cheyenne to the Graybull."

"Of course it's Kuykendall's party, but if we didn't load the old six-pounder once in a while, we'd forget how to load it when the Indians really did show up."

"Bang she'll go then, Captain Wise, and here's a salute to the gold I hope he found."

"Well, he'd better have found something, or what's left of this expedition is going to bust in two right here and now."

"He ain't found nothing, though, or he'd hit a high lope into camp before now and be singing 'There's Gold in the Mountains'."

"You're right, Dutch. Better forget the cannon -- and we better not speak till we're spoken to."

Commander Kuykendall, whom the two men had watched riding toward camp with his group of discouraged prospectors, had been a man of ideas. The winter before he conceived it his civic duty as a citizen of Cheyenne, Wyoming (The Magic City of the Plains) to open up the country on the east slope of the Big Horn Mountains. Unfortunately for his plans, this country north of Cheyenne had been given back to the Indians by the treaties of 1868 and 1869. According to Kuykendall and other Cheyenne citizens it was country that rightfully belonged to the whites. He therefore organized "The Big Horn Mining Expedition" in the late winter of 1870.

The expedition got a big play in the press not only of Cheyenne, but also of Chicago and Omaha. In March 1870, the papers claimed 2000 members. In April 1200 were ready to start. The first of May 400 were assembled in Cheyenne. On May 20, less than 150 were on their way.

Their destination was uncertain. The government had refused them permission to violate the treaty with the Sioux and the army had enforced the order of the government. So Kuykendall, who had been

elected commander of the expedition he had organized, led his party northwest and finally reached Camp Brown on the Wind River. From there he pulled a sneak across the Shoshone Indian Reservation and arrived in the Big Horn Basin which was open territory although surrounded on North, east and south by Indian territory.

He had not gone where he had wanted to go, nor found what he had wanted to find where he had gone. It was little wonder that his subordinate, Captain Wise, agreed not to fire a salute from the cannon. Instead, Wise and his friend made themselves scarce until they were summoned to the tent of the returned commander. They found him trying his best to look cheerful.

"Well, Billy, what's the news since your party got back?"

"None", answered Wise. "There's been some pretty hot ball games organized. The Stinking Waters and Graybulls are split two and two in the series. But none of the boys have found any color to speak of. The men are talking about splitting up. Some want to go on to Montana, others are for Cheyenne."

"I was afraid of that. If the God damned army, and Godder damned President Grant, hadn't kept us out of the Powder River country, we'd have found gold and opened up a country that ought to belong to whites, instead of skulking, scalping Sioux." After a pause he asked, "Dexter back yet?"

"Hell, Mr. Kuykendall, Dexter's gang was back before mine, and gone again already. He pulled out yesterday with twenty men -- bound for the Lord knows where, probably the Stinking water. That's where some of his men had in mind anyway. I doubt we'll see any of them again."

"Damn Dexter and his packers anyway. They ought to have a few bull wagons to slow them down. They've been in and out of camp every two days. That bunch is so restless they don't even wait for the water to settle in their pans. It would take nuggets as big as buffalo chips to make them settle down in one place for a week. What else's news?"

"Let's see -- Jo Dyer got back the afternoon you left, but he didn't find Irish Charley; figgers the wolves got him, especially since his hound came in all chewed to hell a few days later."

Then McLeland and some of the boys done a bit of prospecting. But they didn't find nothing either."

"And the talk in camp is for quitting?"

"Home and Montana is all you hear, boss."

The boys have quit singing 'There's Gold in the Mountains', and made up a new song they call 'Gold's Old Stale Song'."

"Well, Captain Wise, I can't blame them. You call a council in the morning and we'll put it to a vote where we'll go. I'm all for Cheyenne, myself. There's more gold to be found on Cheyenne streets than in all these mountains and rivers put together."

In the morning the remaining members of the Big Horn Mining Expedition voted on what they would do. Thirty-two decided to back-track to Cheyenne with Kuykendall. Fifty-six preferred to go on to the north, prospect the Stinking Water, Clark's Fork, and then, if they still found nothing, go on to the settlements of Montana.

The Montana-bound party headed down the Gray-bull until they found a ford, and then crossed to the north bank. About six miles below their crossing they found the long lost Irish Charley. The party went

into camp, while Charley's friends prepared to stake the prospector's last claim.

Picks and shovels thudded into the dry clay of the river bank. The torn body was gathered into a blanket and lowered into the gray hole. A prospector's pan and pick were placed on the blanket. A wagoner thrust a Bible into the hand of one of the group who were standing around the open grave.

"Here, Doc, you got some book learnin' -- read something."

Doc opened the book, thumbed through a few pages, and began to read:

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

The earth was shovelled back into the grave and large stones were heaped on the top. In the pile of rocks Charlie's friend stuck a board from one of the wagons on which he had burned:

"Charles McHenry, August 5, 1870."

The miners pulled on down the Graybull and

and made their next camp twelve miles below the grave. Then on the seventh of August, they left the river and struck north into a rough and broken country and into a wind so cold that many dug their overcoats from the wagons. They found water for camp that night in a buffalo wallow. It was strong with alkali, but so long as it would strain through their teeth it was pronounced drinkable. To make up for the water they had a feast of buffalo calf that was fit for any prodigal, and the long twilight was spent in a shooting match with buffalo and antelope for targets.

The next day was a repetition of rough, bare hills and dusty basins dotted with sage brush. The only diversion from plodding along and seeing who could count the most buffalo was furnished by a grizzly bear. The grizzly, stuffed with fat buffalo, was unwilling to move for even so impressive a sight as fifty men with their mules and bull teams. It was too much trouble to find a route around the bear, so the advanced guard shot him where he snarled at them not ten feet from the trail.

The next day was a monotonous repetition of the two previous. The north wind continued to blow

the dust from the lead wagons over the rest of the train. The parched country stretched on ahead and added the dreary prospect of dry camp to a day of dusty travel. But early in the afternoon the mules began to raise their heads and sniff the air. The wagons dropped down from bench to bench and finally between the creakings of the wagons could be heard the sound of rushing water.

At evening the party pitched camp on the south side of the Stinking Water where it gushed out from its canyon. The prospectors sat around their evening fires and speculated whether water, such as that from the springs across the river, which smelled so strongly of sulphur would be poison or medicinal. Talk of water passed to gold, and the less discouraged prospectors hoped this river's sands might contain the long-sought color.

Such hope was the tonic of the prospectors. Each new day, each new stream might bring that limitless wealth which was always, almost within their grasp. But to the bull-whackers and wagoners each new day brought ~~but~~ another's day's work.

The river where it gushed from the canyon looked wild, wide, and deep to men who had spent three days almost without water. It had to be crossed. The wagoners locked the wheels of the heavy wagons and let them down the steep south bank to the river. Carefully a rider tested the river, and found that the crossing would be easy after all.

The ascent of the north bank from the river bottom proved the difficult task of the day. It was necessary to hitch several yoke of oxen to each wagon in turn to get up onto the bench above. It proved just another day of hard work for the wagoners and just another day of no prospects to the prospectors. The gold fever had almost burned itself out completely. Even when they located a little color in making the swing around the east side of Heart Mountain, it did not delay the steady push of the ox teams towards Montana.

On the fourteenth of August the Dexter party with their pack string rejoined the wagon train, and the two went into camp together on the Clark's Fork. Dexter announced that he had done the Stinking Water basin and reported the usual lack of color. He then tried to persuade the wagon party

to go with him to the east slope of the Big Horn Mountains in spite of Indians and army.

In this attempt he was unsuccessful. Most of the men were unmoved from their destination. They were willing to move slowly and continue prospecting along the route, but they were going to the settlements on the Yellowstone and Gallatin by the shortest route. They continued northward. Dexter and his packers in and out of camp as their restless spirit moved them. The main camp moved steadily along toward the bend in the Yellowstone and the Bozeman Pass beyond.

VII

WHITE SOLDIERS HEAP FOOLS

The drenching thunder shower moved swiftly eastward across the basin. The Rockies and Heart Mountain glistened in the returning sunshine, while in the blanket blackness to the east streaks of lightning turned the clouds blacker and the wet plains below a shiny gray.

Emerging from the rain into the sun, a small detail of cavalry scouts trotted along the plains toward the southern end of the ridge that descends from the shed-like cap of Heart to the bank of the Stinking Water. The detail slowed to a walk as they flanked the lower end of the ridge. On the crest of the ridge a solitary cavalryman challenged them in perfunctory fashion. Their leader answered and then peered more closely at the bearded face of the sentinel.

"Oh, it's you, Sergeant Murphy! Haven't seen you since they shipped the Fifth to Chicago this summer to watch the *railroad* strike. Which do

you like best, fighting Chicagoans or Indians?"

"A fight's a fight, Lieutenant Wheeler, but I'd rather shoot the red devils than stick my bayonet into Christians, and some of them good Irishmen, too."

"You'll have plenty of redskins to shoot at if the Nez Perce come this way. But so far the only Indians that we've raised since we came through Fryor Gap are those wild Shoshone scouts under King and Bishop."

"We heard you were ambushed pretty."

"Nothing of the sort, Sergeant."

"Beg pardon, Lieutenant, I meant nothing --."

"Forget it, Murphy. As a matter of fact we were ambushed pretty, as you put it. We were a set-up for Bishop and his scouts. We had ridden like hell ever since dawn, and when we crossed those plains yesterday they weren't cool and wet like they are today, but hot and dusty. We were a bit jumpy too at the thought of meeting the whole Nez Perce nation with our three troops before we had located the rest of you from Fort Washakie. We finally got to the river down there and not a thing in sight on the benchland for miles. Hart gave us the order to dismount and went down into the river bottom to look for a crossing."

We just piled off our horses and went to nursing our corns and buyons, and all this time Bishop and his scouts must have been watching us from the bend up river.

"All of a sudden they pored up over the edge of the bench and came whooping down on us. We were really caught with our pants down and thought it was the whole Nez Perce Nation, sure enough. We were milling round like jackrabbits when some of the boys nearest the Indians recognized Bishop and King. I guess they found our faces half red and half white when they got to us."

