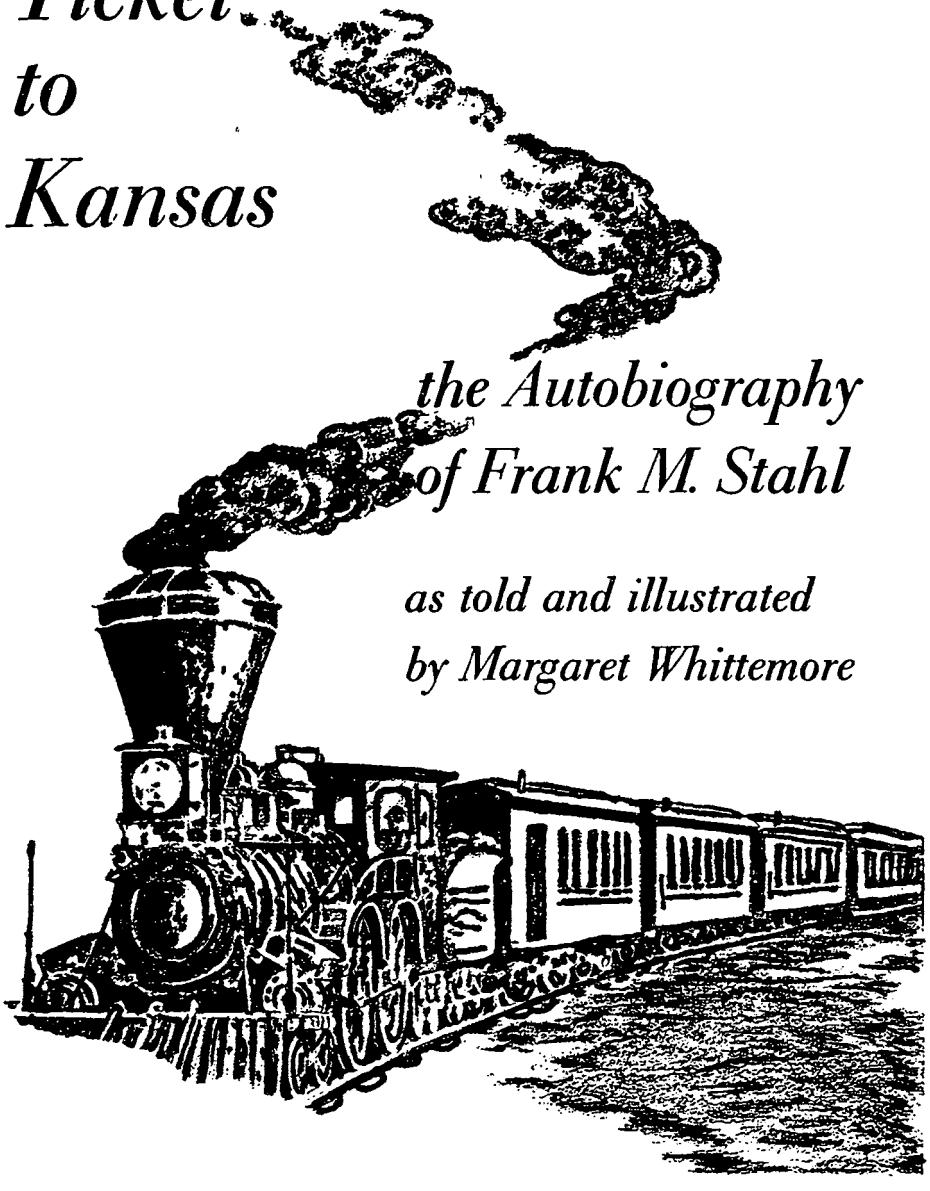
One-Way Ticket to Kansas

the Autobiography of Frank M. Stahl

as told and illustrated by Margaret Whittemore



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PREFACE

From that day in 1857 when Frank M. Stahl determined to help make Kansas a free state, his life was one stirring adventure after another. His colorful career, marked by daring and quick wits, spanned nearly a century—a critical era in the development of the West, when Indians, gold seekers, soldiers, and cowboys peopled the plains. It was due to the courage and vision of pioneers such as he that homes were established on the prairies.

William E. Connelley, former secretary of the Kansas State Historical Society, declared in his book, *Kansas and Kansans,* "If all the events, circumstances, and movements with which Frank M. Stahl has been identified should be written out in detail, the result would be a Kansas history, perhaps as complete, and certainly as interesting, as could be written with one life as the central feature."

The story related here is pieced together for the most part from Mr. Stahl's oral accounts and typewritten notes. Wherever possible his exact wording is used. The reminiscences he put into rhyme are quoted verbatim. In assembling background material, the compiler received generous help from many sources. Mrs. Eva Meredith, a daughter of Mr. Stahl, shared her personal recollections, as well as family photographs. Fuller information concerning members of the Simerwell family came from Miss Bessie Moore and Mrs. Lena Baxter Schenck, great-granddaughters of the Reverend Robert Simerwell, who played an important part in this narrative. Dr. E. B. Trail of Berger, Missouri, an authority on Missouri River steamboat history, gave unstinted assistance and loaned photographs from this valuable collection.

Others whose help is gratefully acknowledged are Mr. and Mrs. William L. Smith; Professor Samuel A. Johnson

of Harris Teachers College, St. Louis; Orville W. Taylor of the Arkansas History Commission, Little Rock; and reference librarians in the Little Rock Public Library, the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, and the Kansas State Historical Society in Topeka. A special word of appreciation is due Dr. Clyde K. Hyder, Editor of the University of Kansas Press, for his scholarly advice and painstaking assistance in steering the work to its completion.

—M. W.

Contents

Photographic Illustrations

I *Seven Times One Are Seven*

THE LITTLE LOG CABIN where I first saw the light of day on May 23, 1841, stood at the edge of some woods in western Ohio. It was one of many rude dwellings that made up the town of New Harrison in Darke County. A small section had been cleared of walnut, oak, hackberry, beech, ash, and hickory trees to make room for the pioneer settlement, but cultivated fields were still thickly dotted with stumps.

In addition to farming sixty acres of land, my father, Michael Stahl, ran a cooper shop and made shoes. Into his eight children, of whom I was the oldest, he tried to instill something of his own courage, industry, and independence. A couplet which he often quoted ran something like this:

"The work of the world is done by few;
God grant that a part be done by you."

His father, a native of Germany, bequeathed to his descendants the solid surname, meaning "steel," as well as the firmness and strength of character the name signifies.

My mother was a staunch helpmate. Born of Scotch and Irish parents, she had spent her early girlhood among the Pennsylvania Dutch, and spoke German as well as English. Although not a "professing Christian" in those days, as my father was, she was in perfect agreement with his views on morals and proper conduct. Both were honored and respected in their community. When the Women's Crusade came our way in the early fifties,

Mother became an ardent member of their Praying Band, and could always be counted upon to fight for the right.

On the other side of the pike road that bisected our town was Abe Miller's blacksmith shop, where rough farming implements were made. Abe could do anything, from sharpening plow points to replacing metal tires on wagon wheels. As I watched him place a thick iron rod in the fire and hammer it into a horseshoe, later tacking it on the horse's hoof, I made up my mind that I, too, would be a blacksmith.

Unless, perhaps, a soldier's life was preferable! We had June training days when the men gathered one hundred strong and drilled for hours. They made a dazzling picture parading in their smart uniforms fastened with shiny brass buttons, and arrayed in hats adorned with tall white plumes. Could anything be finer than to flaunt such a plume?

My first real accomplishment was "rattling the bones." I was able at the age of seven to twirl and click two polished calf ribs between my fingers in quite a professional manner. Our hotel keeper encouraged fiddlers from far and near to use his wide paved sidewalk for evening concerts, and I often sat and rattled the bones in time to the music.

It was during our war with Mexico over the Texas question that recruiting officers marched up the pike into New Harrison to the tune of fife and drums. The stirring music set my blood a-tingling, and I pranced along beside the soldiers, clicking the bones. When the men stopped to rest, one of them clapped me on the shoulder, saying, "You're quite an expert with those bones, Sonny. Let's see what you can do with the snare drum."

I beat out such a vigorous rat-a-tat-tat that the officers all shouted, "Bravo!" and insisted I must go along to war with them.

"You are too little to carry a gun," one soldier explained with a wink at the others, "but if you beat time with the drum, it will help the rest of us fight that much better."

Excitement was in the air. Some of the men from our town were signing up, among them my uncle. I tugged eagerly at his sleeve and finally attracted his attention.

"I'm going along with you," I said.

He was busy with his own affairs, but I heard him reply, "That's fine."

Quick as a flash I ran back to the house to tell my parents, but before I reached the corner of our yard, the sound of fife and drums again filled my ears. Turning, I saw the men starting off in the other direction. Were they marching away, leaving me behind? On they went without so much as a backward glance at the would-be drummer boy standing abjectly in the middle of the road. As the music faded in the distance, I drowned my disappointment in a flood of tears.

From Father's cobbler shop came the steady tap, tap, tap of the hammer. I was sure of finding comfort there. Father was busy at his bench, but he put down his tools and listened attentively as I poured out my tale of woe.

"In order to be a good soldier," he said, "you must learn to do many things besides beating a drum. Perhaps this is a good time to start."

He took the old Blue-backed Speller from a shelf and propped it up on his workbench where I could see the words as he pronounced them. That was the beginning of daily lessons punctuated by the rhythmic strokes of the

cobbler's hammer. Reading was comparatively easy for me, and before long I could repeat without prompting all the rules of Kirkham's Grammar. When some of Dickens' stories appeared as serials in Horace Greeley's *New York Tribune* and the *Columbian* of Cincinnati, I could hardly wait for each new chapter to appear. Arithmetic, with its multiplication tables and decimal points, was more of a challenge, but I gradually mastered it.

Father was a good scholar for his times—far above the average. He lined off the hymns in church and even taught singing school. The song-books were wide, allowing several to look on together. Each note of the scale had a different shape or shading from any of the others. "Buckwheat notes," we called them.

During the three winter months of each year I attended a subscription school. There were two of these—one a mile east and the other a mile west of our house. Each was built of logs and warmed by a large wood-burning stove near the center. A long board served as a desk for the writing classes, and seats consisted of crude slabs from the sawmill set onto wooden legs. They had no backs.

Most of the pupils took noonday lunches in baskets or pails. A large woods sow had the habit of slipping into the east school, which stood at the edge of heavy timber. Grabbing the handle of a basket in her jaws, she would dash through the open door with her stolen meal.

After one of these raids, an older boy suggested a means of trapping the thief. He tied a long heavy cord to the door, and we took turns watching and waiting outside during recess or before school took up in the morning.

At last the sow put in her appearance. The teacher had not yet arrived, and we children were all out on the

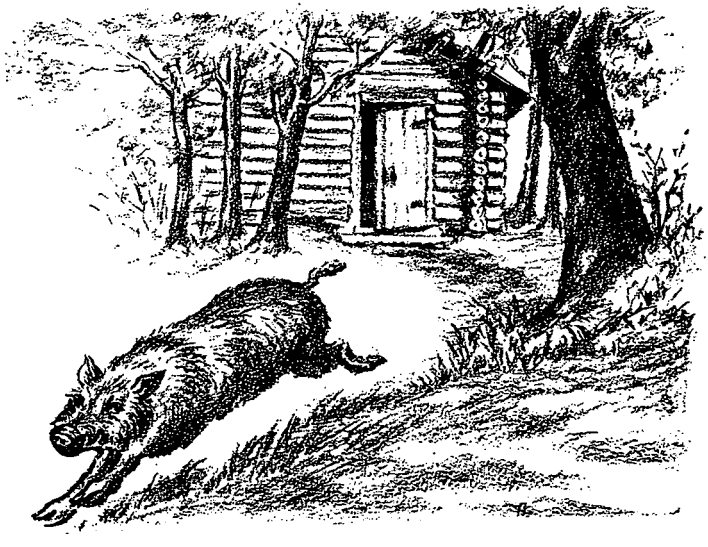
grounds when she ran into the building. Someone pulled the string; the heavy door swung on its wooden hinges and closed with a bang. The sow was ours!

Or was she?

Three of us climbed in through the windows onto the writing desk, out of reach of our indignant captive. She was a raw-boned creature, six feet long and three feet high, and weighed at least four hundred pounds. She ran round and round, overturning benches, scattering books, spilling ink, and breaking slates.

"Keep her going!" shouted the big boys outside. "Don't let her bite you!"

Just then the teacher appeared and opened the door. The frightened sow tore past him and headed straight for the woods. She forgot in her haste to pick up a basket, nor did she ever return for another.



II *Woods and Streams*

THE HABITS OF MOST of our wild animals were familiar to me. Deer were common; also porcupines, and small furred animals, such as the black and grey fox, raccoon, opossum, mink, muskrat, and groundhog. I have counted as many as one hundred squirrels at a time running along a rail fence at the side of our wheat field next to the woods. They were fond of beech and hickory nuts and would follow us, scolding and chattering, when we had nutting parties. (We always gathered six or eight bushels of hickory nuts and a bushel or two of hazelnuts to eat during the winter.) The squirrel's curiosity is often his undoing, in case a hunter is around. Two minutes of quiet is all he can endure. Then he cautiously shows his head around the trunk of a tree or over a fork. Generally he sees or hears you before you see him.

There were many wild turkeys and ducks in season; and the drumming pheasant could be heard, but not often seen. It was shy and quick on the wing. Flocks of wild pigeons, now extinct, had a regular roosting place to which they would fly in the evening. Each flock must have been half a mile long and equally wide.

Somehow I could never tell the track of a coon from that of a groundhog until I trailed it home. The groundhog had two entrances to its burrow with a pile of dirt at the front. Underneath there were yards of tunnels with a nest of soft grasses. The coon, of course, never went into the ground, and was a night prowler, seldom showing himself during the day. As a rule he started on his nocturnal expeditions early in the evening, leaving his home in some large tree.

One night two other boys and I set out after coons, taking a large white bulldog and my dog Carlo, who was a brindle with just enough hound in him to follow a scent keenly. He was a banner coon dog and the fastest trailer in our parts. The pair followed the lane a short quarter of a mile. Before reaching the woods, however, they came back, and try as we would, we couldn't send them out again. It was clear that they were frightened, with ears up and tails down.

As we neared the high rail fence separating our field from the woods, we stopped short. Standing on his hind feet with his head over the fence was a panther.

"Let's light the lantern," I whispered.

We were carrying a perforated tin cylinder, some six inches in diameter, that served as a lantern. With the tallow candle in the center giving a faint glimmer of light, we retreated at a fast walk, the dogs staying very close. When we reached the barnyard, a hundred yards from the house, we broke into a dead run. I stumbled over a stump, but was soon on my feet again. Three breathless boys and two panting dogs burst into the kitchen, grateful for their narrow escape.

A few weeks later the panther gave me another scare. This time I was alone fishing, a good quarter of a mile from home. The back water from the dam was on our farm. It was warm, cloudy, and dark, an ideal night for catfish. Fish were biting and I had a nice string. Just across from where I sat a large tree had fallen and lay partly in the water. All at once a dreadful scream rent the air—a sound that once heard will never be forgotten. I have heard it many times since in Colorado, where these catlike animals are known as mountain lions.

If ever a boy's hair stood on end, mine did that night. I got home all right, but without my nice string of fish. I had no further dealings with the panther. Its lair was believed to be in an old windbreak several miles away.

Our Methodist preacher had a passion for hunting and I often went with him. I would sit patiently through the midweek prayer-meeting until the last hymn was sung. As soon as the congregation left, he picked up his gun and I whistled for Carlo. Then off we went to the woods, seldom returning empty-handed.

Late in the fall hunting matches were common, with thirty or more men choosing sides. The wager was a supper to be paid for by the losing party. It was a feather in your cap to be a good marksman. The men sometimes amused themselves at public sales by shooting at a target placed against a tree. Since all bullets were molded, the lead was an important item, and the winning marksman had the privilege of taking it from the bark where it was embedded.

There was one delicate feat that only a very few could perform. From a distance of twenty or twenty-five yards an attempt was made to snuff a lighted candle without touching the taper itself with the bullet. The best time for such a contest was a still dark night when no breeze was stirring, and the favorite spot was under the bridge spanning Greenville Creek.

This stream provided plenty of sport for the fisherman. Our best fish was rock bass—a flat, light-colored wide-mouthed scale fish, weighing from three to five pounds. The yellow perch was another good biter, as were the white perch, sunfish, catfish, silversides, and chubs. The

common large-mouthed bullheads were caught at night or when the water was riled and muddy.