"Sure, Lieutenant Wheeler, and why not. We're all jumpy. The whole fifth Cavalry ain't more than enough to stop the Hostiles."

The scouts pushed on towards the tents pitched along the flat above the river. The clatter and whoop of the party made little stir as they swept into camp. From the sunny side of one of the tents a black boy uncoiled and rubbed his eyes. Wheeler's voice reached him.

"Fill the pot and get the tin stove going, Clay boy, the boys will be after their coffee before long."

"Yas sah, boss, but we all ain't got no more coffee left. Your friends done clean us out yesterday."

A war whoop announced that the Shoshone scouts were back in camp and in a minute Bishop strode past Wheeler's tent on his way to report to headquarters.

"I'll be back in a minute for some of your coffee," he called.

"Come right ahead, Lieutenant," answered Wheeler. "The pot's about to boil and I just been sitting here debating whether to throw in a handful of sagebrush or some kinnik-kinnik to get the best flavor."

"Hell, Wheeler, don't do that. There's plenty of coffee in camp. As long as you cook it, we'll bring it."

Bishop was soon back with a sack of coffee and an account of his day's scouting. He reported that he had found no more Indians than had Wheeler's party. He had gone over the north rim of the canyon and down to the river again, but no signs of Indians, either above or below the forks of the river.

While they drank their coffee and waited for

the return of other parties whose scouting might throw more light on the Nez Percés' movements, Wheeler asked his friend about his trip north from the fort. Bishop then told how he and King with the scouts had left Fort Washakie the same day as Gen. Merritt had started with the main command up through the Big Horn Basin. But the scouts had gone up the Wind River and over into the head-waters of the Yellowstone south of the Park. They had scouted around there and found nothing but a few of the relatives of their Indian scouts and had then decided it was time to head for the Stinking Water to rejoin Merritt. The rest of the trip "had been something," Bishop continued.

"We hit the headwaters of the Stinking Water at Ishawooa Cone and headed down the old Indian trail onto Ishawooa Creek. Now that is some trail. We traveled through a long basin that slowly got deeper between long, even rim rocks of gray stone. Then we came to the falls.

"We could hear them but never did see them. The creek just dropped out of sight into a sort of corkscrew funnel. The trail went out on the wooded slope beyond the falls and then just disappeared.

So we sat our horses on their tails and slid down about a thousand feet of mountain to the bottom of the falls. And in less than a day of easy riding we were at the forks of the Stinking Water where our scouts claimed all the Indians in the west came to camp.-- But none had been there this year."

The other scouting parties had come in during Bishop's account. Grouard, who had been scouting in the low pass between Heart and the Rockies joined the coffee drinkers. Grouard said he believed they'd missed the fun and that the Nez Perce had been caught in the mountains by a cavalry regiment which had come through the gap next to Heart and then swung into the mountains to the west.

"What command was it, Grouard?"

"It was the Seventh. We found a dead cavalry horse with their brand on it along with some Indian ponies. Sturgis is in command of what's left of the seventh. He was away somewhere last year when Custer and the rest of them got massacred. Hope Sturgis has better luck this year than Custer did last."

"It don't make sense," put in Wheeler. "There isn't a sign of an Indian anywhere the rest of us have

been. And all you have found is some dead horses and a cavalry trail. What do you make out of it?"

"Well, up there on the mountain, -- no, you can't see the place from here, but from the pass, you see a big open ridge. The Nez Perce or some horsemen must have been all over it from the way it looks through glasses. Looks as if somebody had been up to a trick to draw Sturgis away from where he was camped --over on the Clark's Fork probably. But here's King back, and he's been up where that trail went into the mountain. Let's see what he has to say."

King was hailed into the group and handed some coffee. He rinsed the day's march out of his throat and looked at his impatient audience.

"God damn, that hits the spot after following cavalry and Indian trails all day and not knowing whether you'll suffocate with heat, or drawn in a cloudburst. There's sure been a bunch of cavalry and Indians in those mountains somewhere!"

"So Grouard was saying. It's the Seventh Cavalry, Sturgis' command.

"The Seventh! I hope they haven't let themselves in for another Custer stunt, because they're

being fooled as sure as hell!"

While the boys exclaimed at the corroboration of Grouard's guess and filled their cups again, King finished his coffee and resumed:

"We hadn't got more than to the base of the mountains when we run onto a cavalry trail heading up that creek. That put us hot for the day's work although the trail is days old. Pretty well up the mountain we come onto an Indian trail, lots of Indians had gone out on an open grassy ridge -- you can't see it from here, but from the ridge you can look down between Heart and the mountains clear towards Clark's Fork. Well the Indians had been out and back on that ridge! Decoys sure as hell! They'd been out there to get Sturgis away from the Clark's Fork and into the mountains. Well they did, and we followed on Sturgis' trail covering up the Indians altogether right back into the Mountains.

"God I didn't like it. Kept thinking every time I topped a little ridge that I'd find a pocket beyond full of scalped men and butchered horses.

"Finally we got pretty well up towards the top of the main ridge and Spotted-tail comes up to

me and says he knows the country, his people used to hunt here. So I pulled up because old Spotted don't talk just to hear himself think.

After a while Spotted says:

"White soldiers heap fools; and Chief Joseph plenty smart." Then I got really worried. But Spotted goes on after a while and says he thinks soldiers heap fools, but still alive -- that the Nez Perce sent a big band out on that bare ridge to make Sturgis believe they were all coming down the Stinking Water Trail and draw him away from the Clark's Fork.

"Then Spotted said that if I'd let him and his brother go on they'd be back at camp in the morning and tell me that after Chief Joseph got Sturgis into the mountains, the Nez Perce had slipped around them and high tailed it down onto the Clark's Fork by a trail the white soldiers didn't know anything about.

"So I let Spotted go and ever since we turned back to camp I've been thinking that what he said seems righter and righter. I'll bet my summer's pay if it ever catches up with me."

"No takers," replied Grouard, "but we'll know for sure some time tomorrow. I sent two of my men on

down to the Clark's Fork to see what they can see. They'll ride all night if their horses hold out."

The Indian scout had been right. During the next day Grouard's tired men returned to tell of Cavalry and even wagon tracks that led away to the north. By sunset Spotted and his brother slipped into camp and reported that Chief Joseph had escaped and was pursued by heap cavalry, not only by Sturgis' command but another from the west.

"So Howard never caught up with Chief Joseph," concluded Homer over his coffee. "A heap smart Indian, and old Howard will be writing reports all the rest of his life explaining why he couldn't outsmart him.

"Bet the Nez Perce are in Canada by now. "

"I'll take that bet" answered Grouard. "I'm still betting on the telegraph. Gen. Miles with the infantry is somewhere along the Yellowstone, and until we hear about his movements I'll bet the Nez Perces are still in the States. The telegraph is the white medicine that the Indians don't yet savvy."

VIII

THE LAST SCALES GO OVER THE ISHAWCOA

Two men rode slowly along the high bench that stretched in waves of heat from the base of Heart Mountain towards the Stinking Water. Their two pack mules lagged against their lead ropes. The sun glinted on the miner's pan and pick tied to the top of each pack. The less well-groomed of the riders removed his hat and mopped his forehead with a red bandanna.

A cloud passed over the sun and the man spoke.

"We're going to get wet. I've spent all my life dodging out of thunderstorms for fear they might take the crease out of my pants. Now I'm in clothes and a country that don't bother about creases, I'll just get myself wet for the fun of it. We're just going to get the edge of this shower anyway. Most of it's behind us."

The men turned their horses and looked back Over Heart Mountain the clouds were gathering blacker

and blacker. Occasionally the bare ridges and flat cap were etched against the clouds by long flashes of lightning.

"The men in camp are going to get soaked all right," remarked the man who had been addressed as Judge.

As he finished speaking the rain came. Falling straight and heavy, it instantly drenched the men as they sat on their horses and almost obliterated Heart Mountain from sight. As the men watched, the cap and ridges of the mountain became shinily wet. Little white rivulets appeared and suddenly turned brown as the whole head of a ravine began to slip. Water, mud, and huge fragments of rock tumbled down the mountain, disappeared for a moment between the lower ridges, and then as the rumble of tons of moving mud and water reached the two men on the plain, the wall of mud and water appeared charging down the winding creek bottom.

Where a minute before had been only a thread of water lost among the polished boulders of the creek bottom, there now churned along a wall of mud, rocks and logs filling the creek bed

from bank to bank. As the cloudburst reached the more level plain to the right of the watchers, its water spread and dropped the load of mud and rocks. For a while longer the clearer flood behind cut through the center of the scattered debris and rushed on down towards the Stinking Water.

As abruptly as the rain began, it ceased. The two men sat for a time, hypnotized. At length one shook the water from his hat and remarked:

"This time yesterday I was taking a snooze practically in the middle of that creek."

"Guess you've lived a good life, Judge. Do you think we ought to poke around in that soup and look for our friends?"

"No, we've been the butt of their jokes all across from the Black Hills. Now we've pulled out, let's stay pulled out."

"That suits me -- come on, horse."

The two men turned and continued their way along the base of the mountains. On a low bench at the mouth of the Stinking Water canyon, they pitched their tent. George went off to spend the rest of the daylight catching a mess of trout for

supper. The Judge wandered over to examine the sulphur springs. He was hot and sticky now that the sun had half dried his dusty, rain-soaked clothes. He looked at the warm steaming springs. Civilized habit conquered the Judge's resolve to live completely in the rough. He took a hot bath before dinner.

The sun of the next morning again grew hot in the sky. The four animals of the camp stood head to tail fighting the interminable flies. Over the remains of breakfast the two prospectors were carrying on a long, but unheated, discussion of the proposed prospecting for that day when the drowsy pattern of existence was broken by the appearance of three riders. By the time the prospectors had secured their rifles and found out whether they were loaded, the riders had proved to be army scouts, two in uniform and the other in beaded buckskins and moccasins.

"Get down and have a cup of coffee," invited the Judge.

The three army men dismounted and the clean shaven man in buckskins did the honors:

"Yellowstone Kelly's the name, from Fort Keogh. This is Lieutenant Gilbert and Lieutenant - -"

"Isaak Walton," supplied the third scout, "Yellowstone never remembers my name because he likes my fishing better, so let it go at that."

"Well, you have come to the right place for fish," replied George. "The canyon above here is full of them."

"We're supposed to be prospecting," explained the Judge. "But George, here, can't always keep his mind on it. We were debating when you rode up whether it is possible to find gold in a canyon like this where there are outcroppings of sandstone. What is your opinion, Mr. Kelly?"

"Well, I wouldn't set myself up as an authority on gold. Indians are what I've been hunting the last few years. But I've always heard that sandstone rock and gold don't go much together."

In the course of the rambling conversation that followed, Kelly learned that there were other prospectors camped along the mountain. When the scouts had finished their coffee, their leader said that maybe they had better go have a look at them.

The three were rising to go, when the one who had called himself Isaak Walton said:

"My eyes are pretty bad today, Yellowstone. It don't seem to me that I could see those prospectors even if I rode right over the top of them."

"Yea, it was sun on clear water that kept me from getting an education when I was a kid. You unpack these mules. Then if your eyes ain't any better, maybe one of our friends here will lead you down to the river's edge and put a rod in your hand."

In the heat of the afternoon occasional gusts of air from the canyon moved the light ashes of the dying campfire. Big flies buzzed around the fish bones that lay in the edge of the ashes. George and the fishing Lieutenant in the shade of one of the tents were droning on like the flies about the trout they had got and those that had gotten away.

The Judge emerged sleepily from behind the other tent to join the two fishermen.

"Your friends have had time to go to Whitmore's camp and back twice by this time," he volunteered.

"Yellowstone ain't really interested in those prospectors except to have something about them to put in his report. What he's really interested in is seeing Yellowstone Lake. Right now I'll bet he's up on top of some mountain figuring how to get there. He's never been here before, but when he comes back no one could lose him within a hundred miles of here even if it was a pitch black night and a blizzard."

After a pause, George hesitatingly asked:

"It isn't any of my business, but would you mind if I asked what you are scouting for?"

"No. There's no secret about it. Kelly got orders to follow up some miners to see if they were on the Crow Reservation, and to see if any Bannocks had come east over the mountains."

"There are no Indians here I hope", broke in the Judge.

"No, neither Crow nor Bannock," resumed the Lieutenant. "That's the joke of Kelly's order. The Crow Reservation is north of here and the Bannocks are probably way west or south. But such a crazy double order gave Kelly the excuse to go to Yellowstone Lake which he has been spoiling to see for

years.

"You really think there's no danger from the Bannocks," persisted the Judge.

"No, I wouldn't be fishing if I did. But ask Yellowstone when he gets back."

The two fisherman returned to their favorite sport as the afternoon began to cool. The Judge took his pick and pan and went off to look for an easy gravel bar.

The shadows on the plains lengthened and the bare clay hills to the east turned from brown to red. Horses and mules ceased to fight flies and went to feeding on the cooling range. Twilight gave way to dark. For a time the campfire light flickered on the white tents where the three men sat talking of cities and army camps. The fire died and the figures disappeared.

The three had regathered around the coffee pot with the return of the sun. The Judge had dreamed of marauding Bannocks and asked where they would be likely to come through the mountains if they should head east like the Key Perce had the year before.

As if in direct answer to the Judge's worries, there came a war whoop from the mountain slope almost directly above the camp. The two prospectors sprang for their guns and searched the mountain anxiously. The lieutenant, who did not move at the sound, calmed their fears of attacks.

"Hell, men. I forgot you didn't know Yellowstone's ways. I can't tell you the difference between his yell and an Injun's, but that's his."

Yellowstone and Gilbert soon emerged from the timber and descended into camp. Trout and coffee before them, Kelly proceeded to give an account of their last twenty-four hours. They had ridden up to the miners' camp and found it half washed away. The miners, however, seemed determined to stay for a while longer in spite of cloud-bursts. Then Kelly had decided to climb the mountain north of the Stinking Water canyon and see what he could see. This, the two had done and had even descended to the river above the canyon. Here they had been mistaken for deserters by a detachment of cavalry from Fort Washakie. The cavalry, learn-

ing of their mistake, had invited the two scouts to spend the night with them, but as Yellowstone put it:

"I'm just a natural born fool for wanting to take a short cut. So we left our new friends and headed right over the mountain for camp, instead of angling back towards Heart the way the trail had come. It was just rougher than all hell and we hung up there somewhere in the timber all night with the owls. And we might just as well have been sitting in a big tent eating somebody else's bacon."

"Did you see any signs of Indians?" asked the Judge as soon as Kelly had finished his account.

"No, and I doubt if there will be any this summer. This fellow from Fort Washakie, McCabe, he said his name was, says they got scouting parties in south of here, and it's a cinch that the forts up north won't let hostiles through again like they did last year. You'll see nothing but peaceful Shoshones or Crows and probably none of those."

Yellowstone and Gilbert then stretched out to get a little sleep while the other three broke camp and packed the mules of both parties. About noon the three army men took off across the mountains. The Judge and his friend crossed the river and took their prospecting way up the small creek that comes down to the east of Cedar Mountain.

As the days of August slipped by, the two prospectors worked around the mountain and then up the Ishawooa. They reached the end of its wide valley. It was late August now and the two men found a clear pleasant river sweeping from pool to pool, through the canyon. The temptation was too much. George took rod in hand and asked the Judge to take the camp up over the game trails and meet him somewhere above.

George fished up the narrow gorge of the river and found his friend camped on a little meadow where the valley widened above the canyon. The following day both prospected and great was their excitement on finding a whole ledge of gold-bearing ore. It was not the free gold for which they had been washing the streams for month, but

gold was gold in any form.

They talked late of their discovery and returned to restless dreams of their discovered gold and how they would get it out of the mountains. In the early dawn they awoke and crawled from their tent. Their eyes were blinded, not by the gold plated landscape they had seen in their dreams, but by a blanket of snow that covered everything with flashing whiteness.

They debated what to do and decided it was time to get out of the mountains and north to the settlements of Montana. They could return to their claim the first thing in the spring. It was unlikely that anyone would find their vein of gold in the meantime. They had stumbled on it almost by accident, themselves. They accordingly took a few samples of the ore, packed their mules, and departed over the high white trails.

Their departure was dreary and the wind moved up the Ishawooa damp and cold. Below the canyon there was no snow, but the low-hanging clouds kept away all heat from the sun. They went into camp early and the next day resumed their march down

the Ishawooa. Towards noon the weather began to break. The wind shifted to the west, the low clouds between the walls of the valley broke and dissolved and at last the sun shone down to warm the prospectors' bones.

They pitched their tent on the river bar opposite the Ishawooa rock and built a good fire before its entrance. Clearing skies had brought real cold, the first freeze of the year. The coyotes along the foothills felt the change of season, howling and yapping back and forth through the night.

Over their breakfast coffee, and warmed by the morning sun, the prospectors forgot their hurry of the day before and relaxed. The Judge summed himself up:

"Even if we had found no gold, I'd be content. This summer has been the first time in my life that I have been able to ignore all the little "necessities" of civilized life. I've done what I wanted to and when I wanted to. I'm content to go north to the settlements now. I'll hang out my lawyer's shingle again, and maybe take more gold

from the pockets of the settlers than we will ever find in that cliff up the river.

"Maybe I'll like civilization so much when I get back to it now, that I'll sell out my interest to you in the spring and go on practicing law. It isn't such a bad profession when you can get away from it once."

"Well, you've about hit the nail on the head," replied his friend. "We've had a good summer, and I'll throw in again with you this winter. I'll take the gold you get from your clients and double its value by putting it back into their teeth. And when spring comes, maybe we'll both decide to sell our gold cliff."

"So, just in case we don't come back, and while the frost is drying out of the tent, I'm going to take my pole one last time and have a little fun."

"Suits me. I'll just amble across the river and look at that rock sticking up there all by itself."

The Judge departed and George got out his rod and line. He worked along the stream and crossed to the other side. There was a beautiful

pool ahead of him and a long cast would reach it without his being seen by its inhabitants. His back cast caught on a cottonwood and as he turned to see whether he could shake it loose, something stirred the lower foliage. The sun flashed an instant on a movement between him and the trees. He recoiled and crumpled into the river.

The Judge meanwhile had climbed the bare slope beyond the river bottom. He had circled the curious spire of rock and decided to return to camp. As he descended towards the trees along the river, something moved within their shadows. He raised his gun before him, ready to take aim if what he saw was worth a shot. There was a flash and report from the trees. The Judge's gun dropped from his shattered right hand. Stupefied with pain the Judge stood for a moment undecided. Again the sun flashed on something moving. The Judge fell forward across his broken rifle.

PART THREE

THE OLD DAYS WERE ONLY YESTERDAY

- 7

IX

THE CHANGE

The low ridge rose brown from the little basin at the head of Mectetse Creek. Along the course of the creek the leafless branches of the red ozier bushes glowed dully in the late afternoon sun. A solitary rider leading a pack horse climbed from the head of the creek to the top of the bare ridge above him. His fur cap was pushed to the back of his head and a heavy mackinaw was rolled behind his saddle.

Topping the ridge, the rider paused to give his horses a blow while he searched the slopes dropping beyond him along Sage Creek to the distant Stinking Water.

The ears of the two horses pricked forward. Instantly the rider straightened in his saddle. He shook his head and listened, repeated the motion and muttered:

"God damn, it's getting me. I'll be herding sheep yet."

He spurred his horses forward and crossed the narrow plateau. Below him was a crude canvas tent with a campfire before it. Between tent and fire sat an old, bearded man sawing away on his fiddle. The notes of the Arkansas Traveler squeaked clearly to the rider through the cool November air.