The pike was in a class by itself, preferring still water. As a rule it lay motionless near the surface, seldom more than four inches below. Its movement was a glide of lightning-like swiftness, rather than a swim. There were three ways to catch it—by shooting, snaring, and hooking; and it made choice eating.

Every three or four miles along the creek there was a dam with a mill for grinding grain and sawing lumber. Above the back water of these dams other temporary dams were made of rock or slats in the springtime, forming an open place about four feet in width. Here, where the water ran swiftest, we would set a funnel net with the mouth downstream, in the hope of catching fish headed toward the shallow upstream water to spawn. If a fish once got into the net, there was no way of escape. I have taken as much as one hundred pounds of fish out of the net in a morning. They were mostly suckers that cannot be caught with hook and line. The bass is a good jumper and seldom gets into the net. If a muskrat entangles himself in its meshes, he cuts his way out and the fish play "Follow the leader."

The large bodies of still water behind the dams made excellent skating rinks in winter. I was the proud owner of the finest skates in the village, a gift from Father. They were steel-guttered with turned-up runners topped by brass acorns. I flew over the ice, cutting figure eights and letters, but I could never whirl when going full speed nor skate backwards like the older boys.

Sometimes we chose sides for shinny matches, the goals being sixty or eighty rods apart. The two captains skated

to the center to start the game. Players on each side had sticks with crooks on the end. The ball was tossed into the air.

"High buck or low doe!" we shouted.

If one of the captains struck the ball as it fell, it was "high buck," and the ball was in play. If he missed, "low doe" got the ice lick. Then twenty or more skaters rushed for the ball, sometimes bunching and falling, but seldom getting hurt. It was an exciting sport and put a glow into our cheeks.

III *Farm Work*

My youth was not spent entirely in play. I learned early how to handle the wood-saw and axe, and by the time I was twelve, I could do most of the farm chores. Our crops were chiefly corn, wheat, oats, and hay. The orchard produced peaches, pears, plums, and many varieties of apples. I can still shut my eyes and tell by the taste or smell the difference between Maiden's Blush, Winesap, Sheep-nose, Bellflower, Seek-no-further, and Rambo. Wild plums and grapes, blackberries, raspberries, and gooseberries could be had for the picking.

Timothy grass and clover provided good hay to be cut with the scythe and gathered with a rake. Farming tools were crude. Shallow furrows for corn were laid out in rows across the field with a one-horse shovel plow. Then we were ready for planting. The same rig crossed the first furrows, two men dropping the corn, three grains at a time, at the intersections. Then two men or women with hoes covered the seed. Five men with a horse could plant six acres in a day, if they kept at it. Cultivating was done with a single shovel plow drawn by one horse. The rows were perfectly checked and could be plowed one way as well as the other.

A common custom was to top the corn, while the leaves were green, cutting the stalk just above the ear. This provided winter feed for cattle and left a beautiful field, showing nothing but ears.

Fallow ground made the ideal seed bed for wheat. Seed was sown broadcast and harrowed in. Our only implements for harvesting were the cradle and sickle. Profes-

sional cradlers took great pride in their work, and usually expected their employer to treat with a bottle of whisky. Father was the only man in our community who refused to serve intoxicants to guests or helpers.

One day we had four cradlers working in the field, swinging in unison and leaving the wheat in straight rows on the ground with even butts. I followed behind with a rake, bringing the stalks into bundles for the binder. From time to time the men exchanged a few words in muffled tones. Ill-humor was written on their faces.

"We'll make Mike Stahl serve whisky, or else!" one man asserted sullenly.

The others mumbled their assent.

They put down their cradles and approached Father. "If you won't give us whisky, we'll leave the field," they announced.

The wheat was dead ripe and the need for cutting urgent, but Father was adamant. He would give them good cold water, but no alcoholic beverage. That was final.

The men left in a huff and things looked black. Mother hurried down from the house in her sunbonnet. "I'll help you," she said. "We can finish the harvesting ourselves."

Father took the cradle, while Mother and I raked and bound. We worked till evening and were at it again early the next morning. Immediately after lunch, to our great surprise, the four cradlers returned.

"We'll finish the field for you," they said, and took over the job. They even praised Father later for his firm stand on the liquor question. This incident gave me the courage to hold to my convictions later in life, when faced with similar problems.

After harvesting came the threshing. Wheat sheaves,

unbound and laid in a circle on the threshing floor, were piled about two feet deep with heads all pointing one way. Four horses then trampled out the grain, going against the heads.

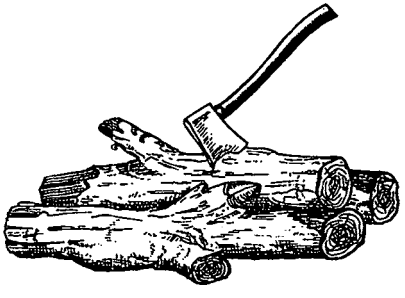
Another method was the flail process. It was a real distinction to be a good flailer. Two nicely dressed sticks, one about seven feet long, and the other, four feet, were tied together end to end, with a strong leather thong. The longer stick was the handle, while the short one was the beater. Two experts, working together, would alternate their blows, striking the same place on the sheaves in rapid succession without touching each other's flails.

Every farmer had a small flock of sheep to provide wool for warm winter clothing. Washing the sheep in a nearby creek was a gala occasion, and again called for whisky. No one touched liquor, however, when Mike Stahl's sheep were involved. After washing came the shearing. Then the wool was washed again and taken to the mill and carded.

There was a spinning wheel in every household. Mother was a good spinner, twisting and winding the thread on spindles by applying her foot to the treadle. When the spindle was full, she rolled off the thread onto a reel until there was enough for a skein. The skeins were taken to a weaver who turned out all the cloth, bedspreads, and blankets we needed. By 1854 machinery had supplanted the work of the hand loom.

Mother made all of our clothes, using wool for winter and linen for summer. Linen thread came from flax grown on the farm. A certain bleaching process, known only to her, left the linen snow-white, ready for towels, sheets, and tablecloths.

Father's skill as a cobbler stood him in good stead. Footwear in those days was all custom-made to fit the individual. Each farmer in our neighborhood had his own leather for the purpose stored in our shop. After butchering his beef, the farmer had taken the hide to the tanner on the south edge of town, who did the work on the fifty-fifty plan. It required one year to tan a hide. By watching Father at work at his cobbler's bench, I early learned the trade and could make a fairly respectable pair of shoes or boots by the time I was thirteen.



IV *Making Barrels*

WHEN FARM WORK WAS NOT TOO PRESSING, Father could always keep me busy in the cooper shop. His chief market for barrels was at Troy, Ohio, nearly thirty miles away. A first-class barrel brought from eighteen to twenty-five cents delivered, and much time and effort went into its construction.

First there was the trip to the woods, where we selected a large oak tree and cut it down. The branches were sawed into proper lengths and split into stave blocks. We hauled these in and piled them up near the shop to dry. They required much hollowing and planing by hand to give the proper bulge to the barrel. For the barrel heads we used shorter and wider blocks.

Hoops were of second-growth hickory, cut late in the fall when the sap stopped running and the bark was tight. I knew where the best hoop poles grew and would cut as many as I could carry, then drag them out to the woods road to be picked up later. Each pole was about nine feet long and an inch in diameter at the small end. Unlike the staves, these must be kept from drying. We stored them in a damp underground cellar until the time came to split and shave them and form them into hoops.

While the barrel was being set up, the staves were held in place by what we called tress-hoops. Because of the stiffness of the staves, it is quite a trick to bring them into proper shape, and many an amateur cooper lets his barrel fall apart while trying to place the last staves. The crude barrel now is fired over a cresset, an iron box with flaring bars, filled with burning shavings. This operation heats and even scorches the barrel until it is black. The purpose

is to soften the staves and prevent their breaking when forced into place by the hoops. The next step is leveling and inserting the head of the barrel, before replacing the tress-hoops with the hickory hoops. Ten hoops were required for a flour barrel.

Although I usually had Saturday afternoons free to do as I pleased, I remember one week-end late in the fall when Father was unusually busy in the shop, and kept me at the task of shaving hickory poles for hoops. He had six or seven other workmen employed. There was to be a shooting match for turkeys that afternoon, and I wanted to go.

Not long before this, Father had given me a new rifle, with a percussion lock, to take the place of an old flintlock musket with which I had practiced enough to pride myself on being a good shot. But Father strongly opposed my going to the turkey match, partly on the grounds that it was a game of chance.

"It's a game of science," I insisted. "To win you need a steady nerve and a good eye."

I kept teasing him to let me go. The workmen in the shop were all on my side. Father finally reached into his pocket and took out three dimes.

"Take these," he said, putting them into my hand. "Go shoot them away as quick as you can, and come back to your work."

I got my gun and ran for the shooting ground a quarter of a mile away. The owners of the turkeys were charging a dollar for each bird. Nine men had already paid ten cents for a shot when I added a dime. A mark was placed fifty yards away and each contestant was to take a single shot, the best one getting the bird.

When my rifle cracked, the crowd cheered. I had won! The same thing happened a second time. Two dimes gone, but I had two turkeys!

A third mark was set up under the same conditions. Nine of us had shot, and so far, my shot was the best—just half an inch from center. The tenth shot belonged to an old hunter named Haney, famed for his marksmanship. It was an exciting moment.

Haney's gun popped and he called the shot. If the shot was called before the result could be seen, the marksman was entitled to try again. Unfortunately, he spoke too soon, for he had just hit the bull's-eye.

"The turkey is mine," Haney said. But the judges ruled otherwise.

"You called the shot and must shoot once more."

This time he missed by two inches. I was again the winner.

The match was over for me. My money was gone, but I had three big turkeys. Several boys volunteered to help carry home the fowl, but I preferred to take them myself. Proud as a peacock, I trudged through town in the direction of Father's shop, bearing the spoils of victory.

When I entered the door, the workmen looked up in astonishment. They could hardly believe their eyes. I laid the turkeys down in front of Father.

"Where did you get those?" he demanded.

"Won them up at the shooting match," I exulted, and then gave the details.

Father had to admit that I must have displayed some skill as a marksman. "Still," he declared emphatically, "that is your last match!"

I was obedient and never again shot mark for myself

at a turkey match, but many a time I helped some of the old-timers whose eyes had grown dim. I do not recall that any of them ever regretted having risked a dime on my marksmanship.

V *The Whisky Bottle*

WHEN THE INTERURBAN RAILWAY between Dayton and Greenville, our county seat, began operating, the company reserved one day for free rides. Father decided to take me. We drove the six miles from New Harrison to Greenville in our buggy, accompanied by a neighbor, Mr. Martin. After hitching the horse on the common, we boarded the train. The ride to Dayton in the open car at what seemed like lightning speed was a thrilling experience.

On the return trip, we had the Dayton crowd, which included many factory workers. Too much liquor had made them rough and boisterous. Someone hit me on the arm with a half-filled whisky bottle, which Father seized and tossed from the train. The owner turned on him menacingly, but did not carry out his threats.

When we arrived at Dayton, I ran ahead to get the horse and buggy at the common. Two drunken men had started a fight, which quickly developed into a riot, with one hundred men or more on each side. It was Greenville versus Dayton. Hoop poles lying in piles on the grass made excellent cudgels.

By dodging this way and that I reached the buggy. Men were throwing rocks, one of which broke a spoke in the wheel. Father and Mr. Martin were helpless to do anything, and I saw little chance of escape. Two men were killed in the riot before officers of the peace eventually succeeded in restoring order. This experience made a deep impression on me.

On the way home, we three did some serious thinking.

"If the opportunity ever comes to you to strike at alcohol," Father said, "strike it hard!"

As a rule the pioneer men were square, helpful, and good-intentioned, but, as I have said, there was far too much drinking. When the tavern-keeper went wild with delirium tremens somebody always came for Father. No one else could control him, but he was plastic in Father's hands. His son persisted in daring me to fight, well knowing I had Father's disapproval. One day Father overheard his taunts, and said, "Thresh him, Frank." I gave him a good trouncing, with no afterclaps from Father this time.

The curse of drink finally ruined the boy's life. He had little chance in the face of his surroundings. His one redeeming quality was his fine penmanship. Father asked him to write some records in our family Bible, and I still enjoy looking at those beautifully formed letters.

At corn huskings, public sales, political meetings, and log rollings the bottle was always present, and friendly bouts all too often developed into drunken brawls. Log rollings took place in early spring when a piece of virgin forest was to be cleared. These were gala affairs, calling for neighborly co-operation. Before the appointed day, axe strokes bit into tough trunks and huge trees crashed to the ground. Workers cut the tops into stove wood and peeled off any white oak bark to be sold to the tanner. Then came the "niggering off" of the trunks by laying heavy limbs across them some fifteen feet apart. Fires were started at these points—hundreds of fires burning at once. It required constant attention to keep the blaze under control, to rub limbs across the trunks, and place new limbs as needed. This was all in preparation for the actual log rolling, when a general invitation was issued and every-

body came. On that occasion men arranged the fifteen-foot logs in huge piles, applied the torch, and we gazed in awe as tongues of flame leaped skyward from the giant bonfire.

There was one gathering when, by common consent, drinking was forbidden. That was at barn raisings, where clear heads and steady nerves were mandatory. It was dangerous work. Flinching or dropping the heavy pike might have been fatal.

The time came when Father needed a large barn to shelter stock and protect grain. He knew he could count on his neighbors to help with the raising, just as he had helped them. Such mutual assistance lessened the privations of frontier life.

I was allowed to go to the woods with four horses and drag a large piece of hewn timber to the place where the barn was to be. Many other logs, chiefly of shellbark hickory and about sixty feet long, were brought in, together with sills, posts, and plates, that were cut in the woods.

Henry Cunningham served as our architect to lay out plans and prepare the framing. An able and well-liked carpenter, George Reck, was chosen to boss the job, chiefly because of his stentorian voice. On the day appointed, a hundred volunteers were on hand to take orders.

The first move was to place the heavy sills on a prepared foundation. Posts were carried to the corners and carefully laid, with the tenon ready to drop into the mortice when raised. The bents—entire ends and sides of the barn—were assembled and pinned together.

Next came the raising. Scores of men took their places,

equipped with light tapering pike poles, twelve to sixteen feet long, each having an iron spike in the end.

"All together, heave!" shouted Reck.

One side and one end were raised simultaneously, a man going up with each bent to fasten the pieces together with hickory pins. The process was repeated with the next two bents, tenons fitting solidly into the mortices in the same way. It was like clockwork.

After the final raising, pandemonium reigned. Some of the men lifted Father and the carpenters onto horizontal ladders, and before I knew it, I, too, was in for a ride. A pair of strong arms set me up beside the others, and we were all carried in triumph down the main street through a cheering crowd. The day ended with a big dinner for all the workers, served under the trees.

VI *Slave or Free?*

MEN IN OUR COMMUNITY were active in the operation of the "underground railroad" through Ohio, giving secret sanctuary to runaway slaves and conducting them on their way to Canada, where they would be free. My parents, vigorous in their stand against slavery, gave me a copy of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which was essentially a pamphlet against the Fugitive Slave Law, disguised as a novel. Harriet Beecher Stowe had written it while living in Cincinnati, separated only by the Ohio River from a slave-holding community. As I pored over the pages, I was deeply stirred by the pitiful plight of Uncle Tom and shocked by the horrors of the slave trade.

All over the North public sentiment was growing, and the best intellect of America was on the antislavery side. Kansas territory became a hotbed of controversy when in May 1854 President Franklin Pierce signed a bill opening Kansas and Nebraska for settlement and giving settlers the right to determine the question for themselves.

Abolitionists in the North and slaveholders in the South sought immediately to gain Kansas for their own. Southern sympathizers from Missouri crossed the state line to "spot" claims, while border ruffians attacked free-state settlements, founded largely by the New England Emigrant Aid Company. The eminent clergyman, Henry Ward Beecher, pledged his Brooklyn parish to furnish quantities of rifles, which were shipped in boxes labeled "Bibles." During the last six months of 1856, a committee with headquarters in Chicago sent provisions, arms, and clothing valued at $200,000. Little more than half of this

reached its destination, however, the remainder being destroyed or appropriated by proslavery men at Missouri River landings.