The rider smiled and descended to the camp. The song went on to the end before the rider spoke.

"You had me worried for a minute before I saw you, Uncle George. I thought the solitude had begun to get me like it does a sheepherder."

"You'll have to herd sheep or cattle before long -- they're takin' the country. But step down, Josh, tonight's old times and you and me are eating buffalo."

"And I got something to wash it down with."

Josh unsaddled his horses and drew from his pack a demijohn. The two men seated themselves before the fire where they could, without moving, reach demijohn, food, and fiddle. Uncle George took the proffered jug.

"Well, here's to the old days, Josh."

"Yea," murmured Josh, watching the smoke curl upward from the fire.

Josh reflected that the old days were just yesterday. It had been only five years ago when he started his mail route, and there was then only one house in the whole Big Horn Basin. That year and the next his clients had been miners working the streams along the west side of the Big Horn River from Fort Washakie on the South to Red Lodge on the north. Then in the fall of '79 had come the change. Carter had come in with his herd of cattle from Oregon and built a house on the flats below Carter Mountain.

It was called Carter Mountain now. Before Carter had come, it had just been the dividing ridge between the Stinking Water and the Greybull. And of course the creek that Carter built on, was Carter Creek. The next one to it that ran to the forks of the Stinking Water was Marquette, because Uncle George there across the fire had built his cabin at its mouth.

Anything was an excuse for a name now.

Pete McCulloch, the Carter trail boss, had hated the barren clay hills on the south side of the Stinking Water, so now everybody called them the McCulloch Peaks. An old bull had quit a herd that came in from Oregon. The bull wintered all alone on the flat where he had quit the herd. The flat was Oregon Basin now.

But mostly the names came from settlers. The creek on the east side of the Ishawooa where Captain Belknap had built his ranch was Belknap Creek. He'd come in the same year as Carter, only from Montana. Or was it the same year? So many herds of cattle were coming in, a man forgot which was when.

"Say, Uncle George, what year did Captain Belknap come into the country?"

"Let's see, Josh. I run into him the first time up the South Fork after I'd pulled my traps the winter of '79-'80. After we'd chewed the fat for a while and sampled some of his liquor, he asked me to build a house for him. I done it too. Me and some of the grub-liners down at Carter's put it up that spring.

"It was a house too, not just a cabin -- four rooms, puncheon roof with a foot of good clay on it. We whipsawed planks for the floors, and daubed the walls good to keep out the weather.

"Funny thing about one of them logs. Some old trapper had carved it up with his skinnin' knife. Near as we could make it out it said 'bakon' and 'camp' and had the year '1821! It don't make sense though. There was trappers in here then I guess, but I doubt they'd be toting bacon clear from St. Louis. But there she was, and the old tree had died right through the middle of the carvin'. The dead half showed the letters just as clear as when they'd been cut. But them on the live part had growed out so we could hardly read 'em.

"That Belknap is a good man to work for. He said to me, 'George, I want a four room house.' Then he went off -- 'set sail to the nor' ard' -- as he put it. Never showed up again till June or July. By that time his trail boss, Johnny Dyer, had brought in his herd from Bozeman and was starting to put up a bunkhouse.

"Yessir, Captain Henry Belknap's a good man to work for, but not exactly what you'd take for a cattleman. Englishman, he must be from the way he talks, and a sailor from the way he walks. He never gets in Dyer's way with the cattle. He's never 'round much anyway. Comes out in the summer to look at his cattle and goes back in the fall after he's shipped. He's a good man to work for."

Uncle George took another pull on the demijohn, passed the back of his hand across his whiskers, and reached for his fiddle. He tuned the strings meditatively, and placed the fiddle under his chin. Bury Me Not on the Lone Prairie floated into the deepening twilight.

The tune continued the memories in Josh's mind. All the cowboys had come into the valley singing that song. All except one outfit. They'd just brought a herd of cattle from the Madison River straight through the mountains of Yellowstone Park and were the maddest bunch of cowpokes he had ever seen.

He'd run onto them just after they'd got

the herd off of Bald Ridge and were drifting them past Heart Mountain towards the Stinking Water. It seemed they'd been told on the Madison, where they had built their herd, that it would be easy to drift them through the Yellowstone on the old roads left by Howard when he was chasing the Nez Perce.

But there hadn't been any old roads and the cowboys had ridden their string of horses down to a whisper trying to keep the cattle out of the timber. Then the timber got so thick in places that they'd had to pile off their horses and dodge around in the trees like a bunch of farm boys after the milk cows -- either that or they'd still be hanging by their chins in the trees of Yellowstone Park.

Their boss had located a ranch and built a cabin on a branch of Sage Creek below them here. But it had been too close to the scene of their troubles. They'd sold the ranch and part of the herd to Ashworth and Johnson and trailed off south with the rest when spring came.

Other herds had come into the country too,

but without that much trouble. Grangers and rustlers were following, thicker than coyotes now -- and more trouble with their barbed wire fences and planting grain on the best range.

The country was filling up so fast that the government was going to take over his mail route. That was all right with him. It was time for a man to think of taking up a homestead and settling down before the grangers got all the best land.

The country would change fast now -- but tonight was old times. Uncle George's fiddle sang on through melody after melody. The contents of the demi john wasted slowly.

The old days were just yesterday and would be gone tomorrow.

X

WIND AND WEATHER

Around the crude table in Sam's cabin four men were finishing a supper of steaks and biscuits drowned in syrup. The candles flickered and wavered in the drafts from crevices around window and door. The men, engrossed with their eating, were oblivious to the incessant rattling of the stove-pipe and the fiercer attacks of the wind which threatened to move the log cabin from its foundation.

The concentration of the men gradually relaxed. One by one they pushed forward their plates and leaned back on their benches. One held a candle to his newly rolled cigarette. It was time for talk.

"About half a dozen of Sam's biscuits with plenty of lick and I can forget this sorry climate."

"What climate? There ain't no climate up the South Fork, just weather."

"If you don't like it," volunteered a

third, "stiek around fifteen minutes and it's bound to change."

"Yea, but the wind blows away. It's blowed like this ever since New Year's. The boys down at Belknap's old place are all tired out from getting up to fill the stove."

"Belknap was smarter than you guys that worked for him. He left the country when the weather got bad in the fall and never came back till it got warm in the spring. That's what it used to be like to be a cattleman."

"Yea, it was pretty soft for the early birds. What made him quit last year and sell out?"

"Oh they say he thought of leavin' every time he saw a new settler come in -- that kept his mind on it pretty constant of late years. But when the talk went around about Buffalo Bill's irrigatin' the country and building a town, he made up his mind to leave quick."

The men listened to the wind howl down upon the cabin in silence. Sam stoked his stove and resumed his seat. A spatter of rain and sleet rattled on the window. Sam asked:

"How's the Colonel's ditch going?"

"Dyer was down at Marquette after his mail a week ago. He said they had got the ditch up over the edge of the bench. He rode on up to see how much farther they'd got it, and run onto the Colonel himself with a bunch of his high-falutin friends. Dyer says Colonel Cody was settin' on his white horse. The wind was blowin' through that beard and mane of his that need roachin' so bad. He was wavin' his arms around showing them city men what was going to be acres and acres of wheat and alfalfa and rooterbaggers."

"Yea, Belknap was right. There'll be no room in the country for squatters and rustlers much longer. It will be all farmin' country before long.

"Squatters and rustlers," mused another, "and lately just squatters. Nobody can find a maverick to run his iron on any more -- except maybe Fete Snyder and his old woman."

"Now there's a man that ought to have been hung long ago. He used to find Belknap's cows way off in some pocket in the hills and just run his brand on their calves almost before they quit suck-

in' their mummies."

"Well, they still ride the best horses in the valley, hey Sam?"

"Oh, I don't mind getting beat in a horse trade; somebody has to in every deal. It was their using a couple of lawyers to corral me in Billings that made me sore. Then after that Pete had the gall to ask me to swear out a warrant against Johnny Rooks and Joe Legg for beating him up. Hell, he should have figured I wouldn't give him much sympathy, but he was sorer at me than I ever hope to be at anybody."

"How'd they go about catching Pete without his guns. He's had at least two with him every time I've seen him."

"Oh, I don't know. They must have sort of hazed him into a fence corner when he was travelin' light. He's a sight, his teeth ain't meshed since."

The talk lulled again and this time the wind lulled with it. Sam pushed back his chair and put the dishpan on the stove. The men at the table stacked the plates and Sam dumped them

into the pan along with a bucket of cold water. A deck of cards was produced and the dealer announced:

"Five card stud. No freeze outs. First man broke washes the dishes -- we got to have something to eat breakfast off of."

The game progressed in silence, except for the click of the cards and chips. The candles on the table ceased to waver and jump. Silence had settled within and without the cabin. Sam leaned back in his chair estimating his chances of winning the hand.

The stillness burst with the crash of rifle. Pieces of glass were falling on the floor. Sam put his hand to his eyes, and then slumped forward into the midst of cards and chips. Blood trickled down his hair onto the table.

"They got Sam, let's get 'em."

Three men sprang to secure their guns and slid into the night. After a tense search around cabin and corbals, the men returned.

Far up the valley the dull roar of a new wind was gathering strength. Besides that suggestion of motion there was only the emptiness of black

clouds and blacker mountains above the dark valley. The men re-entered the cabin, closed the door, and covered its window panes against attack of man or wind.

Sam was not dead after all. The shot had only creased the back of his skull, stunning him for a few moments. It was a jagged skin wound though and should be sewed up. Heavy black silk for sewing on buttons was found in the dresser together with a bachelor-sized needle. The boys finally succeeded in getting the needle's eye over the thread, and were ready for the sewing.

They cut the hair away from the wound and produced a bottle of rattlesnake medicine for Sam's anesthetic. He took a short pull and looked at the worried faces around him.

"Hell men, it ain't as serious as all that. Take a pull of this and let's get it over."

When it was done and bandaged they put Sam to bed and settled down themselves to wait for daylight. The surging wind rushed on through the night.

At last the wind blew in a new, wet dawn.

Not far from the window which had been broken by the shot, tracks in the fresh ground led to the corner of the fence. Outside the ground showed that a horse had been tied, and tracks from this spot went off along the cart road up the valley.

On horseback the men followed at a high lope. The tracks went around Hutsonpillar's place, across the meadow beyond and into the rocks of Boulder Creek. Beyond the rocks they found the tracks again in the marshy bottoms. It led them through Johnny Rooks' meadow to the Snyder fence above. They drew rein without going through the fence.

Before them on the wet brownness of the spring meadow grazed a horse caked with mud. But under the mud could be seen the saddle mark and curled hair of a horse that had been ridden until soaked with sweat. Smoke blew from the chimney of the nearby cabin.

"I guess Pete tried to get even with you once and for all, Sam."

Before Sam could answer the door of the cabin opened and a youngster came out for a pail of water. He returned without seeing the watchers. One of the latter asked:

"Who's the kid?"

"That's Rice Hudsonpillar's young nephew," said Sam. "He comes up to stay with the old lady and do the chores when Pete's away."

"Let's get the old woman out and see what she has to say."

"No," said Sam, "since they like the law so well, I'll just fog down to Marquette and get a warrant. You boys kind of ride herd on the place. If you get tired, Johnny and Legg will fight for a chance to help you."

Sam rode off to Marquette twenty-five miles down river.

The others went back across Rooks' meadow to his cabin perched on the open slope above. They found both the short, sandy-haired Rooks and the tough Legg within finishing a late breakfast.

On hearing the story of the night's happenings Legg was determined to go and smoke out the old woman. Rooks, the little Dutchman, as they called him, argued that they had better wait till Sam got back since he was the one that was shot at. The argument went on intermittently all day, like the wind. None of them, not even Legg, really

wanted to risk a situation where they would have to shoot it out with a woman.

Legg could not let the subject drop, however, and eventually shifted his argument to the point that they ought to get the youngster away from the influence of that Snyder hell-cat. This argument moved the group to action. They went up through the meadow and placed themselves at a respectful distance from the Snyder door. They yelled for the woman to come out. The door of the cabin opened and she stepped out. She coolly looked the armed men over one by one and then demanded:

"What the hell do you sons of bitches think you're going to do?"

"We're going to take young Elen back to his uncle's and put you under arrest for shooting Sam Aldrich," said Legg.

"So that old horse butcher's dead."

"You'll wish he was when he gets back with the warrant."

"Listen, Joe Legg, when I shoot a man he don't get back!"

Mrs. Snyder disappeared into the cabin and

the door slammed shut. The men drew together behind the cottonwoods and held council whether to smoke her out or not. They decided against it for fear of hitting the kid. They'd get Rice to come up after his nephew in the morning, and then they'd take care of the old woman when Sam got back with the warrant.

Mrs. Snyder worked faster than the men in the morning, however. Before they had begun to put their plan into execution the woman appeared in her doorway dressed for riding. She stared at the brush where the guard was sheltering himself from the wind.

"Well what's the matter? You scared to shoot?"

There was no reply from the brush. The woman spoke again:

"Wouldn't shoot a lady, huh! Too much of a gentleman, I bet! You just hightail it down to those two yellow-livered neighbors of mine and tell them I'm going to take a ride right through their damn meadow. They can beat me up or shoot me off my horse -- if they think they got guts enough to

do either."

The woman proceeded to catch her horse and the watcher went back to deliver her ultimatum to his companions. The woman was not long in keeping her word. When she rode past Rocks' with the kid perched behind her, she was joined by the five men who rode well out of pistol range.

They had gotten across the rocks of Boulder Creek when they met Sam and another man returning from down river.

"Well, here's your prisoner, Sam. Just lope right in and serve your warrant."

"Wish I could. Judge Griffin's resigned and that makes the nearest justice or sheriff over on Clark's Fork. They went over after a warrant for me but they won't be back in time."

"In time for what?"

"Pete's on his way up river. Jim and I passed him at Corral Creek."

Mrs. Snyder had continued steadily on her way and the men trailed along in her wake. When they arrived at the Hudsonpillar place, the woman and boy dismounted and entered the cabin.

The men took council while they waited.

Joe Legg, the fire-eater, argued for mixing it with Fete as soon as he came in sight. Such a skirmish could end in but one way. Finally Jim Calloway, the man who had come back with Sam and was not involved in the prejudices of the upper valley, volunteered to meet Snyder and ask him to give himself up.

When Snyder came in sight, Jim separated from the group to intercept him. He talked for a time out of ear-shot from the other men. They could only judge from his motions towards Rice's house, and the posse, and Snyder's gun what the talk was about. Suddenly Snyder raised his voice above the wind:

"The hell I'll give up my guns. You can have my carcass, but I'll keep my guns 'til some of those big men behind you want to come and take them away."

Snyder glared at the posse of men for a minute and then rode nearer to the cabin. He yelled for his wife to come out. Before the group of men had decided what to do next, Mrs.

Snyder had come out and the couple started off up the valley. Rice secured his horse from the corral and joined the group of men. He had marked that a rifle still protruded from the gun s cabbard of the departing Snyder. Rice addressed the group in general:

"Didn't you all take Pete's guns away from him?"

There was silence among the men.

"Well I'll be a sheepherder and a Republican if I keep the old lady's pea shooter, and all of you with not nerve enough to get the old man's firing irons off him."

Rice put spurs to his horse and vanished after the departed Snyders. The others looked at each other a moment and Legg muttered:

"I hope Pete takes that bastard for me and drills a couple of holes through his head."

The state of siege around the Snyder cabin was resumed. On the second morning watchers brought back word that the couple was packing to pull out. The hasty plan took shape that the fugitives would be escorted ahead and behind as

far as Marquette. There they would stop the Snyders and serve the warrant when it was brought back from Clark.

The Snyder buckboard with two saddle horses tied behind at length appeared. Legg with four other men took off ahead of it to get well out of rifle shot in the lead. Legg turned as he galloped off and yelled:

"You can stake your whole pile: they'll not go beyond Marquette."

When the loaded rig had passed, a silent trio mounted, and followed in the rear: Sam with his hat tipped forward revealing the rough bandages over his cow-boy needlework; Johnny Rocks, the Dutchman, with blond hair showing between hat and coat collar that suggested a mildness out of place in the tense parade; and Bill Nichols whose battered hat and stained clothes suggested a miner, rather than settler or rancher.

Stretched out over half a mile the three parts of the caravan watched each other warily. Through snow squalls and over rocks, in sunshine and windy hills, the wagon bumped along with its

escorts of horsemen. In the afternoon the three groups approached the Belknap ranch.

Well out of rifle range in the lead the first group of horsemen passed through the bare trees of the creek below the cabin. In a little while they were out of sight around a point of a hill. Approaching the trees in its turn the wagon began to edge off the road. Nichols and Rooks drew apart from Sam. Quickly Snyder cramped his wagon behind some trees, leaped to the ground and fired at Nichols.

Off his horse behind a rock, Nichols returned the fire which missed its mark but hit one of the work horses. The wagon dragged forward a little further and stopped. Snyder was still in the wagon. ^{His wife} ~~She~~ stood up and emptied her six-shooter at the three men in the rear. No one returned the fire so she reloaded and repeated the performance. The men were still too occupied trying to locate the exact position of Snyder in the creek bottom.

The woman jumped from the wagon and went to talk to her invisible husband. When she had again returned to the wagon and was popping away

with her pistol, Rooks had figured where the husband was concealed. He shifted his position and paused a moment to examine what was before him. Then he shouted:

"I'm going to get the bugger right now."

Advancing his rifle before him, Rooks stalked from his shelter. There was a report and puff of smoke from the trees further up stream and Rooks fell to the ground.

Sam had seen the puff of smoke and learned the exact position of Snyder which his wife had before concealed by talking to him where he wasn't. Sam shifted to a shelter that commanded Snyder so well that the latter had to stand with his feet in the icy creek and could not advance his gun for a shot without exposing himself.

The advance possemen had heard the shooting in the meantime. Snyder was surrounded and Callo-way called on him to surrender. With the chance of death either way, but most certain if he did not surrender, Snyder called out that if Sam would leave his position, he would give up. Sam edged backward out of rifle shot and the two Snyders laid

down their arms and were taken away.

Johnny Rooks was dead with a bullet through his head. Sam, Nichols, and Joe Legg remained behind to "lay-out" the remains of their neighbor in one of the rooms of the Bellmap cabin. Legg grumbled and cursed the Snyders throughout the work, complaining that no opportunity had been given him to drill "that God-damned coyote." As they were finishing their work over the corpse, Legg burst out;

"Damn it, I say, old Rice ought to be lynched for giving the old woman back her gun!"

"Christ, turn it off can't you! By the time we've planted Johnny six feet into the hardpan you wont want to dig any more graves for a while."

XI

CITY OF CODY

Two men in big Stetson hats sat on their high heels before the frame livery barn. One rolled and lit a cigarette as they idly watched the occasional riders pass and listened to the noise from the main street.

"What you going to do with four teams, Studhorse?"

"Haul water to the new hotel 'till they tell me to quit. That little tank they put in there won't hold enough for the chasers they'll push across the bar tonight. The city dudes and their calico will have to wash their beautiful white bodies two or three times tonight -- just like they do back home in Chicago and New York. It'll take a lot of water, Tex."

"How about getting a load of baggage from the depot before you start hauling water? Those city people will bring more trunks than they'll ever be able to strap on behind the coaches."

"Sure, I'll get a load if you'll keep my extra teams where they can bail hay and oats till I need them."

Across the back lots behind the stores of the main street another cowboy approached the two sitters. He wore a new ten-gallon hat, buckskin vest over his red shirt, and polished riding boots showed below his blue jeans. Tex greeted the newcomer:

"It's time you were getting around, Neversweat. You'll have to put cockleburs under your horses tails if you roll that "Concord" over to the depot in time to meet the Colonel's special train."