Armed bands tried to stem the tide of emigration from the North by robbing those who disembarked at Kansas City and Leavenworth, and ordering them back home in an insolent manner. James H. Lane, an ardent free-soiler, not to be thwarted by this blockade, mapped out an entrance through Iowa and Nebraska. Those who followed it were known as "Lane's Army of the North."

A free-state settler from Mount Gilead, Ohio, who had taken his wife and children to Kansas, wrote several letters to the editor of the *National Era.* Those we read with much interest. The following extract, printed in 1854, is typical:

"Emigrants are arriving in scores; tents are stretched all over the prairie; cabins are going up in all directions. Labor is plenty. A man, though poor, if he *can* and *will* work, can do well here. A man with only a team is independent. But to those who have no means, *can't* or *won't* work, Kansas is no place for *you.* Emigrants must expect to meet some hardships.

"Were I in Ohio today, with my knowledge of Kansas, I should lose no time in coming here. Understand me, I urge no one to come; for, as in all new countries, many chicken-hearted ones will get homesick and leave. But if you have made up your minds and are coming, *now* is the time. The sooner here, the better for you.

Samuel N. Wood."

A newly formed Republican party, made up of Whigs, Free-Soilers, and others favoring the abolition of slavery,

had in 1856 nominated John C. Frémont for President and William L. Dayton as his running-mate. Since Father was a Whig and a staunch supporter of Frémont, I heard much about his explorations throughout the West that brought him fame as "the Pathfinder." Abraham Lincoln, a more obscure figure at that time, had recently won acclaim by a strong antislavery speech he delivered in Bloomington, Illinois.

Opposing candidates on the Democratic ticket were James Buchanan and John C. Breckenridge. A banner emblazoned with "Buck and Breck" waved atop a tall hickory pole and was plainly visible from the backyard of my chum, Hamilton Woods. Ham's father, who kept an all-purpose store and harness shop, was also a Whig. The Democratic flag made a tempting target for Ham and me. We took secret delight in shooting it full of holes; no one ever discovered who the "miserable scamps" were that mutilated the banner.

Plans were under way for a large Republican rally at Greenville to which New Harrison was sending a delegation. Father was one of the group and he gave me permission to go. At least a hundred of us were crowded on a heavy log wagon. It was coupled out for twenty-five feet and covered with an open board platform. We could either stand or sit on the floor. Our ride was a bumpy one, for the road was gravel with frequent hard clods the size of goose eggs that were ground to powder by the weight of the wagon.

Sixteen strong well-matched teams had been picked from farms in the vicinity to pull the tremendous load. They were specially groomed and decorated for the occasion, and made an attractive spectacle. John Morrison, our

capable driver, rode the nigh wheel horse. A single line ran from team to team through a ring in the head band of each bridle until it reached the mouth of the nigh leader. Driving through the streets of Greenville, Morrison often lost sight of his leaders as they rounded a corner far ahead of his position near the wagon.

It was a great rally with speeches and wild demonstrations. Our largest banner bore the party slogan: "Free Soil, Fremont, Frée Kansas." The marshal of the day rode a magnificent black-and-white-spotted pony with heavy mane three feet long and a tail touching the ground. The term "pony" is really a misnomer, for this animal was strong enough to carry a well-built man.

When the time came to return home the marshal said to me, "How would you like to ride my pony back to New Harrison while I take your place on the wagon?"

I trotted back and forth from one end of the parade to the other, showing off my borrowed mount. No boy could have been happier than I that day.

VII *The One-Way Ticket*

A SEMBLANCE OF PEACE and order returned to Kansas in August, 1856, with the appointment of John W. Geary as territorial governor. He succeeded in disbanding armed forces and in lifting the blockade on the Missouri River. Travel became more secure as violence and strife diminished.

This brought a fresh wave of enthusiasm throughout the North and a determination to rush more settlers into the territory. A group of young men from western Ohio decided to start off the following spring, and I was eager to join them. My parents thought I was too young; the others were all over twenty, while I was just fifteen. I had never been away from home, except for that short excursion to Dayton. Father said he had plans for sending me to college in the not too distant future.

I did considerable talking among my friends, however, and declared that I was going to Kansas. As time went on, some members of the party began to hesitate. I, too, might have lost my resolve, had it not been for a brief conversation overheard one evening. A group of boys walking past our house after dark did not know I was within earshot.

"When the day comes for the company to leave, Frank will be missing," one predicted.

"If he does go, he'll turn right around and come back," added another.

That settled it! I was not a quitter!

Father reluctantly gave his consent and said he would buy the ticket. Mother packed two carpet bags with

trousers and shirts and other clothing she had made for me. She also insisted on putting in a woolen blanket and a coverlet woven with a beautiful bird and tree design. No telling how cold the Kansas winters might be!

In the midst of these preparations I took the precaution to hide my precious skates in a safe place, where I alone could find them upon my return. They were my most prized possession. Swinging hand over hand along the rafters in the barn, I managed to fasten them thirty feet above the threshing floor.

I said goodby to all my friends, fully expecting to be back in two years. March 25 was the day set for our departure. There were warm hugs and embraces all around the family. Mother had filled a big box with good things to eat on the train. Then Father drove me to Greenville, where I was to join the rest of the party.

What was our surprise to find only one person there! He was Absalom Holman, a forty-five-year-old bachelor, the oldest member to sign up. I was the youngest. The other fourteen volunteers had backed out.

Father looked at me questioningly. Would I change my mind and return home with him? Perhaps he hoped so; or was he glad that I stuck to my purpose? There was no turning back for me now; so he went to the window to buy my ticket. I do not remember what it cost; but I do know that emigrants traveled all the way from Boston to Kansas on less than fifty dollars.

As he handed me the ticket, Father said, "I'll give you enough money to bring you home again, if you decide not to stay."

"No," I replied, "only a few silver coins, I want to make sure I *do* stay."

The conductor called, "All aboard!" I swung my carpet bags onto the train.

Father's strong hand grasped mine.

"Send us a letter as soon as you can," he said.

Mr. Holman and I climbed aboard. The whistle blew, there was a grinding of wheels, and the train began to move. I waved to Father and kept my eyes on the station platform until he appeared to be only a speck in the distance. With a swelling heart, I watched the unreeling of the track, widening the gap between me and all the associations of childhood.

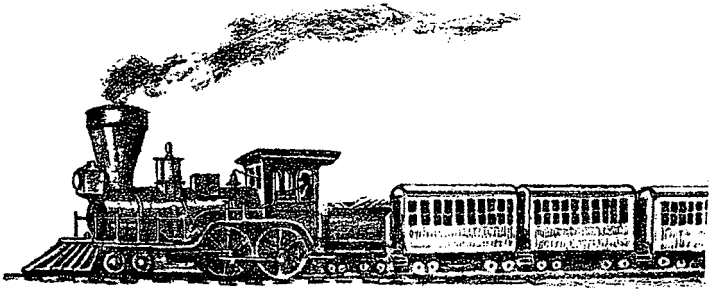
It was an ordinary daycoach in which we now settled ourselves. Sleepers were still unknown. Railroads were only beginning to cover the Midwest with their networks of iron. The speed of two hundred miles and more in a day seemed remarkable compared with the eight miles an hour of the very fastest stagecoach. The rhythmic clicking of wheels on the rail joints and the strange sensation when we swung around the curves added to the novelty of this first great adventure. We were on our way to Kansas!

The expanse of open land in Indiana and Illinois, extending like endless prairie in all directions, brought a new concept of the vastness of our country. When we reached the great Mississippi, the cars were ferried across, to begin the final stretch of our railroad travel. Railway construction west of the Mississippi only that year had reached Jefferson City, near the center of Missouri. This was then the terminus of what later became the Missouri Pacific Railroad.

Our fellow passengers kept up a heated discussion of the Kansas question and decided opinions were expressed on both sides. Mr. Holman and I concluded it was safer

to listen than to talk. One vociferous man, the overseer of a large plantation worked by slaves, declared in a gruff voice, "If niggers were selling for ten cents an acre, not one free-state man in a hundred could buy a bunch of wool."

It was something of a relief to get off the train at Jefferson City. Here we were to embark on one of the eight steamers comprising the "Lightning Line," which the same pioneer railroad had put into operation the year before. A canopied board walk led from the station to the dock. Every day, when the passenger train from St. Louis pulled into Missouri's capital city, it found a steamboat moored there, ready for the up-river run to Weston.



VIII *Heading up the Missouri*

OUR PACKET, THE *New Lucy,* was a marvel of beauty, a dazzling white palace floating on the water. Her hull was 225 feet long, with 33-foot beam. She was built in St. Louis in 1852 and had the reputation of being about the fastest boat on the Missouri. When running light on long summer days, she could go from Jefferson City to Kansas City between daybreak and dark.

Progress on our trip in March was much slower. The boat was heavily laden, taxing her freight capacity of 416 tons. Two tall smokestacks, ornamented at the top, threw out clouds of smoke as she chugged steadily upstream against the current. The vessel was frequently brought to landings to receive or discharge cargo or to take on wood for fuel. This had been sawed into cord lengths and stacked by farmers at convenient points along the river bank.

On the main deck of the boat were four cylindrical boilers, having a steam pressure of 165 pounds—high for those times. They were placed over huge wood-burning furnaces. Two smoothly running engines supplied motive power to rotate two immense paddle wheels, twenty feet or more in diameter, one on either side. By backing down on one wheel and going ahead on the other, a twin-engined sidewheeler showed great maneuverability and could practically turn in its own length.

The years 1855 to 1860 stand out as the "golden era" of steamboating. An endless stream of people made their way up the river, intent on building an empire in the

West. The rush to Kansas was on. Our deck was crowded with all sorts of merchandise, household goods, and farm tools, as well as a motley array of emigrants. Although I had a first-class ticket, I wondered whether I could find a spot to lie down on at night. As it turned out, Holman and I had a comfortable stateroom together.

Looking over the deck rail, I was amazed at the countless shore birds—ducks, geese, and plovers—fringing the sandbars. The water was literally alive with winged fowl. Flocks of wild turkeys fed along the banks.

"Quite a spectacle, isn't it, son?" remarked someone at my side.

A tall pleasant-faced gentleman, who smiled down at me, proved to be thoroughly familiar with this river. He knew all about steamboats and the grand old captains who manned them. From him I learned that Captain Tom Brierly of St. Joseph owned and operated the finest, fastest, and most beautiful side-wheel steamers that ever plied the Missouri. The *New Lucy* was one of them, and he was master on many of her trips. The clerk on our boat, Captain James Kennedy, spent his entire life on river craft. I learned later that, at the age of ninety-three, he was still serving as wharf master in Kansas City.

We were running twenty-four hours a day and I wondered how we managed to avoid snags at night.

"That's the supreme test of a pilot's skill," my companion explained. "Boats under full steam narrowly escape snags and shifting sandbars even in full daylight. A good pilot develops an unerring memory for landmarks. He often determines his location at night by the echo of the steam whistle as it resounds from the bluffs. Only an expert can cope with this untamed stream."

Our steamboat tickets included meals; as I was about to question my new acquaintance on this subject, he remarked, "The steward will soon announce dinner. If you stay close to me, I'll see that you get a seat."

I was only too glad to accept his offer. We took our places at a long table in the cabin. It was an elegant room, painted pure white, and equipped with the very finest furnishings. Our meal was a hearty one, with wild turkey for the main dish. After the tables were cleared, a stringed orchestra played lively tunes while gayly dressed ladies in hoop skirts and innumerable flounces joined their partners in the Virginia Reel.

Gambling often went on in such boats day and night. Not only gold and silver pieces but watches and jewelry went into the jackpot. A few Southern planters became so excited that they even bet their slaves in a game of cards. Many incidents arose from the slavery question. Most people were wary about expressing any opinions, for party spirit ran high, and there was no way of knowing whether the stranger at your side was proslavery or free-state, friend or foe.

Most of the wood carried aboard was handled by Negro roustabouts. At landings along the bank our first mate seemed to consider it his duty to curse and strike the Negroes as they struggled up the gangplank under their heavy burdens. Up to this time my knowledge of slavery had come entirely through reading and hearsay. The brutality I now witnessed added fuel to the flame already kindled. I realized that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was not mere fiction.

When the *New Lucy* finally docked in Kansas City, the passengers were hurried from the vessel just before

supper under the impression that they might otherwise be carried on to Leavenworth. Holman and I made our way along the levee past boxes, cartons, and all kinds of merchandise, piled wherever space could be found. Slaves were everywhere. There was a moving mass of wagons, animals, and men. The cracking of ox whips, cries of drivers, and braying of mules all added to the confusion. Facing the wharf were a few brick buildings that served as warehouses and outfitting stations for emigrants. Behind these rose high precipitous bluffs, seamed by hollows where blackjacks had taken root.

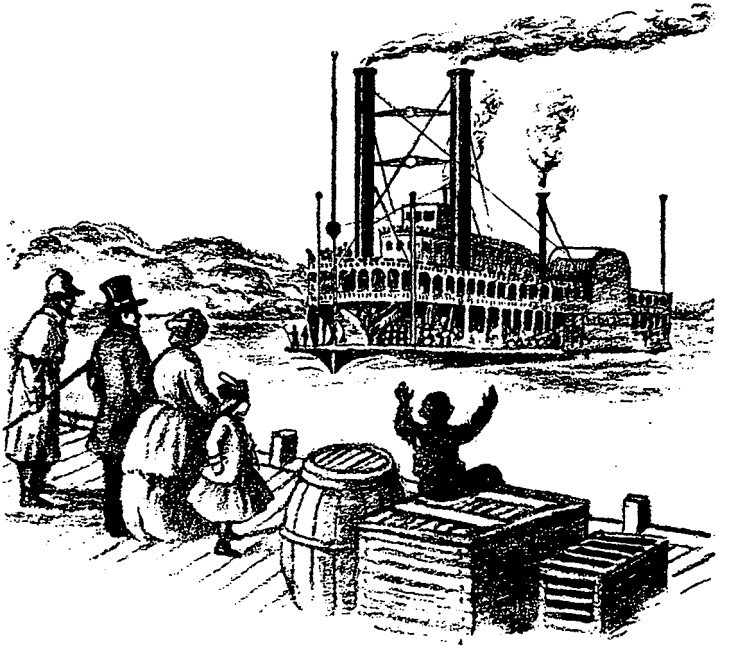
Backing into the bluff was a boarding-house or hotel where we engaged a room for the night. Since my funds were getting low, I decided to go without supper. Then it suddenly occurred to me that I might be entitled to another meal on the *New Lucy*. I returned to the levee, where members of the crew were still busy unloading freight. Dashing up the gangplank, I boldly entered the cabin and took my place at the table. I gulped down the food, all in a tremble lest the boat should get under way; and even wrapped some morsels in a napkin to serve for another meal.

When I returned to the hotel, Holman had just finished his dinner. This popular place, kept by H. W. Chiles, was known then as the Western Hotel, and later as the Gillis House. During the years 1856 and 1857 it is said to have had 27,000 customers. One of these was Andrew H. Reeder, first territorial governor of Kansas, who had participated in the formation of a provisional free-state government. In May 1856, when proslavery leaders brought indictments for treason against him, he concealed himself in the Western Hotel and later escaped, disguised as a

woodcutter. He took passage on a Missouri River steamboat bound for Illinois.

Just two months after my voyage on the *New Lucy*, she carried Kansas' fourth territorial governor, Robert J. Walker, to Leavenworth to take over the reigns of office. The boat stopped at Quindaro, where a waiting crowd at the wharf demanded a speech. They applauded as the new governor appeared on the upper deck and spoke briefly to his first Kansas audience.

Late in November of that same year, 1857, when the *New Lucy* was held up by the ice floes near De Witt, Missouri, she caught fire, through the carelessness of a watchman, and quickly burned to the water's edge. What little remained sank to the bottom of the channel. During her brief span of five years she had endeared herself to the people of the lower Missouri valley and was long remembered as one of the finest boats that ever plied the river.



IX *Out Where the West Begins*

KANSAS CITY HAD ENTERED upon a year of rapid growth. Stage and mail routes towards the west were already established. When the large freighting firm of Russell, Majors, and Waddell persuaded the government to unload boats here instead of at Leavenworth, Kansas City became the chief point of departure for all regions farther west. During 1857, the six to ten boats arriving daily at the levee discharged about 75,000,000 pounds of merchandise. Much of this freight passed over the Santa Fe Trail to Mexico, where it was exchanged for buffalo robes, hides, wool, and furs.

The morning sun was casting long shadows in front of us when Holman and I set off on foot toward Kansas. Four miles out we reached a stone house known as Donnelson's stopping-place and were glad to set down our heavy bags. Between here and Lawrence we found only a few scattered dwellings belonging to the Delaware Indians, a peaceable tribe whose men spoke broken English and wore the loose garb of outlying settlers. We were entertained one night in an Indian shack, sleeping on blankets laid on the rough puncheon floor. The meal they served us was simple but appetizing.

As we traveled westward, we looked off across rolling hills and fertile valleys, now showing the first green of spring. The Kansas River swung back and forth in long sweeping curves. At Lawrence we found rugged homesteaders grim in their determination to keep Kansas free. This hotbed of strife had not yet recovered from the pro-

slavery raids of the preceding year. East of Lawrence we came to the home of a Mr. Wakefield, a staunch free-stater, who bravely rebuilt after border ruffians had burned him out. His was the only house on the fifteen-mile stretch between Lawrence and Big Springs.

The free-state party had been organized in 1855 at Big Springs under the leadership of Charles Robinson and James H. Lane. About a year later the town druggist brought a keg of whisky to his store and proposed a "grand opening." Up to that time the town had been bone-dry, and its citizens intended to keep it so. They rolled the keg out into the street, poured the liquor into a pile of shavings, and set the pile on fire.

Only a small cluster of houses made up the settlement as we saw it. Members of the United Brethren faith had built a little stone church the year before. We were impressed by the fact that most of the men in town wore unusually long whiskers.

As we were about to start on again toward the west, a middle-aged man came by on horseback and suddenly drew rein.

"Well, if this isn't Absalom Holman," he exclaimed, "it's his ghost! What are you doing in Kansas?"

The two had known each other in Ohio. Holman introduced his friend. The man said he had filed a claim in the southeastern part of the territory, and suggested our going there.

"I have enough work to keep both of you busy for a while," he said. "The usual wage is fifty cents a day. Not much, but a man can live on it."

This sounded good to us. Work was what we wanted and had to have if we were to stay in Kansas.

"Meet me at Donnelson's," my new acquaintance said, specifying the day; "then we can go together from there."

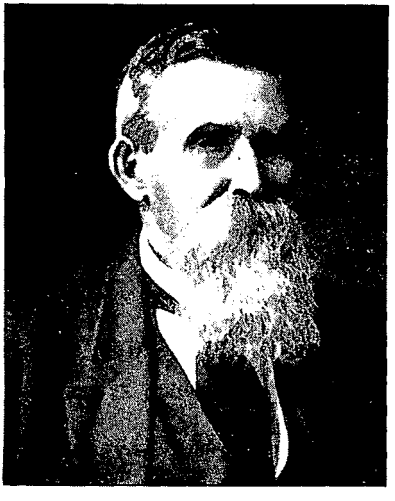
He set off on horseback and we on foot. Although for us it meant retracing our steps nearly fifty miles, we did it with light hearts, rejoicing over our good fortune. When we finally reached Donnelson's, however, our prospective employer was not there. We waited another day, but still no sign of him.

Nothing could have been more disheartening. What were we to do? We were now almost back to Kansas City, where our long fruitless tramp had started!

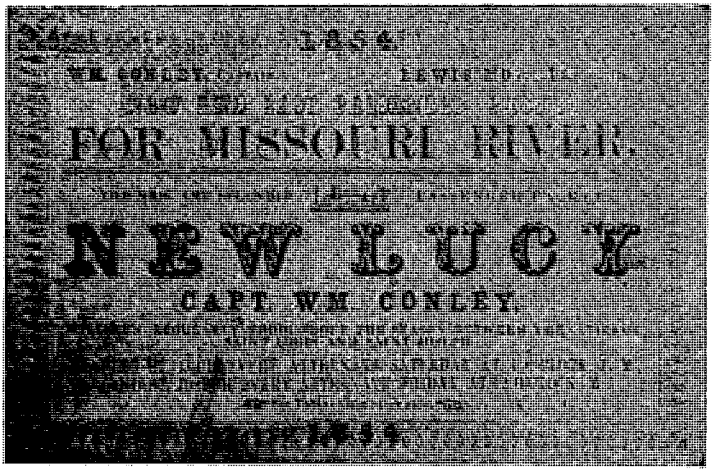
"Well," declared Holman in exasperation, "it's no use staying in this dreary place. Let's go back to Ohio!"

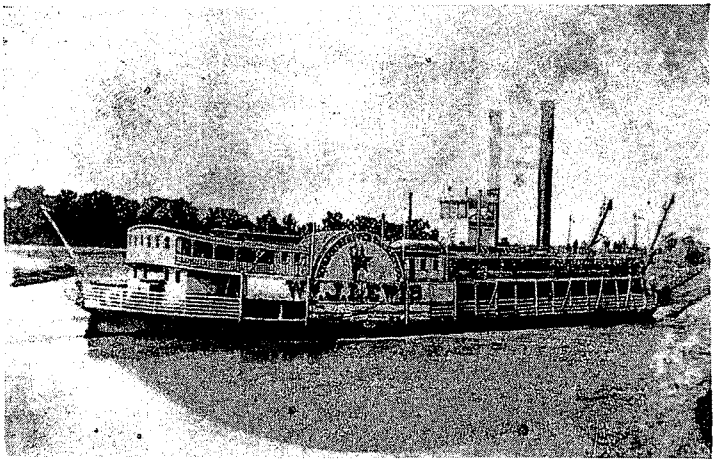
He could leave if he wanted to, but for me leaving was out of the question. Had I made a mistake in not bringing enough money for the return trip? My meager funds were nearly exhausted. I *had* to stay.

Holman made ready to start back. "I hate to leave you



Above: Frank M. Stahl after the Civil War; Jennie Dickson before her marriage. Below: Stahl in later years.





Above: The trip card of the *New Lucy*. Below: the steamer *Wm. J. Lewis,* similar to the *New Lucy;* courtesy of Dr. E. B. Trail.

here alone," he said, "but I guess that's the way it has to be. Any message for your father?"

"Tell him I'll make out all right and I'll send a letter when I get settled."

In spite of my brave words, there is no denying the desolate feeling I had when he left me. Here I was, a stranger alone in a strange land, not knowing what lay ahead.

X *A Friend in Need*

AFTER SUPPER THAT EVENING a gentleman drove in from the west on his way to Kansas City. He seemed to be well acquainted with Donnelson, who must have told him something of my predicament. The newcomer approached me with outstretched hand. He was a slight smooth-shaven man, probably in his early sixties, although his thick brown hair showed no touch of gray.

"I hear you have come from Ohio," he began, drawing up a chair.

"Yes," I replied. "I wanted to help make Kansas a free state, but perhaps there is nothing I can do, after all."

"Kansas is going to need boys like you," he said in a reassuring manner. "You'll find plenty of work to do, and perhaps I can help you get started." His keen blue eyes looked right through me.

I learned that he was Robert Simerwell, a Baptist preacher, who had come to the United States from Ireland with his parents, his four brothers, and his sister, arriving in Philadelphia in the spring of 1812.

"All but one member of our family contracted fever on the boat," he recalled, "and three months later, I was an orphan and homeless. I was just sixteen—probably about your age."

"Yes," I replied, "I'll be sixteen in May."

He explained that he had been apprenticed to a blacksmith, receiving his food, lodging, and clothing, and had attended school at night. He had then served as a missionary among the Pottawatomie Indians in Michigan

Territory and later at the Baptist Shawnee Mission on Pottawatomie Creek in eastern Kansas. In 1848 the government set up a new mission a few miles west of Topeka. In a three-story stone building with twelve rooms, boys and girls were given instruction in the manual arts, as well as in reading, writing, arithmetic, and religious subjects. One aim was to Americanize the Indians, so as to attach them to our country and its institutions.

There was much more to the missionary's story, and I listened attentively. In the fall of 1854, he and his wife had retired from active work at the Pottawatomie Mission, to homestead on 160 acres of virgin land farther south. His wife had died the following year, but his three daughters were now with him. The oldest one, Sarah, was soon to be married, and his only son, William, had a little family of his own nearby.

Did I know much about farming, Mr. Simerwell wanted to know, and seemed pleased with my answer. He then proposed that I stay on his farm and help with the work, which was becoming too strenuous for him to handle alone. He offered me fifteen dollars a month and a home. This appeared to be a happy solution to my problem and I readily agreed. I retired that night in a cheerful frame of mind, my heart filled with gratitude.

Early the next morning a Pottawatomie Indian with a wagon and team of horses stopped by on his way to the Baptist Mission. Speaking to him in his own language, Mr. Simerwell arranged for me to ride with the Indian as far as Big Springs and wait there for the Missionary. This was much better than covering the distance on foot, as I had done twice already. If only Holman could see how well

things were working out, he would regret his hasty departure!

On arriving at Big Springs, I thanked my driver for his kindness. He made it quite evident, however, that I owed him more than thanks. The few coins I put into his hand apparently satisfied him, for he smiled and drove on. When I counted my remaining change, I found I had just sixty-five cents.

Needless to say, it was with a feeling of relief that I saw Mr. Simerwell come driving up the road a few hours later. We were not long in reaching his farm, in a beautiful valley with an abundance of timber along Six Mile Creek.

Three attractive young ladies rushed out of a two-room log cabin and greeted their father affectionately. They were introduced to me as Sarah, Ann, and Elizabeth. In due time I met the other members of the household—a little girl of ten, named Fannie; Mrs. Elizabeth Gault, a sister of Mr. Simerwell, and her three children, Robert, Eliza, and Annie. In addition, there were three regular boarders—making, in all, twelve persons on the farm. Even so, they found room for me in one of several little cabins, and I soon felt quite at home.

Mr. Simerwell had a blacksmith shop on the place—the first in Williamsport township. His knowledge of the trade had proved useful in all of the missions he served, as well as in this community. Five acres of ground were already broken, and my first task was to plow the tract and plant it with corn. I was expected to harness a yoke of oxen for the purpose. We had never used oxen in Ohio, and I knew nothing about these powerful beasts of burden.

Without disclosing my ignorance, I looked about for some substitute and discovered a herd of Indian ponies, twenty or so, grazing in a pasture. I corraled them, selected two of the more docile animals, and found enough collars, straps, buckles, and strings in the barn to harness them. They were not hard to break, and before long I had the corn in the ground. It was good to find a place where you could plow straight furrows without going around stumps and rocks.

Mr. Simerwell spent much of his time traveling by horse and buggy from one settlement to another, preaching to people in their homes and distributing religious publications. His was the volunteer work of an itinerant pioneer missionary. Upon returning from one such trip in 1854 with his horse, old Black Betty, he had stuck his buggy whip—a slender cottonwood switch—into the ground just west of his log cabin. The cutting took root and grew into a sturdy tree, prized by later generations. In 1907 it measured more than twenty feet around the base.

When, at Mr. Simerwell's request, the Home Missionary Society sent a preacher from the East to aid the

Baptist cause in this region, the first sermon was preached in the Simerwell house. Soon after my arrival, Mr. Simerwell organized the Auburn Baptist Church and Sunday School, and the following year donated a two-story stone house for a parsonage.

It became my duty on Sundays to hitch the oxen, with which I was now on familiar terms, to a big wagon and drive the girls the three and a half miles to Sunday School and church in Auburn. They looked so prim and sedate in their best Sunday go-to-meeting dresses that I could not resist the temptation to tease them by getting astride the nigh ox just as we neared the church.

One day I asked Lizzie, the youngest daughter, how long she had been in Kansas. She blushingly replied, "Twenty-two years." It seems she was the very first white girl born in the territory. The date of her birth was January 24, 1835. Her parents were then living in the Baptist Shawnee Mission in Miami County. The three older children were born in Michigan Territory, coming to Kansas with their parents in 1833.

All of them received a good education. William attended Shurtleff College at Alton, Illinois. The girls went to a school in Independence, Missouri, and to the Reverend Nathan Scarritt's school at the Methodist Mission. For about four years Elizabeth attended the seminary at Monticello in Illinois, taking courses in Latin, geology, chemistry, geometry, philosophy, music, and drawing. Latin she considered easiest of all.

Ann, who was not as strong as the other girls, suffered from a spinal trouble, believed to have resulted from a fall in babyhood. She died in 1858.

A neighbor of the Simerwells, Isaac Baxter, was court-

ing Sarah, the oldest of the girls, and they were married soon after I began living on the farm. The young bridegroom hauled walnut lumber from Leavenworth by ox-team to build their house. It was a two-story dwelling, having six rooms and a kitchen in a separate building. This arrangement kept the living quarters cooler in summer, for the wood stove gave off much heat. Many a night, wayfarers, caught in a storm, slept on pallets on the kitchen floor, thankful for a dry place to rest. Like her father, Sarah could never turn anyone away.

Crossing their farm pastures was a trail worn by heavy wagons and known as the California Road. One branch of the Mormon trek from Nauvoo, Illinois, to Salt Lake in Utah, which started in 1846, passed this way. Caravans were sometimes seen even in 1857. The California gold rush had brought ninety thousand people through Kansas, many following the route of the Mormons.

Some say the Mormons, who contended with heat and cold, drouth and flood, hunger and starvation, scattered sunflower seeds along the way to mark their trail. At any rate, it is generally agreed that the seeds' clinging to mud on wheels of pioneer wagons resulted in a widespread distribution of the bright yellow blooms.

XI "Keep the Mill a-Going"

WILLIAM SIMERWELL, who had a home of his own near Auburn, was interested in starting a milling business. He and a friend had brought machinery for a combination saw and grist mill from Alton, Illinois, and asked me to help run it. I had now been on his father's farm just a year, but the missionary considered this a useful project and urged me to take the job.

Mills, indispensable to the growth of pioneer settlements, were springing up all over the state. By 1860 there were sixty-two water-powered mills in Kansas, as well as many that ran by steam. The new Auburn mill was one of the latter. It kept us busy from the start.

My first task was a humble one—carrying sawdust; but before long I was working the running lathe, the saw, and the engine. It took a watchful eye to keep the boilers filled with steam, leather belts tight around the pulleys, and the shining bandsaw ready for its first bite into a walnut log.

Walnut was the favorite building material, and it was abundant. We sawed it into truss timbers, girders, columns, and planks. Shingles, clapboards, and laths were usually split by hand. Window and door frames and other parts, such as windowpanes, nails, and hardware, were bought in Leavenworth, the trading outpost for our region. Five days were required to make the round trip with horses, and six with oxen.

Indians and white men within a hundred-mile radius brought their corn, wheat, and barley to be ground at the

Auburn mill. During rush periods, we did sawing in the daytime and grinding at night. As engineer I worked both day and night shifts, drawing double pay.

One branch of the Santa Fe Trail passed through Auburn, then a town of some four hundred. There were an excellent 120-foot well for watering horses, and two stores, two blacksmith shops, a harness shop, a broom factory, a concrete schoolhouse, and a three-story hotel. The third story of this last building was used as a public hall and ballroom, in which four cotillions could occupy the floor at one time.

In 1859 the citizens of Auburn invited Colonel James H. Lane to be the main speaker at a Fourth of July celebration. It was his magnetic oratory that had helped in arousing the North to action, and he was still making eloquent appeals for the right of Kansas to enter the Union as a free state. When he arrived at Auburn, the Colonel was accompanied by his daughter. He delivered a stirring speech, followed by a ball that lasted till midnight.

An old stone barn in Auburn was credited with having saved the town from Indians who once came riding over the hill from the north, intent on making an attack. When they saw the long narrow building with its rows of small windows on the north and south sides, they decided that it was a fort and turned away.

Since early territorial days, the Independent Order of Good Templars had been working for prohibition in Kansas, with Lawrence as one of its strongholds. When a lodge was formed in Auburn, I was made chief, although I was only seventeen at the time. The Good Templars

later became a potent factor in furthering the temperance movement in Kansas.

For more than a year now I had been sending my parents glowing accounts of life on this frontier, where any quantity of fertile land could be had for a song. Instead of urging me to return to Ohio at the end of my first two years, they decided to sell the farm and come west themselves. Eventually all of their children made Kansas their home.

Upon reaching Kansas City, Father bought a wagon and ox team to transport his family and household goods across the plains to Auburn. I had found a farm for him on Six Mile Creek, not far from the Simerwell place, where he could also carry on his trade as a cobbler. My parents were glad to meet those who had befriended me.

One of the first questions I asked Father was,"Did anyone find my skates?"