"If I can get those broncs hitched in, they won't need nothing to make them move."

The two got off their heels to help Neversweat with his teams. They succeeded in getting the four excited broncs hitched where they belonged without getting kicked through the coach. Neversweat climbed unto the high driver's seat, took the lines from Tex, and let off the brake. The four green horses pranced,

strained and backed, twisted and tried to get out of their harness. Suddenly they lined out down the street at a gallop.

The two men left before the stable, watched the swaying coach approach the corner of the street to the depot.

"The drinks are on me if he makes it," said Tex.

They saw Neversweat on his swaying seat put his weight on the foot-brake. The hind wheels of the empty coach locked and skidded. It rocked and swerved. Just in time the horses took the corner and the coach followed on two wheels.

"I'll collect now, if you don't mind, before I start haulin'." Studhorse raised his voice, "Hey Pistol."

"Whatten hell do you want?" replied a youngster who had been watching the exhibition from the sunny side of a log cabin across the street.

"Hitch my two teams into that wagon. Watch them till I get back and you can throw your outfit on my big paint this afternoon. Might as well show the city dudes and calico what a real cowboy looks like."

"Go to hell, you damn mile skinner," answered the youngster as he rose and tried not to hurry into the barn after the horses.

The two men trailed off across the back lots to the main street. After a suitable interval they returned. Studhorse climbed into the wagon and took up the lines.

"I believe Pistol would look pretty good in my new chaps, Tex. If he gets himself shot up this afternoon, he might as well die pretty," and the wagon rattled off towards the depot.

Studhorse turned past the wide veranda of the new stone hotel resplendent with flags and bunting. People were already gathering on veranda and board walks in front of it to welcome the coaches from the depot. The main street that crossed the depot road here was full of mounted cowboys and lined with horses tied to the hitching racks in front of the false-fronted stores and saloons. Dust rose in clouds through the still November sunshine.

The sun always shone on Bill Cody, the wagoner reflected as he continued on his way.

Buffalo Bill was coming home with a bunch of big bugs to dedicate his own hotel in his own town, so November had turned to Indian Summer to welcome him. The whole town and country would welcome him and drink his liquor. Good enough, but here was one bohunk that was going to stay sober and work. Water was a dollar a barrel today and he was going to haul it till they cried quits. He'd made enough to fix up his ranch the way he wanted it.

Thus musing the driver came to the edge of the level bench on which the town rested. He looked across the deep cut of the river to the depot where the crowds were milling around. No train yet in sight on the benchland that ran away to the east. Studhorse locked his brakes and squeaked down the long double hill to the river. The whistle of Colonel Cody's train blasted somewhere down towards the McCulloch peaks.

It was a damn shame, the driver mused, that the town and railroad couldn't get together on the same side of the river. Just the natural cussedness and orneriness of human beings kept them apart. The town of Cody figured it was important enough with

its street of shacks so that the Burlington would take the railroad across the river to it. And the Burlington was sure that the town would move its shacks over to the railroad. They would probably never get together now that Cody had built his new hotel.

The shouts and shots of the welcoming mob could be heard as the train puffed into the station. Studhorse pulled over the edge of the bench, off the main road to wait for the crowd to leave. Horses, men and women on foot, frontiersmen, and elegant eastern ladies (calico, Studhorse called them) milled about the deserted train and the coaches nearby. Roars of recognition, shots from the many six-shooters mingled with the excited squeals of the genteel ladies to whom all this was new and rather alarming.

Stud watched Neversweat's coach which was already filling with notables from the train. His passengers were going to have one ride they would never forget in their lives. With all the cowboys galloping back and forth, God only knew what was going to happen when the two men who were holding the lead horses let go. Neversweat would never know

until it was all over whether his broncs would cross the bridge at the bottom of the hill, or take it into their heads to jump off into the river instead.

The horsemen and coaches were forming for the parade to town. Colonel Cody mounted his white horse. Resplendent in his shining buckskins, his long white hair and whiskers gleaming in the sun, he waved his big hat and led off. His quick eye picked out acquaintances everywhere.

"Hello, Studhorse Charley, how's the Missus?" he called to the man sitting in the freight wagon.

"Fine, Colonel, glad to see you back home."

That was what everyone liked about the Colonel. He could round up a bunch of big city bankers and royalty from the other side of the ocean, but he was never too big nor too busy to call everyone he had ever met by name.

Studhorse finished loading the pile of baggage and pulled out to the edge of the bench. He stopped to set his brakes and roll a cigarette. Half a mile away, as the crowd flew, was the town of Cody straggling a little way along its wide, level bench of Buffalo Bill. The new hotel raised

its second story above the mottled assortment of cabins and shacks around it. These lesser buildings reached a few blocks on each side of the hotel and then the featureless sagebrush benches stretched away west to the canyon and east to the McCulloch peaks. Behind the town a higher bench rose in a rock and sage brush slope.

As Studhorse started down the long hill to the river, he wondered how the town impressed the fine guests from the eastern cities. They probably wouldn't know how it looked till some time tomorrow. First they'd be too scared and busy holding onto their pitching seats in the coaches. After that they'd have to put in a lot of time soaking off the dust and lapping up the liquor. Good thing a lot of them wouldn't drink water as well as wash, or he'd never be able to keep the hotel's tank full of water.

After he had finally edged his teams through the milling madness before the hotel, he had to wait for another cart to get away from the rear door of the hotel. While he waited the excited talk of a couple on the end of the veranda

at his elbow came to him.

"I'm not going to stay another instant," said the woman, "and that's that. I'll wait right here 'till you get a rig to take us back to the station."

"Now, Clara," soothed the man, "there is no danger, I'm sure. Colonel Cody would have told us about it if there was."

"No he wouldn't. He's been too busy shaking hands with everyone and giving them drinks to notice that there's a smallpox epidemic here."

"Well, there's no point in going back to the depot now. There's no train out until tomorrow."

"I don't care. I'm going back; and if you won't take me, I'll go alone." Here the angry woman looked wildly around her and noticed the teamster sitting in his wagon almost at her elbow. She addressed him. "Mr. Driver, Will you take me back to the depot?"

"No, marm, I can't. I got to haul water."

"Well, can you tell me who will? Is the epidemic pretty bad? Are many people sick?"

"Ain't heard of no one being sick today, marm. There'll probably be plenty who don't feel too spry by this time tomorrow, though."

"There's cases of smallpox all over town."

"Maybe so, but I ain't heard of it."

"Why there are two houses right over there with red flags hanging on them!"

"Oh them, mam. They ain't smallpox. Them's for water. This town is just as far from the river as from the depot. Except in summer when the ditch 's running there ain't no water in the town. When a family gets out of water they just hang out a piece of red cloth, so that whoever's hauling water that day will leave them a barrel...Giddap there nig."

Back and forth, back and forth between hotel and river Studhorse drove his wagon of water barrels. Cool evening had turned to cold November night. Studhorse couldn't see how even twice the number of people who were dancing and drinking in Cody's honor could use so much water -- unless of course they were using it to cut the liquor that passed across the wide bar. He'd gone in the hotel kitchen to get a drink of coffee before he changed teams. He'd glanced into the bar room and seen the men lined up four and five deep waiting till they could get near enough to stretch their arm out and

get hold of another.

Still they yelled for more water, complaining that the water in the tank was getting lower and lower. What a night, what a night! It must be way past midnight and the main street was still full of people tramping the board walks and wild riders burning up the street. The town echoed to shouts and shots.

He needed some more coffee now. He should have kept his own teams for the night work. Then he could have slept between hotel and river. He had to watch these teams so they didn't wander off the road and upset the wagon and drown him in a barrel of water.

He worked his teams into the back alley past the extra band that was blaring into the night from the porch of the hotel. He yelled for his helper. After a few more yells, the back door opened and the hotel's jack-of-all-trades fell out:

"Wassamat?"

"Get up and help me get this water unloaded before I dump a barrel on you."

"Water, wa-ar, war-r-. . .," and old Ike was

sound asleep.

Stud dumped a bucket of water on the prostrate form but produced no reaction.

"What's the matter, Studhorse?" asked someone behind him.

"Who in . . . Oh it's you Micky. Want a good drunk to hang up over your bar for an advertisement?"

"Got too many there now. That's the trouble. What'll you take for a barrel of water?"

"Nothin,' I promised to haul for the hotel exclusive."

"Just one barrel, Studhorse, name your own price. We haven't washed a glass up at my place for two hours, and for the last hour we've been pouring chasers and gin out of the same bottle. It's too much for the boys, they ain't used to so much luxury. The roof's shot full of holes and now the boys are getting so unsteady they can't hit that. You wouldn't want there to be a general massacre, Stud, just on account of not having a barrel of water."

"Okay, okay, Mickey. Just help me take care of these barrels, and I'll take one up to your

place for a stack of sandwiches and a pot of hot black coffee."

Half an hour later Studhorse rose from his coffee, warm and again awake. He paused at the back door of Mickey's saloon to help a cowboy locate the wide open door. The boy finally managed to hit the opening, but tripped over the sill. He sprawled outside, flat into the pool of water, where Mickey and Stud had unloaded the barrel of water.

The drunk lay with his face in the muddy water for an instant. He rolled and sat up. He grasped the empty air, trying to catch his breath. His pipes blew clear and he cried:

"Run for the hills, men, the river's rising!"

Studhorse walked around the drowning man and untied his teams. If the river would rise the thousand feet to the Cody bench it would save him a lot of work, and quiet the wild riders galloping up and down the dusty main street between the rows of kerosene flames.

The river was worth more to him where it

was though. He was glad he'd stayed sober. His wife could have a new dress, and they could fix the house and corrals too, when he'd collected for this night's work.

He turned his horses down the dark road to the river. The blare of the two bands at the hotel died away as he dropped over the edge of the benchland. The intermittent shots of the wild men were the snaps of toy pistols. A faint light in the northern sky silhouetted the black bulk of Heart Mountain before him. A falling star left a little streak in the sky. The barrels in the jouncing wagon resounded hollowly as they rattled down the rough road to the river.

XII

THE FRONTIER

Z. H. Cruikshank had the best dude cabin on the Triple Z that summer -- four rooms and two baths for himself and party to spread out in. But even bathrooms, inner spring mattresses and Hudson Bay blankets were termed "roughing it" by Z.H. Accordin' to his tell, his house back on Long Island had so many rooms and servants that he couldn't remember their names. He could enumerate the servants by duties that they were supposed to perform and recite the expense of each to the nearest cent. Servants and expense were two of his worries.

He had a few others: taxes, dates of notes due him, stock and bond fluctuations. He even talked some times as if his best coupon clipping scissors were too dull and might stick right in the middle of a government bond and cause him a lot of further worry.

Z.H. seldom rode around the country that

he was paying about \$500 a week for himself and friends to see. But he could talk a pretty good horse-back ride with the wranglers, and since he seldom made them get the seats of their blue jeans off their high heels, they gave a sympathetic ear to all his troubles.

The old boy would have groused through the summer in idyllic discontent. He would have gone home in the early fall comparing his vacation on the South Fork with his winter's vacation at Miami and seeing little difference except that the houses in Miami were stucco instead of logs. But he lost his audience down at the corral. The Triple Z decided to take its guests on a round-up in the Buttonhole country over the week-end. All the wranglers went except the corral boss. He had to stay at the ranch to catch the horses for the few older folks, like Z.H., who stayed behind.

Unfortunately the corral boss was also a man who preferred to talk rather than listen. By the end of two days Cruikshank became a little incensed at the increasingly inattentive grunts of his one-man audience. He felt that his eloquent

encomiums on politics, the national debt, unappreciativeness of servants, and socialism in the colleges deserved more appreciation.

Desperate on the third day he ordered his horse and went for a ride. He cantered his cayuse down the graded auto road to Boulder Creek. Then from somewhere, buried under the cumulated strata of worries, the gipsy in old Z.H.rose, He turned his horse off the road down through the rough pasture.

Riding all alone through the pathless west, he discovered a vine-covered cabin tucked behind a hill in the shade of some cottonwoods. As he approached he saw an old, bent woman, hoisting a bucket of water from the well in her front yard. Flowers bloomed all around her. Her dog got up from the rear of the cabin, barked and then wagged out to meet the stranger.

"Good afternoon madam?" glowed Z.H.

"Hello," the little, work-worn woman answered, a slight smile crinkling her eyes.

"Lovely place you have here. Just what I've always wanted to own."

"I like it," stated the woman.

"Just what I've always wanted," repeated the man. "Beautiful flowers, big trees, and your own well right in the middle of the garden. Nothing tastes as good as water out of a well."

"Would you like a drink?"

"Why Yes, I would."

The man made no move to get off, so Mrs. Dahlgaard took the tin cup from the top of the well-cover, dipped it in the pail which she had just drawn and passed it to him across the garden fence. There Z.H. took it from her hand and drank luxuriously.

"Thank you madam. If I ride along this trail, will it take me back to the Triple Z?"

"Sure will."

"Well thank you again. I must be getting back. Good by."

"Good by."

Z.H. rode off over the hill. He was so filled with his picture of the ideal existence that he entertained the corral boss with it as soon as he got back to the ranch. He enlarged

on the original picture and described how the little pioneer woman must have come into the country as a bride. He mentioned the covered wagon and the nights of singing around the campfire.

The corral boss listened. He couldn't ignore this monologue as he had those about stocks and bonds and things he knew nothing of. And he got madder as he listened. He'd come into the country the same way --- not the same way that Z.H. described it, but the same way Mrs. Dahlgard had. It was too much. When Z.H. paused for breath, the old cowboy let loose.

"Listen, Z.H., someone's been stringing you. Old Mis' Dahlgard come into the valley from Red Lodge, Montana in a wagon with her husband. The trip was over 150 miles long and hers was no romantic covered wagon like you see in the movies with a tall handsome cowboy ridin' straight and tall alongside, ready to burst into song whenever the picture threatened to get monotonous.

"Hers was just a plain dumb wagon with no springs and four iron-shod wheels that bumped and shook like a buckin' horse when you got a headache.

She and her husband bumped and jerked over the rutted dried mud out of Red Lodge, pounded over the rocky flats along the Clark's Fork. They chewed dust for a day or two up the long bench behind Heart Mountain, and then chewed some down this side the Stinking Water -- which is called the Shoshone now, so as not to frighten the dudines away. Then for a couple or three days more they pounded over the boulders comin' up the South Fork.

"And I've not heard any one tell about old man Dahlgaard putting in his evenings twanging a guitar so that his missus could sing a love song to the full moon. These guitar twanging pioneers started from Hollywood in the nineteen twenties, if I remember right. They sure never had any in Red Lodge in the eighties and nineties.

"The Dahlgaards finally got up here and homesteaded that rock pile of theirs below the Triple Z. By putting in 365 fifteen-hour days a year they managed, before the old man was killed, to raise a few vegetables and enough hay for their stock, a couple dozen range and milk cows, and three

sons. His death was as hard as his life too,-- got pitched off a sulky plow into a pile of rocks when his team of broncs ran away. We buried him in six feet of hardpan in a grave that took ten of us half a day to dig.

"One of the sons does the heavy work around the place now. That leaves the widow with nothin' to do but look after the milk cows and chickens, keep her flowers and vegetables watered, cook three squares a day, and in the summer laundry as a sort of cash crop. The laundry is all the sheets, towels and personal duds from this and two other dude ranches. I've seen so many sheets and towels hung out behind her house that the grove looked just like winter -- drifted full of snow.

"She does it all by hand, no electricity, no water out of a faucet. Why a couple of summers back we had to drive through her places in coaches to get to the main road on account of cloudbursts taking out a bridge. Drivin' home nights from visitin' round with the neighbors we'd find her work lamp still burnin' in the kitchen. And one

night after a big brawl when we went through their place just before dawn, we saw that same light wink on just as we topped the little hill between here 'n there."

The corral boss had gotten it all off his chest, and talking that long at one stretch sort of embarrassed him. He got up and stumped across the corral to get his horse and "turn out" the cavvy for the night.

Old Z.H. wasn't quite the same man after that. He'd get launched on one of his old tirades and be going strong when all of a sudden his eye would fall on the corral boss, or he'd find himself looking in the direction of Dahlgaard's. Then his spiel would sort of trail off like a run-down victrola. He'd sit a minute and then get his horse and ride off alone somewhere.

He went off at the end of the summer and nobody heard anything from him till the next spring. Then the Triple Z got a letter that he was sending out two of his stenographers for a vacation, and enclosed ^{was} a check. The boys got pretty excited till the two gals showed up and proved to be the kind that do the work.

The old gals did a lot of riding and always wanted to see the different ranches. The boys never thought of taking them down to Dahlgard's place though. But one morning when there was nothing else to do, one of them took some of her duds down for a ride, asking the corral boss the way to the "laundry."

When she got back she told the corral boss why they had been so curious about seeing all the ranches. It seems that Z.H. had had a big enlargement made of a snapshot he took of Dahlgard's cabin, and hung it on the wall of his private office where he saw it every time he looked up from his desk. The old girl said that Z.H. would get all steamed up and roaring like a bear, and then his eyes would fall on that picture and he would sort of sizzle down and in a minute be the best guy to work for in the world.

She claimed that picture was worth more to the office force than a raise in pay. But one thing she couldn't understand. Why had old Z.H. taken the picture when a big wash was hanging behind the cabin?

The corral boss slowly built himself a

cigarette and lighted it.

"That's probably to remind him that old man Dahigaard couldn't play the guitar," he said, looking into space.

an

Yellowstone River

Billings

Red Lodge
1878 (?)

Proctor Gap

Big Horn Canyon

Clark

Yellowstone
Park
1872

Heart Mt.

Water

Stinking

Cody

Cedar Mt.