A friend of mine, he said, had followed the precarious route I had taken along the barn rafters and succeeded in untying and rescuing them. I hope they brought as much pleasure to this pal as they had given me.

The drought of 1860 that faced my parents soon after their arrival might well have discouraged less hardy souls. Many other newcomers lost all faith in Kansas and quit their claims on the flat, hot, windy, dusty prairies. For nearly eighteen months no rain fell; creeks dried up and crops withered. Practically everyone who remained was dependent on aid from societies in the east for food and clothing. Through a distribution center in Atchison, one could get shelled corn, navy beans, dried apples, cornmeal, hominy, and salt pork. Some four thousand tons of provi-

sions were shipped into the territory during this period of drought.

Our milling business declined to such an extent that the mill was finally shut down. One night the engine, boiler, and grinding machinery all disappeared. Forty years later I discovered the identical parts in Louisville, a town north of Wamego. With work now at a standstill, I joined some other boys in a wolf hunt near Dighton and a trapping expedition on Walnut Creek near the present town of Great Bend. Our party comprised nine persons at the start, but only two remained to complete the hunt. In one night we killed forty wild animals, all but two being mountain wolves.

XII *Western Kansas Diggings*

FABULOUS GOLD DISCOVERIES in Colorado—then part of Kansas Territory—were luring thousands of adventurers across the plains. I joined a group of Auburn boys, deciding I had little to lose and perhaps much to gain in searching for the precious metal. Four of us set off together on foot in June of 1860. We hired a man named Tim Chidsey to haul provisions, bedding, and a small tent to serve as protection against rain.

West of Topeka, where we completed our preparations, the sparsely settled land was chiefly Indian reservation. Our first stop was at the Pottawatomie Catholic Mission at St. Mary's. Here the black-robed Jesuit priests had established in 1848 a manual labor school and trading houses in connection with an extensive farm. Exhausted cattle, abandoned there by gold-seekers bound for Colorado, formed the nucleus of the famous "mission herd."

We followed the Kaw River to its junction with the Blue; then up the Blue to Marysville, the last place before Denver to call itself a town. In front of a whisky and tobacco shop was a post with an inverted human skull on top, filled with tobacco.

"Help yourselves, boys," called a voice from the doorway. "A pipe-full is free."

We passed what is now the line between Kansas and Nebraska and followed the beautiful valley of the Little Blue River. Mosquitoes were everywhere.

"Those pesky skeeters!" cried Tim. "They're driving

the oxen crazy. We'll have to chain them to the wagon tonight, or they'll stampede for sure!"

Near our camp a herd of buffalo crossed the valley and disappeared over the bluffs. Hoping I might get a calf, I followed part of the way up the slope with my gun. What I then saw drove all thought of buffalo from my mind. Strewn across the ground were the remains of three charred wagons with little left but the iron. Oxen, two or three yoke to each wagon, had been shot and were lying in their chains. There was no sign of human beings. We learned later that Mormon families from Arkansas had been attacked by Indians. Travelers following behind found the bodies and buried them. This was but one of many unwritten tragedies that summer on the plains.

Pushing westward up the Platte and across a high tableland dotted with cactus, we saw large groups of Indians who were peaceful, at least to the extent of avoiding any open outbreak. The danger lay in being caught napping alone on the trail. Your hair might be the forfeit.

Fort Kearny was the converging point for caravans en route to Denver. We found it advisable to join other teams in order to take turns at night standing guard over the camp. The stream of travelers pouring across the plains became so continuous that there was scarcely a distance of even a few miles between companies.

Some pushed their meager belongings in two-wheeled carts, but the greater part traveled in ox-drawn wagons. Occasionally there were families with women and children among the throngs of rough-clad laborers, teamsters, farmers, and merchants. All hoped to better themselves in this wild scramble for gold. Supply trains made money by selling tools, whisky, and eatables.

Scrawled on the wagons were such inscriptions as "Root Hog or Die," "Lightning Express," and "Pike's Peak or Bust." Returning prospectors displayed the words "Pike's Peak and Busted," or showed pictures of a man climbing out of the small end of a horn. Though they laughed away their disappointment, it was evident that the loss incurred in time and money was a serious matter.

One night, as I lay out under the stars, I heard the thud of galloping hoofs. It was a Pony Express rider on his weekly run, carrying a sack of letters. This fast mail service from St. Joseph, Missouri, to Sacramento, California, started on April 3, 1860, but was discontinued sixteen months later when telegraph wires supplanted the ponies and their fearless riders. They established an enviable record for speed and endurance.

Our tedious march across the prairies ended at Cherry Creek, a stream usually dry, running through the town of Denver. Pike's Peak rose majestically to the southwest, a landmark for trappers, emigrants, and traders. We had reached the site of the "gold diggin's." Other boys from Auburn, who had preceded us, greeted us warmly.

"You'll find plenty of high life here," declared Al Davis, "roulette, faro, keno, three-card monte, and poker—pay your money and take your choice."

We wandered about the town and looked in on two large gambling houses. It was amazing to see the huge sums played for stakes on a single faro table—as much as twenty thousand dollars.

Horace Greeley, editor of the *New York Tribune,* had visited Denver the year before to investigate reports of rich gold discoveries. He stayed at the only hotel, but was unable to sleep because of boisterous crowds at the bar and

gaming tables, and a band that played throughout the night.

When he could stand it no longer, he got up and dressed, went downstairs, and gave the rowdies a piece of his mind. He lectured them on the evil of their pursuits, pointing out incidentally that he was entitled to some rest. They listened attentively and applauded with vigor. During the remainder of his stay, gambling and drinking ceased promptly at eleven o'clock.

The "*Tribune* Philosopher" is said to have coined his memorable phrase, "Go west, young man," that summer, while stirring his readers with glowing descriptions of the untapped resources of the Great American Desert.

XIII *There's Gold in Those Hills*

My primary concern was to look for a job, and I found one—cutting logs for Denver's first frame houses. Up to that time, the buildings were adobe, except for a few log cabins. This work took me twenty miles into the mountains, but compared with the long journey just completed, it seemed a short distance.

Curley Gray, an Auburn boy, and I then bought an interest in a placer mine, four miles west of Denver on Bear Creek. By tying willows in bunches to make a dam, we raised the water and ran it in ditches down to our claims. Alongside our camp was that of Jim Beckworth, one-time partner of Kit Carson. He entertained us by the hour with tales of his adventures. A company of loggers, farther up the mountain, soon ended our prospecting here by destroying our dam with their log rafts. We were learning by experience that "gold has to be dug from the ground before it can be put in your pockets."

We decided to strike out for Central City, forty miles distant. Our combined resources when we reached there were ten cents, which we spent for liver at a butcher shop. After making a fire and roasting the meat for our supper, we laid our bed under a pine tree. This section was the natural home of the antelope. Since we often saw hundreds at a time, we knew we would not starve.

Another prospector now joined us and each of us took a one-third interest in good placer mines at the junction of two gulches above the city. We were doing quite well when, early in 1861, reports reached us of valuable gold

discoveries in the San Juan Mountains. Many persons, however, in attempting to climb the steep and rugged passes, had suffered severely from the cold, and some lost their lives in the deep mountain snows.

In spite of these reported hazards, I could not resist the urge to join four other Auburn boys in a caravan of 150 persons on what was later known as "the ill-fated San Juan expedition." To my two partners at Central City I gave the "power of attorney" to handle the mines as they saw fit during my absence.

Starting early in the summer to avoid the perils of cold weather, our party followed Cherry Creek south of Denver until we reached Pueblo, a town of only a few Mexican huts. Here the Mexicans had thrown a wooden bridge across the Arkansas River and charged a toll of $2.50 for each vehicle.

We had several ox-drawn wagons, one owned by a Mr. Smith and his brother Sol. They were accompanied by Mrs. Smith and their eighteen-year-old daughter Elizabeth. Our mounted leaders included two of Sheriff Middaugh's boys from Denver. One member of the party was a vigorous, middle-aged man called Pete, who claimed to have discovered a rich vein in Poor Man's Gulch on the west side of the Sangre de Cristo range.

For some reason our leaders became suspicious of him and decided to put him under guard. Al Davis and I were appointed to take charge of him at night. We made our beds on the ground, placing Pete between us. When we awoke one morning, we were chagrined to find that he had slipped through our hands.

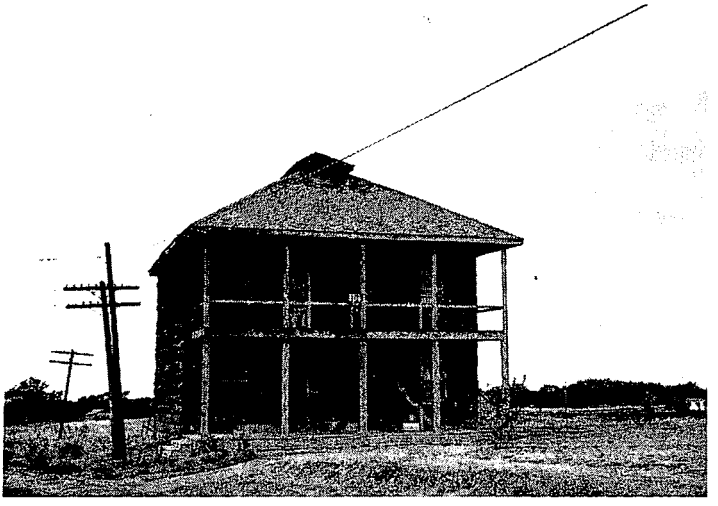
Three horsemen struck out at once, and after two days of searching returned with the culprit, who had been hid-

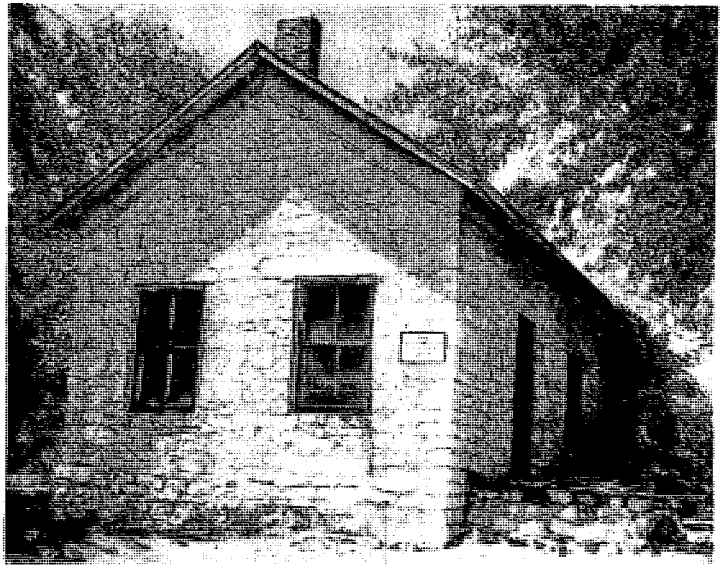
ing at a ranch over at the Greenhorn. Al and I felt humiliated and expected some drastic punishment. We anxiously awaited the verdict, while the others held a council. Finally, to our relief, the leaders simply led the turncoat over to us, saying curtly, "Don't let this fellow get away again."

From that time on, Pete did not make a move at night without our knowing it. After his attempted escape, the men had lost all faith in his stories, but, true to the Western style, he was given every opportunity to make good. We crossed the Sangre de Cristo range with its sharp mountain passes and camped at the mouth of Poor Man's Gulch. Day after day parties went out with him to locate his diggings, till at length he admitted he could not find the spot.

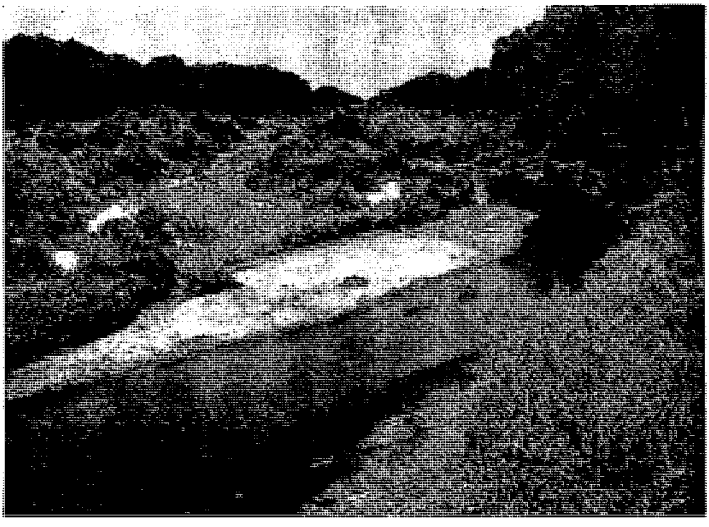
What advantage he hoped to gain by leading our large caravan on this wild-goose chase is still a mystery. He surely deserved punishment, and he received it in the Western frontier manner—thirty-nine lashes applied to his bare back. That was the last we saw of Pete, but we learned all too late that he had played a similar trick on California prospectors during the gold rush of '49.

Thoroughly discouraged at the turn things had taken, most of our caravan immediately took the back track for Denver. Only the Smith family and we five boys from Auburn remained. At the mouth of Gray Back Gulch we found several run-down cabins made of pine logs. A few of the roofs had enough boards to keep the rain out. Wedged between the logs, for some reason, were scores of grizzly bears' feet with long claws. We went into the woods after game to replenish our diminishing food sup-





Above: Fort Harker Guardhouse at Kanopolis. Below: Last Chance Store near Council Grove. Courtesy of the Kansas Industrial Development Commission.



Above: Santa Fe Trail Ruts, near Dodge City. Below: Cimarron Crossing. Courtesy of the Kansas Industrial Development Commission.

ply, and every few days one of us walked over to Fort Garland to draw all the government rations possible.

Late one afternoon a ruddy-faced well-knit frontiersman in slouch hat and buckskins burst into camp to warn us of impending danger. It was none other than Kit Carson.

"The Utes are on the warpath," he said. "Your camp is on their main trail, and the sooner you move, the better!"

We also learned that the Mexican bandit, Joaquin, and his men infested this region. Any word of caution from Frémont's intrepid scout was not to be passed over lightly. Kit Carson's prowess and resourcefulness had stood him in good stead. His hairbreadth escapes were legendary, and through his knowledge of Indian traits and language, he had exercised a restraining influence over many warlike tribes.

After he left us we discussed our predicament and tried to decide what course to pursue. There was little sleep for any of us that night. In the darkness I seemed to hear the bells of Indian ponies and the soft tread of moccasined feet.

By morning the Smith family had resolved to start back towards Denver. We bade them goodby with deep concern for their safety. The daughter Elizabeth was a large comely girl about my age. Since her shoes had worn thin from mountain climbing, I let her take my extra pair of slippers.

We boys lost no time in moving camp, hastily throwing blankets, cooking utensils, picks, shovels, pans, and other equipment into the wagon. Half a mile up the gulch we found a grassy field where we pastured our oxen. We

pitched our tent in a narrow valley, facing a well-worn path made by deer. Icy waters from mountain snows tumbled over nearby rocks, forming a sparkling rivulet.

By the time we got settled, it was almost sundown. The other boys started a game of cards while I took a nap. After I awoke, my first impulse was to look after the cattle, and I started up the dusty trail, stopping first to bathe my face in the cold stream. When I had gone but a few rods, I noticed the tracks of cattle hoofs coming down the path. A closer look in the gathering dusk indicated moccasined footprints adjacent.

I yelled, "Indians!"

The other boys came on the run. Investigation proved that the cattle were indeed gone. We could hardly believe that they had passed within a hundred feet of the open tent without our knowledge. Evening shadows now engulfed the valley, and we knew further search would be useless.

Here we were, stranded, out of food, cattle gone, and surrounded by hostile Indians. What could we do? We spent most of the night talking over our situation. The cattle had evidently been taken east on the mountain pass followed by the Smith family. We agreed that three of us would attempt to track them down at daybreak.

George Ramsey, Frank Day, and I started along the wagon road, leaving Al Davis and Harlow Kline to guard the camp. When we had gone about three miles we saw, lying in the dust, a slipper—my slipper! It was one of the pair given to Elizabeth Smith the day before. Where was its mate, and how did it get there? Had misfortune overtaken the Smiths already? We were determined to find out, if possible.

Leaving the wagon road, we crossed the gulch and climbed to a narrow foot trail sometimes used by infantry soldiers in guarding government trains. From this height we soon had an unobstructed view of the valley below, and what did we see, standing all alone, but a white ox with yellow spots! It belonged to the Smiths!

Soon eight or ten men, wrapped in blankets, rode in single file from the south side of the gulch to where the lone ox stood. We had seen enough to make us want to return to the home side of the gulch ourselves, and this we did as quickly as possible.

Hidden by quaking aspen trees, we could neither see nor be seen; so we waited here until dark to start for camp, some six or eight miles to the northwest. Suddenly a blood-curdling yell arose from the valley immediately below us, occasioned, no doubt, by the discovery of our footprints crossing the wagon road.

We were now afraid to take the trail back to camp, but, under cover of darkness, cut through a long stretch of pine forest where hundreds of trees had been felled, spreading over a heavy undergrowth of quaking asps. There was always the danger that mountain lions or bears might be lurking near. Exhausted from our long hike, we finally reached camp.

A party of prospectors, on the point of starvation, had found the place during the day, and when they heard our story, offered to help by giving us guns, but they were not willing to risk their own lives in any further search.

The next morning a government wagon train passed up the road toward Fort Garland. This gave us courage to continue our efforts. Casting all care to the winds, we retraced our steps along the road followed the day before.

A two-mile walk brought us suddenly in sight of a circle of wagons corraled in the usual Western way. Among the herd of grazing cattle we recognized our two steers, as well as the Smiths' piebald ox.

We three boys entered the camp boldly and found ourselves facing the most villainous group of men I have ever seen. All but the captain bore marks of fighting, and all carried knives, though I saw only a couple of guns. They were Mexicans who had evidently been to Leavenworth with a load of hides and wool, and were returning to Mexico with the goods for which they had bartered their cargo.

Upon our arrival, they immediately drove the oxen into the wagon corral. We tried to make them understand that two of the steers were ours.

"No savvy," was the reply.

I felt certain the leader did understand, for by words and signs he insisted they had bought the cattle. We argued back and forth to no purpose.

Ramsey suddenly decided to go into action. Drawing

his Colt's revolver, he started straight towards the cattle, declaring by all the saints in the calendar that he was going to have what rightfully belonged to us. His sudden outburst frightened the Mexicans. Frank Day and I rushed to his aid, and we got our two steers without firing a shot.

The piebald ox we regretfully left behind. Although we continued our search for the Smiths and made numerous inquiries, the fate of that family remained a mystery.

After getting our cattle back to camp, we took pains to keep them tied at night. One of the pair was bitten by a reptile and died close by our tent. We dug a hole and buried him under an aspen tree. I cut into the smooth bark the words "Sacred to the memory of Tom."

About this time a man named Beauchamp drifted into Fort Garland with his wife and ten-year-old daughter and came over to see us. Being anxious to get back to Denver, Beauchamp offered to provide a mate for our ox if we would return with them. This plan seemed providential. We crossed the mountains without any kind of trail and came out at Canyon City, reaching Denver late in the fall of 1861. There we learned that a war was on between the states.

During our long absence my partners at Central City had concluded that I must have met the same fate as others of the San Juan expedition and would never return. They had both left, taking everything that could be converted into money. With all investments in the placer mines now worthless, my gold bubble had burst. A rifle, a shotgun, a Colt's revolver, and one-fifth interest in a wagon and yoke of oxen comprised my sole stock in trade.

As Ramsey, Kline, and I started for home on foot, we looked like scarecrows in our trousers and shirts of common bagging, and hats made of willows. We trudged along, following the Platte valley to Fort Kearny, then across the plains to the Little Blue, past Marysville again, and on to Auburn.

Eleven years later, after the railroad was completed to the mountains, many of those who had risked their all reaped ample rewards for their faith and perseverance. Attempts to extract gold and silver from the San Juan Mountains met with success, and the region became one of the most productive mining sections of Colorado.

XIV *The Long, Long Trail*

ALTHOUGH I WAS NOT YET TWENTY-ONE, I felt like Rip van Winkle after this absence of almost a year and a half. Events of great national importance had occurred during that interval. In November 1860, Lincoln was elected President on the Republican ticket. His platform called for the immediate admission of Kansas into the Union. When this took place, January 29, 1861, the news was greeted by bonfires and the ringing of bells. In February, the free-state leader of Lawrence, Charles Robinson, took the oath as first governor.

Ever since 1854, free-state settlers in Kansas had been forced to shoulder arms to protect their towns from pro-slavery agitators. When, in April 1861, Fort Sumter was fired upon, the struggle became nation-wide. Eleven states seceded, splitting the country North and South.

In spite of the fact that Kansas still suffered from drought and internal warfare, she responded to Lincoln's first call for volunteers with a regiment of 650 men. These troops proved their mettle and went into battle singing. By autumn there was a lull in the fighting. Lincoln was trying to arbitrate with the Confederates, and many thought the war was over. Instead of enlisting then, I took a commission to drive six yoke of oxen in a train of wagons, carrying 6,500 pounds of revolvers and ammunition to Fort Union, New Mexico. For forty years after its establishment in 1851, this outpost was the largest supply depot in the Southwest.

I went to Fort Leavenworth to help load the twenty-

six wagons at the government headquarters. We checked each wagon to make sure that bows, axles, tires, and yokes were in good condition and with enough spare bolts to last throughout the 873-mile journey. This was in the spring of '62. As soon as grass on the prairies would be green enough to pasture the animals, we made ready to start.

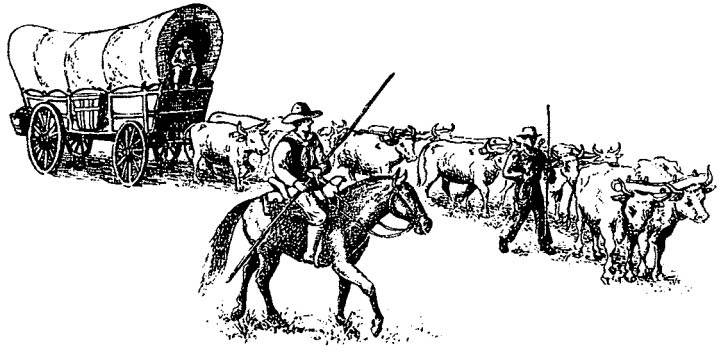
Six yoke of oxen were hitched to each wagon. They were steadier than mules or horses, and could pull heavier loads through mud and sand. A captain, a lieutenant, and extra man were mounted on mules. Our crew of twenty-six "bull-whackers" was a motley array of farmers, backwoodsmen, and city-bred merchants, glad of the chance to earn forty dollars a month during the three months' trip, when other work was scarce.

On the day set for our departure we were up before the crack of dawn. The command, "Catch up, catch up!" spread over the camp.

When each teamster was ready, he replied, "All's set!"

"Fall in!" shouted the captain.

The creaking wagons of our bulky freight caravan began to move. We drove three or four miles before



stopping for breakfast. The oxen were unyoked and turned out to graze until afternoon, when we drove four or five miles farther. Then came another period for grazing. We had supper about four o'clock—just two meals a day, followed by a drive of four or five miles before stopping for the night. The average daily distance covered was from twelve to fifteen miles, although sometimes an entire day was consumed in crossing a stream. There was not a single bridge along the Santa Fe Trail.

At night the wagons were corralled in the form of an ellipse, leaving a gap at one end about thirty feet wide, where cattle could be driven in for yoking up. This formation served as protection in case of Indian alarms. Two men were detailed as night herders, and usually eight night watchers stood guard on alternate nights during certain hours. Occasionally wagon trains were escorted by outriders for added daytime protection, but supply trains seldom had military guard. We did, however, have guns and ammunition. Out on the plains, traders invariably banded together for mutual safety, as we did on the Colorado trip.

From Leavenworth the trains for New Mexico had a choice of two different routes. One led through the Delaware reservation past Tonganoxie, crossing the Kaw at Lawrence. The other crossed the river at Topeka, either on Papan's ferryboat or by fording, and went southwest near Auburn. Both of the Leavenworth trails joined a trail from Independence, Missouri, at Wilmington, west of Burlingame.

This long winding pathway, from sixty to a hundred feet wide, tying the United States to Mexico, and crossing the length of Kansas, followed the original buffalo trails

from one river to another. Travel by pack mules began with Captain William Becknell of Missouri in 1822. Four years later wagons supplanted pack animals, and the Santa Fe Trail became a great inland wagon road across the unbroken prairies. By 1862, when I played my small part in the vast commerce of the plains, this was one of the most traveled routes in the world. For ten more years it contributed materially to the development of the great West. In 1872 the railroad put the overland freighter out of business.

Council Grove, 150 miles from Independence, was the most important stopping-place on the trail, and the last outfitting station. At a small stone building called the "Last Chance Store" overland trains could stock up on flour, bacon, and other provender. In fact, everything from needles to harness repairs was available. Indians traded buffalo robes and deer and wolf skins for coveted trinkets.

A strip of oak, walnut, elm, and hickory trees along the valley of the Neosho River was like an oasis on the barren plains. Here we cut logs to be used if necessary for repairs on axles, tongues, and coupling poles, and lashed them under the wagons. While the animals grazed and rested in the cool shelter of the timber, I wandered about the busy outpost.

Seth M. Hays, a cousin of Kit Carson, kept a rambling two-story hotel and eating-house where travelers met for refreshment and an exchange of news. A sturdy stone building, once used as an Indian mission, now served as a place for public gatherings. One mile east of town was Fremont Spring, named for my boyhood hero, "the Great Pathfinder." In 1845 General Frémont had used this site for an encampment. Big John Creek, near at hand, was

named for one of his guides. When offered a pension for his services, Big John requested that instead of money he be given a new scout uniform each year.

Along Big John Creek the government in 1859 started a housing project for the Indians, erecting 150 stone cabins. The red men, however, preferred to live in their old wigwams, and merely stabled their ponies in the cabins.

The Neosho River at Council Grove is comparatively shallow, with a hard rock bottom. Nevertheless, it took an entire day for our twenty-six wagons to ford the stream. Eighteen miles west was a good camping ground near Diamond Springs, where an inexhaustible fountain discharged its clear waters into a gurgling brook. There were ranches, so-called, at Big Turkey Creek, the Little Arkansas (now Little River), Cow Creek, and Walnut Creek. These were really trading stations. After passing Peacock's station on the Walnut, the traveler found no habitation of any kind along the Cimarron and Aubrey routes until he reached Fort Union. On the Raton route he passed Bent's Fort and Trinidad, a Mexican hamlet at the foot of the Spanish Peaks.

Our trail followed the north bank of the Arkansas River—a beautiful and majestic stream, winding for miles across the level plain. It had many green islands, thickly set with cottonwood trees. We were told that Indians lurked in the bluffs along the valley, waiting to pounce upon unsuspecting travelers. Near the Big Bend of the Arkansas, we passed under the shadow of Pawnee Rock, a treacherous hiding-place and lookout for hostile tribes, and the site of many skirmishes. We felt fortunate indeed to escape any encounter with the savages here.

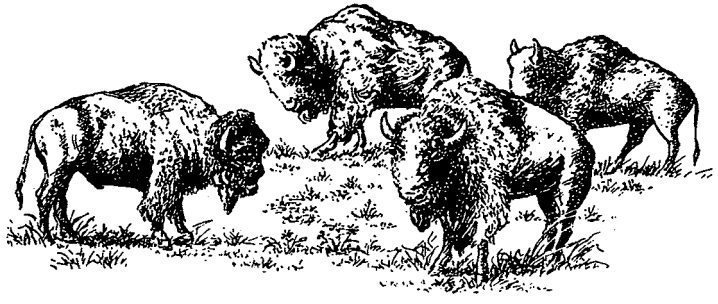
The last place to gather wood for cooking purposes was

at Ash Creek. After that, fuel was husbanded very carefully. Nailed to the side of each wagon was a large gunny sack into which drivers tossed any stray sticks or dry buffalo chips. The tall bluestem grass of the prairies now gave way to short buffalo grass. We had reached the heart of the buffalo country.

By crossing the Arkansas River at a point known as "the Cimarron," one could take a cutoff across Horn Alley, thus saving about seventy miles. Although this meant traveling from thirty-six to forty hours without water for man or beast, our captain decided to risk it. The river at the Cimarron Crossing was then nearly a mile wide and about three and a half feet deep.

Even though we hitched thirty-two cattle to each wagon, it was a hard steady pull. One man waded through the water to steer the lead oxen. Before we reached solid ground there were four miles of heavy sand. After all the wagons were safely across, we drove the cattle back the four miles to the river and watered them. We also filled five-gallon casks and other containers, hoping the water would last until we came to the Cimarron River.

The long dry march was begun in the evening, and we traveled all night. For the most part the road was hard



and level, with only a few sandy depressions. One morning a white mound appeared in the distance. I asked an old-timer what it was.

"The bone-yard," he replied. "It's a law of the plains for every driver to add at least one to the pile. They've been doing it for years."

Miles before the monument was reached, drivers were on the lookout for bones. The pile was shaped like a haystack, about forty feet in diameter and thirty feet high. Whoever got this collection a few years later, when bone-gathering became a profitable business, had a bonanza.

Between 1868 and 1881 many Western communities subsisted largely on the income of eight dollars a ton, derived from buffalo bones. They were shipped east to make buttons and fertilizer, and to be used by carbon works in St. Louis and elsewhere. It was estimated that thirty-one million buffalo were slaughtered by white men for their hides and tongue alone, while the meat was left to rot on the plains. No wonder the Indians, who found a use for every last morsel, cried out against such wastefulness.

Our drive across the barren "water scrape," as this desert was called, continued with little rest all day and most of the second night. We were a weary crew. Men almost slept as they walked. I well remember staggering against a wheel and waking up just in time to avoid being crushed beneath it. For this very reason there were strict orders against riding on the tongue of the wagon.

When we were yet several miles from the Cimarron River, the thirsty cattle, their tongues dry and lolling, smelled the water. They became almost uncontrollable and nearly upset the wagons in trying to make a break for the

stream. A three-day rest here where grass was plentiful gave animals and men a chance to recuperate.

On the Cimarron the water appeared in holes, often ten miles apart. It was impregnated with alkali, though not strong enough to hurt the cattle unless they drank too much, and looked perfectly clear until stirred up by the animals. Catfish that were forced to the surface for air could easily be caught with bare hands.

Indian tribes in this region were friendly and eager to trade almost anything for bacon or sugar. Sugar was, in fact, the currency of the plains. A cup of it would buy a finely beaded and balled pair of mocassins. Five cups paid for a rich black buffalo robe, smoke-tanned and painted, and actually worth several hundred dollars. Sugar was rationed among the boys of our outfit. We could do without it in our coffee and trade it instead, if we chose.

One wagon boss, not in our train, who had been in the battle of Wilson Creek on the Confederate side, showed no scruples about appropriating anything from Uncle Sam. When his government wagons, loaded with sugar, stopped for a day at Wind Valley, he and his men opened hundreds of sacks, took several pounds of sugar from each, and carefully sewed them up again.

After leaving the Cimarron valley, we found that travel was routine, one day being like the preceding. There were Rabbit Ear and Red River to cross; and few teams could take their load over the Apache Hills without doubling. Wagon Mound was the last important landmark before we rolled into Fort Union, fifty days after leaving Leavenworth.

We unloaded, and the very next day started back to the States. As a rule, empty incoming trains took the

Raton Pass. The trail came out of the mountains at Trinidad, following the Purgatory (or Purgatoire) River and striking the Arkansas near Bent's Fort. On one occasion, when the Arkansas was running strong, two wagons turned over while attempting to cross and were washed down the river a good half mile. One carried a man and his wife, passengers coming into the States, but both got out safely. After leaving Bent's Fort, we retraced the route to Leavenworth, where we were paid and discharged.

XV *With the Cavalry in Arkansas*

THE QUESTION OF SLAVERY had not yet been settled, and no one knew how long the struggle would continue. Kansas' contribution to the Northern cause was eighteen regiments, three of them Indian, and two Negro. In August, 1862, I enlisted as a private in Company One of the Second Kansas Cavalry under Colonel William F. Cloud, the idol of the cavalry regiments. Like other officers and scouts of that period, he had very long hair that fell to his shoulders.

A week after my enlistment, word came of the death of my father. It was a loss I felt deeply, for I depended much on his keen judgment, his superior mental faculties, and his high moral sense. Integrity, diligence, and sobriety may be old-fashioned virtues, but they were his rule of life and the cornerstone of his blameless and upright character.