Ishawood

South Fork

Greyball River

BIG
HORN
BASIN

Big Horn Mountains

Buffalo

Grosvent

Snake

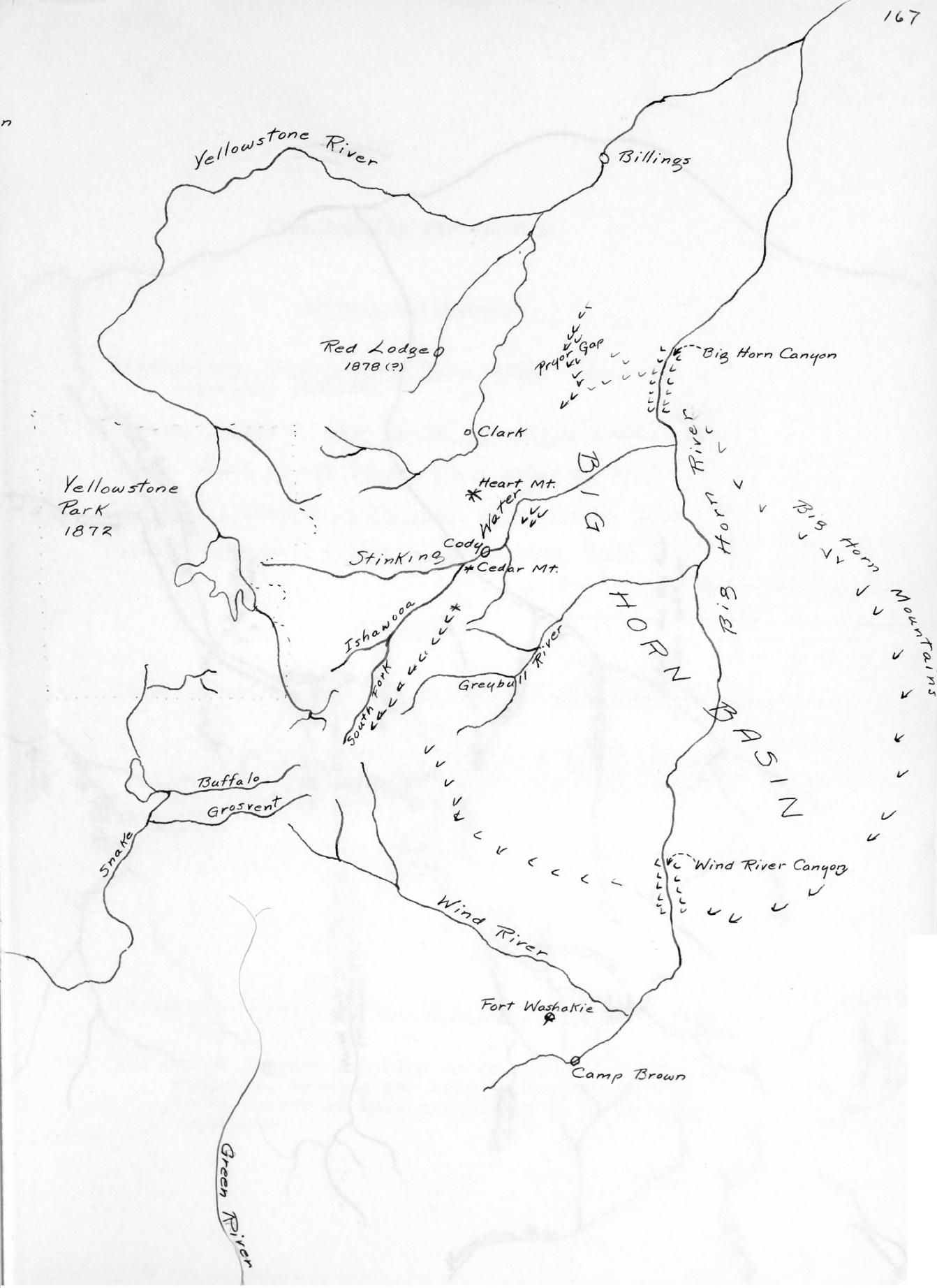
Wind River Canyon

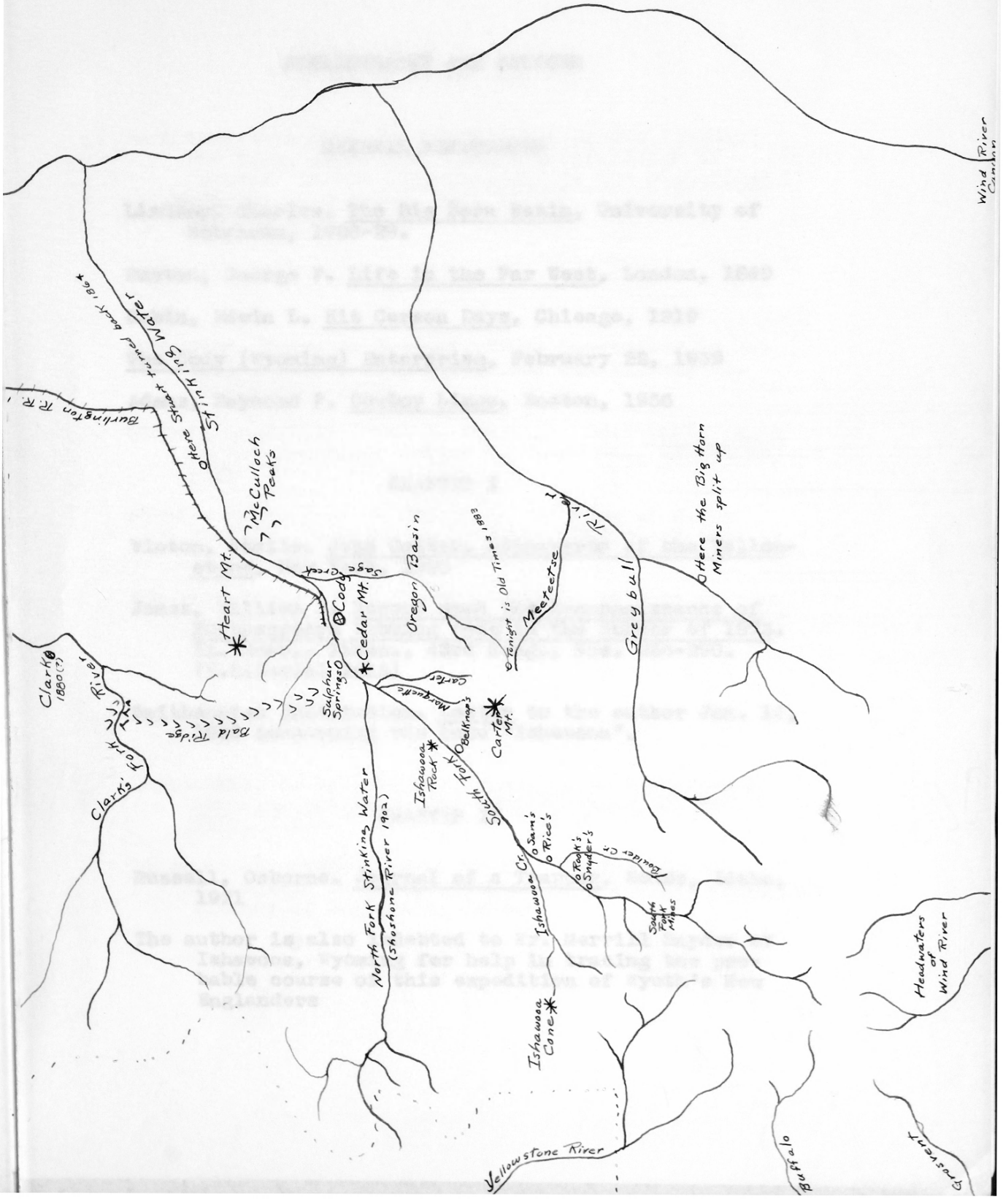
Wind River

Fort Washakie

Camp Brown

Green River





BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SOURCES

GENERAL REFERENCES

Lindsay, Charles. The Big Horn Basin, University of Nebraska, 1928-29.

Ruxton, George F. Life in the Far West, London, 1849

Sabin, Edwin L. Kit Carson Days, Chicago, 1919

The Cody (Wyoming) Enterprise, February 22, 1939

Adams, Raymond F. Cowboy Lingo, Boston, 1936

CHAPTER I

Vinton, Stallo. John Colter, Discoverer of the Yellowstone, New York, 1926

Jones, William A. Report upon the Reconnaissance of Northwestern Wyoming Made in the Summer of 1873.
Ex. Docs., 1888., 43rd Cong., Nos. 255-290.
(U.S. Serial 1615)

Smithsonian Institution. Letter to the author Jan. 14, 1940 concerning the name "Ishawoca".

CHAPTER II

Russell, Osborne. Journal of a Trapper, Boise, Idaho, 1921

The author is also indebted to Mr. Merrill Snyder of Ishawoca, Wyoming for help in tracing the probable course of this expedition of Wyeth's New Englanders

CHAPTERS III AND IV

Hamilton, William T. My Sixty Years on the Plains,
New York, 1905. and "Trapping Expedition of
1848-49" in the Contributions to the Historical
Society of Montana, Vol. VII.

CHAPTER V

Maynadier, Henry R. Journal, "From Sweetwater to the
Yellowstone". 40 Cong. 2Sess. Sen Ex.Doc. 77,
(U.S.Serial 1317)

Stuart, Granville (Paul C. Phillips, Ed.) Forty Years
on the Frontier, Arthur H. Clark Co., Cleveland,
1925

Stuart, Granville. "A Memoir of the Life of James
Stuart", Contributions to the Historical Society
of Montana, Vol.I

The Inscription on the rock mentioned in this chapter
was reported to the author by Mr. Albert Hartung
of Ishawooa, Wyo.

CHAPTER VI

Kuykendall, W. L. Frontier Days: A True Narrative of
Striking Events on the Western Frontier, Denver
1917.

Diary of an unknown member of the Big Horn Basin
Expedition in the possession of the State Historical
Library of Montana at Helena.

CHAPTER VII

Cook, George. Report of Brigadier General George Cook.
Sen. Ex. Doc. 3Sess. 45th Cong. Vol. 2 (Serial 1843)

Price, Capt. George F. Across the Continent with the
Fifth Cavalry, New York 1883

Sturgis, S.D. Report of the Secretary of War, Ex. Doc.
2Sess. 45th Cong. Vol. 2. (Serial 1794)

Wheeler, Col. Homer W. Buffalo Days, Indianapolis, 1923

CHAPTER VIII

Kelly, Luther S. (M.M. Quaife, Ed.) Yellowstone Kelly,
Yale University Press, 1926

Back Trailing on the Old Frontier, "Yellowstone Kelly"
Great Falls, Montana, 1922

Mr. Merrill Snyder, Ishawooa, and Mrs. Eoa C. Brown,
Cody, Wyo., are authorities for the finding of
an 1872-model Winchester rifle and the skeleton
of a man near the Ishawooa Rock.

CHAPTER IX

Banfield, W. H. "Pack Mule Service", Billings (Mont.)
Times, May 16, 1929.

Deane, Josh. "Autobiography", Cody Enterprise, Sept.--
Dec. 1938

Lindsay, Charles. "John W. Deane, Wyoming Pioneer"
Annals of Wyoming, Vol. IX, No. 3, Jan. 1933
and The Big Horn Basin, Lincoln, Neb., 1928-29

Lusk, Frank S. "My Association with Wyoming", Quarterly Bulletin, State of Wyoming Historical Department, Vol. II, Nos. 1&2, Cheyenne, 1924

Interviews with Mr. Roe Avant, March 18, 1940.

CHAPTER X

The Otto (Wyoming) Courier, April 12, 1896, "The Murder at Marquette".

Interviews with Mr. Sam Aldrich, Mr. Blen Holman, Mr. Merrill Snyder, and Mr. Walter Kepford, March 17-18, 1940.

CHAPTER XI

The Cody Enterprise, "Buffalo Bill Birthday Edition", February 22, 1939.