My first assignment upon entering the service was to carry dispatches from our post in Arkansas, called "Muddy Camp," to the colonel of the First Arkansas Cavalry at Elkhorn Tavern near Cross Hollows, about fifty miles northeast. Three others accompanied me, our guide being a sergeant thoroughly acquainted with the region. The country through which we passed was heavily timbered and full of Rebel bushwhackers, the kind that took no prisoners. We had orders to avoid roads as much as possible.

After traveling all night on horseback, we noticed in the dim morning light, near a deep hollow, a fallen tree

and a fine chestnut horse half concealed in the branches. Close by was the rider in civilian clothes. Our sergeant immediately recognized him as a notorious Rebel soldier and declared that the only safe thing was to shoot him.

"No," I protested, "let's take him along."

I promised the prisoner he would not be hurt unless he tried to escape.

Emerging from the forest soon after that, we struck a lane leading into the town of Bentonville, half a mile away. Scores of horsemen were in plain view.

"Shout as loud as you can," our guide directed, "and ride towards them with all speed!!"

It was sound advice, for the horsemen quickly dispersed, and when we reached the town, no one was in sight. Not a man came into the village while we remained. After breakfasting there we took to the woods again and arrived safely at Elkhorn. When our prisoner learned that we purposed turning him over to the colonel, he implored us to keep him, saying they would kill him immediately. His pleas were so affecting that even the sergeant gave in and we took him to a large empty barn, where we all rested a day or two until another dispatch was ready to be taken back.

We again had to travel all night. At daybreak, within ten miles of "Muddy Camp," our prisoner said, "My home is near here. Let me call and see my wife and baby."

It meant going a mile or two out of our way, but I consented. His wife fried bacon and made corn pone and make-believe coffee. She gave us the best she had.

Upon reaching camp we turned our prisoner in at the guardhouse. A few nights later, shots rang out near company headquarters. While attempting to run the guards,

the fellow had been killed. He was considered a "very bad man." I was not sorry, however, that we had made it possible for him to say a last farewell to those dear to him.

When we moved on to Fort Smith, where the Poteau River empties into the Arkansas, I bought a horse that had come originally from the staked plains of Texas and was later used by the Rebels as a dispatch carrier. The Union forces had captured him and put him up for sale, but nobody wanted the lean, rawboned creature. He had only a few straggling hairs for a tail and a mane scarcely five inches long. In spite of his run-down condition, I was impressed by his magnificent carriage and splendidly bowed neck. He was dun-colored, with a cross on his shoulders, a black streak down his back from crest to tail, and black rings around his legs. A friend, who knew his record as a war horse, said he had changed hands for as much as eight hundred dollars in gold, and advised my buying him.

It proved a good investment. The animal was a natural pacer and very fast, high-spirited, and defiant of danger. Throughout the war he was a gallant comrade, and but for him, I might not be alive today.

Most of the army horses were dog-poor. It was well-nigh impossible to find enough feed for them. Some subsisted entirely on split peas. Since his horse is a cavalryman's first concern, we were always on the lookout for fodder.

One day two other boys and I found a cornfield a half mile from camp and were filling our sacks with the fine ripe ears when a volley of shots came from adjoining timber. We were not armed, so we dashed back to camp, snatched our guns, and started towards the field again.

As we passed Colonel Cloud's tent, he called, "What's the trouble, boys?"

We told him.

"Hold a moment," he said. "I'll go with you."

"Wild Bill" Hickok was with him in the tent and rushed out, his keen eyes searching the landscape. This handsome six-footer was destined to become the most celebrated gunman of the West. Our little company of five scouted around the edge of the woods, but heard nothing.

It was now nearly sunset. The Colonel proposed our going a short distance down a well-traveled road into the timber. Tall trees threw heavy shadows on either side of the path. It was soon blacker than darkness itself. After advancing about half a mile, we were surprised by a burst of shots from a company of infantry, and we answered in the orthodox manner.

"Forward, boys!" shouted Colonel Cloud.

The enemy ran and we pursued. A quarter of a mile farther, they formed in the darkness and awaited our advance. Our only way of judging their position was from the flash, the hiss of bullets, and the report. They had all the advantage, knew their ground, and were retreating to the main command. We moved blindly, not knowing where, and unable to see or hear anything until they fired. We had chanced death in the open many times, but this was different. How often we stopped and met their assault I do not know, but we followed until the Rebels opened up on us with artillery.

Colonel Cloud then ordered, "Surround them, boys!"

About seventy-five yards behind us we heard some poor fellow shout, "I surrender!" One of our group worked his way back and took him prisoner.

Strange to say, not one of our little group of five was touched. We learned later that we had been driving a full company back four miles to where their regiment was encamped. They broke camp immediately, and the next day our cavalry followed, overtaking them at Backbone Ridge and forcing them to fight.

Late in November, 1862, Confederate forces were preparing for an invasion of Missouri. General John S. Marmaduke had stationed seven thousand cavalry and some artillery on Cane Hill in northwestern Arkansas, a vantage point from which to guard mountain passes and also near fine farming land. In a brief sharp contest the Federal leader, General James G. Blunt, succeeded in wresting this position from Confederate hands, driving Marmaduke south towards Van Buren.

I was one of a squad of a hundred men from the Second Kansas Cavalry sent from Cane Hill on December 4, to scout around and forestall any enemy maneuvers. After crossing Reed's Mountain, we struck the head of Cove Creek, a crooked stream, winding for many miles through a narrow valley bordered by heavy timber and with mountains on either side. The road zigzagged back and forth, necessitating our crossing the stream every quarter of a mile or so. In a distance of twenty miles through the gorge the road crossed the stream about thirty-five times.

Before long we came upon Rebel pickets, and a tree-to-tree fight ensued. A Confederate officer, Lieutenant Vivian, rode a white horse. He would dismount and fire from behind a tree, then make an open run for another, always under the hiss of bullets. In spite of his reckless

movements, repeated scores of times, he was never hit. He seemed to bear a charmed life.

By mutual consent, apparently, the firing ceased when darkness fell. Both parties kept campfires burning during the night. The next day we drove the Rebels back slowly until we struck their main army. We then retreated through the narrow valley to our own camp at the foot of Reed's Mountain.

That same night—it was Saturday, December 6—Lew Graham and I took it upon ourselves to do a little more scouting, and heard what we concluded were enemy wagons, cavalry, and artillery, passing up the "Line Road," a traveled highway about two miles east, running north and south. We told the other men about it the next morning while sitting at mess, which consisted of coffee, crackers, and sow belly. Colonel Cloud, who had ridden up, overheard our remarks.

"Boys, you are mistaken," he declared.

Just then cannons commenced booming in the distance.

"You are right!" exclaimed the Colonel.

It seems that the Confederate general, Thomas C. Hindman, had determined to move his entire army north and strike our position at Cane Hill, but changed his plans suddenly during the night. Instead, he decided to attack a column of Federal reinforcements at Rhea's Mills, some eight miles from us. General Francis J. Herron, with his Second and Third Divisions, had been making forced marches from Springfield, Missouri, to come to our assistance, and Hindman hoped to turn him back. The roar of artillery and cracking of guns in the distance informed us that Herron, who had only eight

thousand men, was now engaged with Hindman's army of from ten to twelve thousand. Some estimates of Hindman's strength were far higher than that.

No bloodhound on a fresh trail was ever more anxious to find his quarry than were we of the Third Brigade—the Second Kansas Cavalry, Eleventh Infantry, and First Indian Regiment. The cavalry approached Rhea's Mills at full gallop, while the infantry followed at double quick. Our arrival put fresh courage into Herron's exhausted troops.

The Indians attacked the Rebels as they were swinging on Herron's left flank, but were driven back with heavy loss. The cavalry, which fought dismounted, met the enemy as they came on a charge, preceded by the regular Rebel yell. Words cannot describe that blood-curdling sound. The Indian's yell cannot compare with it.

The Federal stand was made on the open prairie behind a heavy rail fence and a group of large haystacks, about a hundred yards from the edge of the timber where the enemy met our advance with a galling fire of musketry. General Blunt ordered the twelve-pound howitzers attached to the Second Cavalry to be moved into the timber on the right of our infantry. Since there was no water, these cannon had to be "thumbed," and became badly burned, but the shot and shell we delivered succeeded in checking the Confederates and in driving them back beyond the crest of a hill. Whenever we attempted to reach the summit of that hill, however, we encountered such terrific fire that we were forced to fall back to a less exposed position.

I had a Whitney rifle, a muzzle loader. We used paper cartridges. You had to bite the paper, put the cartridge

in the muzzle of the gun, seize the gun by the barrel, and stamp it hard on the ground. Your gun was then loaded, ready for action when capped, an operation done by hand. It carried a "minnie ball," hollow at the butt and expanded, making a forced bullet and a deadly weapon. I fired ninety times.

It was a desperate struggle. There were few occasions during the Civil War when bullets flew thicker than on that Sunday, December 7, 1862, at Prairie Grove. The fighting did not cease until after dark, when every gun flashed as it discharged. All of our howitzer horses were killed; so we hauled the cannon back by hand. Rebels were in front and on both sides of us at the time, hardly sixty feet distant.

The contest apparently was still undecided. The Confederates bivouacked in the woods where they had formed in the morning, and the Federal troops remained on the open prairie. Although the night was frosty, neither side ventured for several hours to build any fires. A group of Negro cabins half a mile from our field of battle was equipped with huge fireplaces and offered welcome refuge. All of the wounded that we could reach were brought in, though some of our men had, of course, fallen within Confederate lines.

About nine o'clock, Si Everett—good old Si of Wakarusa—and little Sylvanus Heberling came to me and proposed going back to look for Joe Henderson, our quartermaster sergeant. We had seen him fall. The three of us took a stretcher and crept cautiously through a field of standing corn. On the edge of it, near an orchard, we could plainly see a chain guard, placed there by the enemy. Soldiers, stationed a few rods apart, would walk

a beat in one direction or the other, then retrace their steps and repeat. Joe had fallen some fifty yards beyond this line. We decided to take a chance and crawl between the guards. Nobody saw us and we moved stealthily forward but did not find Joe. A little farther on was a house. We made for that. On the porch, with many others, lay Joe—dead, stripped of his outer clothes, boots, and socks.

Things were stirring in the Rebel camp, so we hastily withdrew, returning as quietly as possible to the line where the chain guard had been. It was no longer there. Anxious to discover what was going on, we did a little reconnoitering and learned that their artillery was moving, the wheels muffled with torn blankets to minimize the sound. Our guess was that they were getting into position for tomorrow's battle. Instead, they were slipping away under cover of the night. They left numerous fires burning in the hope of deceiving our men.

On the way back to the cabins we came upon a soldier lying in the cornfield. He was breathing, and we rolled him gently onto our stretcher. When we reached camp, a surgeon removed the grape and he recovered. After the war, I received a nice letter from him. He lived near Emporia and his name was Butner.

We learned later that Hindman, being far from his base of supplies, had orders from his superior, General Holmes, to retreat. In a truce drawn up between Blunt and Hindman the next morning was an agreement as to exchange of prisoners. Hindman, who was given six hours in which to bury his dead, used this as an excuse to get his army over the mountains, too far for Federal forces to attempt pursuit. There had been a report, later

proved false, which probably had something to do with Hindman's hasty withdrawal. This was to the effect that General John M. Schofield had arrived in Fayetteville with reinforcements and was coming to Blunt's assistance. General Schofield, who had relinquished command of the Army of the Frontier in November on account of sickness, did not resume command until late in December. The withdrawal of Hindman's army after the Battle of Prairie Grove left virtually all of northwestern Arkansas in Federal hands.

Although, by some miracle, I came through this battle without a scratch, I was less fortunate later at Dardanelle, a spot halfway between Fort Smith and Little Rock. There, during a scouting expedition, I was shot twice—through the left side, arm, and hand.

When I fell, "Wild Bill" ran to help me, but concluded I was about gone. Taking a heavy woolen scarf, he folded it quickly and placed it under my head, saying, "Goodby, Frank. This will help you die easy."

"Wild Bill" Hickok was a loyal friend, as I had many opportunities to prove. He came to Kansas in 1855 and became a stage driver on the Santa Fe Trail. As sharpshooter, scout, and spy for the Union army, he had many narrow escapes. He was captured several times and sentenced to be shot.

Once, when we were breaking camp south of Little Rock, a sergeant of Company G got into a quarrel with "Wild Bill" and shot him through the body. He fell and was carried into a tent. My thought was, "That ends 'Wild Bill.'" We were leaving for Fort Smith and I never expected to see him again. Our route lay up the north side of the Arkansas River. Since I had followed

this road before, I was ordered to go in advance as guide with a few companions. On the second day's march, while still in the lead, we found ourselves quite close to the river. A steamboat was pulling upstream. When the pilot saw soldiers in Federal uniform, he headed for shore. A gangplank was thrown out, and who should walk down it but "Wild Bill" Hickok! He was tough in more ways than one!

After the war was over, he took part in Indian campaigns under Generals Custer, Hancock, and Sheridan. His name was later linked with Wyatt Earp, Bat Masterson, and other fearless marshals who helped to tame the rough "cow towns" of the frontier. He upheld the law so effectively that he was appointed marshal at Hays City and Abilene, where he recovered hundreds of stolen horses and mules. In 1876 he joined the gold rush to the Black Hills of South Dakota. While playing in a friendly poker game at Deadwood, he was mortally wounded by a drunken gambler.

Soon after Dardanelle I was ordered to the hospital for convalescents at the old Rector Farm near Fort Smith, because of the bullet wound in my side. The Rector House was a square two-story building with four rooms on each floor and four patients to a room. The Arsenal itself was surrounded by a stone wall on the east and south sides, and on the west and north was defended by the Arkansas and Poteau rivers. The stone commissary building was located on the northeast corner of the garrison, built up against the wall, which was about twelve feet high.

The Poteau at this point was deep enough for ordinary steamboats. In the bed of the river lay several

wrecked craft that the Rebels had destroyed in order to prevent their falling into Federal hands. The water was deep and placid for a couple of miles from the mouth. The only way for commissary stores to reach us was by boats down the river or by wagon train. Food was scarce and we often went hungry.

Each of the thirty-two patients put all his money into a general fund to pay for the meals, prepared by a Negro woman—that is, all the patients but one. Somebody discovered that a man whom I shall call Butcher had twenty-two dollars on hand, but had not contributed anything to the "pot." He always had a good appetite when meals were served; so we worked out a scheme to get his money.

I arranged a "three-card monte" game with some decks that had been given me. This is an absolute steal. The man that "bucks" the game has no possible chance of winning unless it suits the dealer. The other boys were onto the game. They made several small bets and won before Butcher would venture. Meanwhile the winning card had been marked with a pencil for his benefit, while the dealer was not looking.

Finally Butcher hesitatingly bet a dollar, and won it. The boys urged him to go his all; but no, he bet another dollar and won. He was greatly excited, and after a short consultation, placed his all on the game and turned his card; it was a deuce instead of a trey. Poor Butcher was dumbfounded.

We had crimped the cards beforehand, fastening a third spot on the deuce card with white wax. This was removed by drawing the fingernail under the card.

Butcher ran from the room and returned in a few

minutes with a new army overcoat. Meanwhile the deuce had changed back to a trey.

The boys whispered to him, "Are you blind? Didn't you see the marked card?"

He examined the cards, felt of them, and requested me to throw again, betting his overcoat against seven dollars. Of course he lost. We then explained our trick and why we played it on him. The money went into the "pot," Butcher getting his share. He broke down and cried. He admitted he had it coming to him. The coat was one he had bought for only three dollars from a helpless young fellow with a stiff knee. I tossed the overcoat back to its rightful owner, and felt we had accomplished a good day's work.

After three months in the convalescent hospital, I rejoined my regiment at Clarksville, Arkansas, where I was put on detached service in the commissary department, my main task being to furnish beef. It was not a question of buying, but of finding, cattle. They were very scarce, but could occasionally be seen running wild throughout the country, mostly in the canebrakes. Although my side still had a running sore, and my left arm was tied onto a board, I could do very well in the saddle.

Five of us started off one day to look for cattle. We came to a large plantation adjoining the Arkansas River. The owner was a Mrs. Howell, whose family before the War had been wealthy members of the Southern aristocracy. Her most valuable slaves she had recently sent south. Mrs. Howell was a widow and the mother of seven children.

To our amazement we found a large detail of Union

soldiers loading two wagons with food they had found within—meal, bacon, canned fruits, and preserves. We jumped our horses over the low rail fence surrounding the house and accosted the men.

"What's going on here?" I demanded. Receiving no reply, I went on into the house. Here were more soldiers, smashing furniture and pictures. Mrs. Howell was pleading with them, while her daughter, a girl of sixteen or so, and a real firebrand, was bursting with rage.

Although the men claimed to be acting under the command of Captain Harris, I remonstrated with them and ordered them out of the house. Protesting at my interference, they grudgingly complied.

Mrs. Howell came to me and said, her voice full of emotion, "You acted like you might be a gentleman. The soldiers have taken everything. We have nothing left in the way of food but five hundred pounds of cornmeal in a loft over a Negro cabin. If they take this, my children will starve, as well as the few old slaves that are with us. They say the men have already found the meal."

My four companions hurried with me to the cabin. A ladder was set up against an opening in the ceiling. Some soldiers, jubilant over their discovery, were starting to bring down the heavy sacks.

Fate Arnold, one of the boys who came with me, was a slender, quiet-spoken lad of twenty. He coolly seated himself on a rung halfway up and drew his revolver.

"I'll kill the first man that puts his foot on this ladder," he declared.

No one doubted that he would carry out his threat. He was said to have twenty notches cut in the stock of

his pistol. There were rumors that Fate had once been active in the Rebel army, but when I knew him he was a trusted and able scout in the Army of the Frontier.

Just then Captain Harris stamped into the cabin. He was a large brutish sort of person.

"Who in thunder are you?" he demanded.

"Sergeant Stahl of Company One, Second Kansas Cavalry," I replied.

"You are under arrest!" he shouted.

I held out my gun, saying, "Do you want it?"

"No," he flung back scornfully. "Report to Colonel Waugh under arrest."

Captain Harris and his men then departed without the cornmeal and went on down the river, while my boys returned with me to Clarksville without any cattle.

Colonel Waugh listened to our story. He had respect for the sanctity of personal property even in wartime, and was shocked by our report.

"Go down to the blacksmith shop," he ordered, "and have a pair of leg shackles riveted to a heavy piece of cast iron. When Harris returns, arrest him and place the shackles on his legs."

Some time later, when Captain Harris was tried at Little Rock, Colonel Waugh, Mrs. Howell, and I were called as witnesses. Other atrocities he had committed down the river entered into the picture. He was sent to the penitentiary for eight years and threatened to make Colonel Waugh and me pay for it when he got out. That was long ago, and I am still waiting. Taps have sounded for Colonel Waugh.

A short time before the trial, Mrs. Howell had sent her daughter Helen to our post to ask for help in moving

their furniture to a large house north of Clarksville, where she could be with relatives. I got hold of a wagon and a yoke of oxen and went down alone, although there was always danger away from the post.

To show her gratitude, Mrs. Howell invited me up to the house several times, but I always refused. One day Helen came again, insisting that her mother wanted to see me, and that I must go with her. I demurred as usual—whether from bashfulness or stubbornness, I cannot say. Helen would not take no for an answer. I simply *had* to go.

We started walking up the sidewalk through town. Suddenly she ran down to the ditch alongside the street below us and picked up a large hoop.

"Here," she exclaimed, throwing it over my head, and getting inside it herself. "You won't get away from me now!"

Their house was filled with finely dressed ladies. Helen was a typical Southern belle, I suppose, and she and her mother tried to make it pleasant for me in every way they could. It was of no use. I felt out of place, rough and uncouth. In fact, I had more fear of women at that time than I had of a grizzly or a buffalo.

A noted Rebel leader was paying court to Helen, and after the War was over, married her. He rode a fine spotted horse, coveted by every soldier in our Clarksville group. Knowing the virtues of my mount, he once sent word that he would like to exchange his horse for mine, but I refused.

There was some criticism in camp concerning my action in helping the Howells, but my association with them leaves only pleasant memories. I had joined the

Army as a matter of conscientious duty, out of devotion to the Union cause, not to fight women or to live off their land.

During my wartime service I was assigned to take some mules from Springfield, Missouri, to Fort Scott, Kansas. An old Auburn pal, James Dickson, who was stationed at Springfield, asked me to carry a letter to his sister Jennie, since my trip included a short furlough home. There was little means of communication between soldiers and their families, and any message was precious.

As I rode along towards Auburn, after transferring the mules, I remembered something Mr. Dickson, Jim's father, had said to me when I first came to Kansas and was living on the Simerwell place.

"Frank," he had said, "I have a little Scotch lassie for you."

He referred to his twelve-year-old daughter Jennie, who had sparkling black eyes and dark curly hair. At the time his words went in one ear and out the other. Jennie must be quite a young lady now, I thought—about eighteen. I doubted if she would even recognize me with my reddish-brown beard and skin tanned by wind and sun. Here was I, a strapping fellow of twenty-two, still afraid of girls, and fast becoming an "old batch."

I knocked at the Dickson door to deliver Jim's letter. Mrs. Dickson greeted me cordially and asked me to come in, but I was anxious to see my own mother as soon as possible. Just then my eye caught a quick movement behind the door leading into the kitchen, and I heard the swish of an apron. Someone was peeking

through the crack. It was Jennie! Of that I was certain. I felt the color mounting under the bronze of my cheeks.

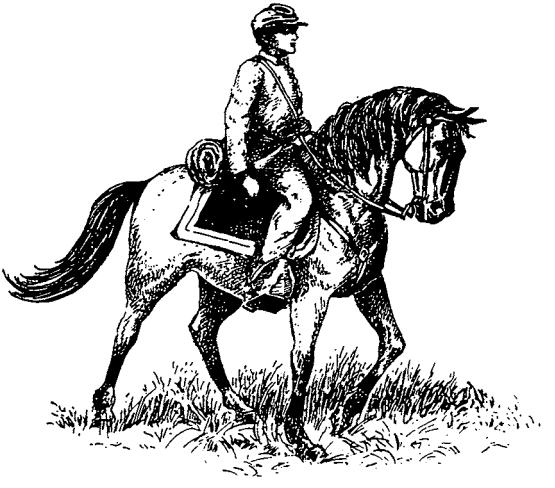
As I rode on towards home, I thought to myself, "There's a shy little miss. She is even more bashful than I!"

After the week-end visit with Mother on the farm, I returned to Fort Smith, where I met some Federal soldiers who had escaped from prison at Tyler, Texas. They were old San Juan prospectors. In comparing our experiences in the mountains, we mentioned the unfortunate ones left to lie in unmarked graves.

"Up in Gray Back Gulch near the San Luis Valley," one soldier observed, "I remember seeing where some poor old fellow had been buried near a tree carved with this epitaph: 'Sacred to the memory of Tom.'"

Why disillusion him by explaining that Tom was merely an ox?

Shortly before the end of the War I received the rank



of sergeant major. I had participated in twenty-seven engagements where artillery was used, the two most important battles being those of Cane Hill and Prairie Grove. With the declaration of peace in 1865, I was given an honorable discharge at old Fort Gibson in Indian Territory.

XVI "Git Along, Little Dogies, Git Along!"

NOT FAR FROM SANTA FE, New Mexico, the government had put a large group of Apache Indians under guard and was faced with the problem of feeding them. The best way to supply meat was on the hoof. A large commission house in Leavenworth was given a contract to deliver several thousand cattle. Jimmie Kerr, head of the firm, offered to pay me five dollars a day and all expenses if I would oversee a drive across the plains. Since "the long trail" was still in my blood, I accepted the job.

Among the twenty drivers I chose to help were Jim Dickson and my brother Jerome. Most of the men were recently discharged soldiers like myself. They were mounted on Indian ponies, while a special assistant and I rode mules. There were also two teamsters, each with a wagon drawn by three yoke of oxen. We started from Leavenworth with three hundred cattle, all branded with the letter *K*. We picked up more at Auburn and Winchester, bringing the total to 1,233 animals.

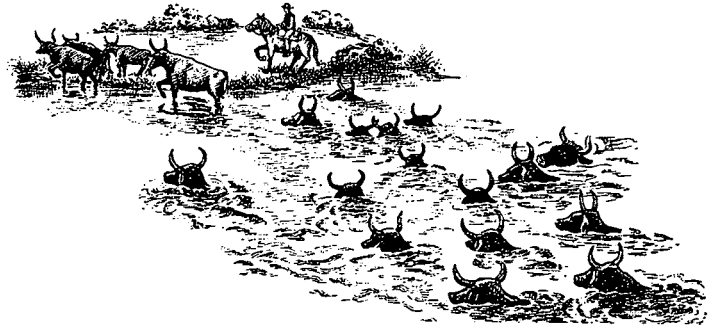
Our orders were to let owners of the toll bridge at Lawrence supervise the crossing of the Kaw. Their plan was to have just fifteen or twenty cattle on the bridge at one time, so that it would not collapse. Bridges were something of a novelty in Kansas; and the animals, after starting across, would run back again in alarm.

For an hour or more the exhausted herders worked in vain, the animals becoming restive and unmanageable.

Finally a group got well out on the bridge and started to run forward. It was impossible to hold the others back. They all followed in a stampede, carrying the four bridge-owners, who were on horseback, along with them. The bridge trembled with the weight and everyone expected it to go down. Fortunately the timbers held, enabling men and cattle to get across safely. Thoroughly frightened, the animals continued running down Massachusetts Street, and reached the banks of the Wakarusa before the drivers gained control.

Swollen streams, caused by heavy rains, were often almost impassable. We sometimes waited days for waters to subside before fording. Deep mud was also treacherous.

At various points along the Santa Fe Trail soldiers were stationed to provide escort from one fort or ranch to another. At Larned I was delighted to find my old Army commander, Colonel Cloud; but from that point on, just when we most needed it, there was no government protection.



We took the cutoff to Fort Dodge and were nearing Rio Blanco on a foggy night, when one of my men reported seeing horsemen on a ridge. The boys got their arms and ammunition and lined up ready for action. I rode back a hundred yards and met the Indians coming on the run. When they caught sight of the line of men, they veered off to one side and disappeared without firing a shot. A Mexican train, following some distance behind, did not fare so well. The Indians attacked and killed seven men. It had been a close call for us.

During the drive, night herders often sang plaintive cowboy songs to quiet the cattle; and even during the day, singing lightened the monotony of the road.

Throughout our journey, we passed large bearded buffalo by the tens of thousands, sometimes so near we had to drive them away from the cattle. Our closely bunched herds crept across the parched desert waste of Horn Alley, until we neared the Cimarron River. Then in a wild stampede for water, they scattered over thousands of acres. After several days spent in rounding them up for the remaining stretch, we felt our initiation into the brotherhood of cowpunchers was complete.

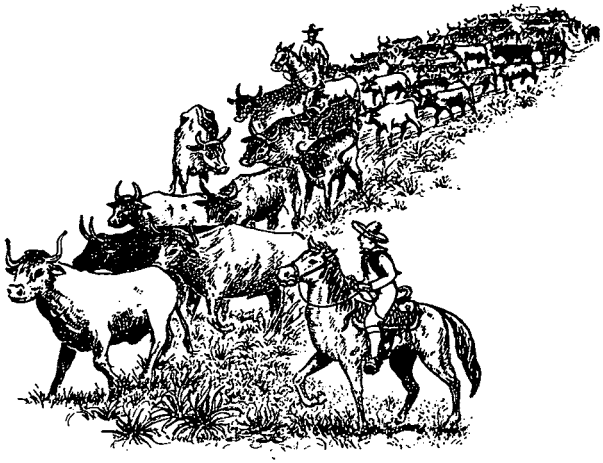
Government officials at Fort Union received, weighed, and counted the cattle. Having fulfilled our contract, we then prepared for the return trip.

The drive back was made later than usual. All but two of the ponies we left at Fort Union, the men now walking instead. We kept the two wagons, however, to haul grub and blankets. The route we chose this time was the Aubrey Trail, named for Felix X. Aubrey, a noted French-Canadian guide and the first man to take a loaded wagon train from the Missouri River to New

Mexico in the winter. The greatest distance without water was only thirty miles, compared with the sixty miles along Horn Alley on the Cimarron River.

Captain Aubrey is best remembered for his famous ride from September 12 to 17, 1848, when he covered the distance from Santa Fe to Westport, Missouri, in five days and thirteen hours, stopping neither to eat nor sleep. He used eleven different horses and tied himself to the saddle so that he could doze without falling off. This astonishing feat, which won him a five-thousand-dollar wager, has never been equaled on the American continent.

Our men, in crossing the Arkansas River, nearly a mile wide, had to wade through slush and ice all the way. Snow on the farther bank was four inches deep. The few dry buffalo chips we had saved provided our only fuel for warmth and cooking. Sleepers crowded close together in the wagons, bundled in blankets against the chill of the plains.



James Dickson suddenly became quite ill and we were all deeply concerned. One of our drivers from Leavenworth had some training and experience as a doctor.

"There's only one possible chance of saving him," he declared, after an examination. "That's with quicksilver."

He said that the remedy itself might prove fatal, but Jim agreed to try it. After hours of anxious waiting there were signs of improvement. A feeling of relief swept over the camp. By the time we reached Auburn, where he turned in at his own gate to be greeted by his family, Jim was quite himself again. I had the feeling that our prayers, rather than quicksilver, had saved him.

XVII *On the Trail of the Indian*

UP TO THE CLOSE OF THE CIVIL WAR, only the eastern third of Kansas was considered tenable. Marysville in the northwest and Council Grove to the southwest were the last settlements. Beyond that it was dangerous for men to settle. The few who dared to homestead on the high plains were in constant peril from hostile Indians.

Early in 1866 the state legislature authorized the sale of 500,000 acres of land to foster the building of railroads. From that time on, the situation became more and more acute. Indians resented the white man's intrusion into their world and fought to retain their choice hunting-grounds. Attacks upon slowly moving trains and railroad workers made railroad construction most difficult.

By the summer of 1867 raids and outrages became so general that Governor Samuel J. Crawford issued a call for volunteers to help subdue the marauding tribes. Nearly four hundred recruits from many parts of the state were mustered into the Eighteenth Kansas Volunteer Battalion on July 15. They were to work with the government troops in patrolling the frontier and keeping the Indians at a safe distance. We were stationed at Fort Harker, the new terminus that year of the Kansas Pacific Railroad. This post in the heart of Indian country was a freighting and distributing depot for southern and western forts, and a starting point for stage lines to Santa Fe. There were a number of regulars at the post, among them a colored regiment.

Our battalion was a single squadron of four companies under the command of Major Horace L. Moore of Lawrence. The captains commissioned by Governor Crawford were Henry C. Lindsey of Topeka, Company A; Edgar A. Barker of Junction City, Company B; George B. Jenness of Ottawa, Company C; and David L. Payne of Atchison, Company D. Recruits from Topeka and Junction City were assigned to Company B, my company, with John Price of Indianola, first lieutenant, and Samuel Hybarger, second lieutenant. Non-commissioned officers were, as a rule, selected by the volunteers, but contrary to the usual plan, I was appointed first sergeant by the governor, with the private understanding that I should fill the first vacancy by a commissioned officer, should there be one. Since most of the volunteers were fresh from the Civil War, they needed little training to become effective soldiers.

Along in August, cholera broke out, becoming virulent. Men were dying daily. Hybarger was one of those who died. The governor commissioned me to fill the vacancy as second lieutenant. In the hope of staying the plague, our battalion was ordered to move out onto the plains. We marched to Fort Larned, many dying along the way. Indians west of Fort Dodge had attacked three Mexican wagon trains and taken mules and cattle. We guarded the wagons until fresh oxen could be obtained to move them, and tried unsuccessfully to intercept the Indians.

In our scouting trips up the Pawnee Fork we followed the route taken by General Custer the preceding spring, and noticed that seed had sprouted where he had fed oats to his horses. Well-headed plants had grown to a

height of three or four feet. If oats sown in this manner grew so abundantly, I wondered why they might not do even better if properly cultivated. But never was the suggestion voiced by anyone that agriculture on the plains was feasible. "Farming? Why, this land wouldn't raise white beans!" The high prairies with their soapweed and prickly pears were considered fit habitations only for prairie dogs and buffalo. In spite of the far-reaching work of the pioneers, how blind they were to the possibilities of the future!

One expedition we made northwest of Harker included a hundred Negro soldiers from the regulars at the base. Our command was split up into three parts of two hundred and we traveled chiefly at night, hiding in ravines or canyons by day. We passed one Indian camp where the coals of a testing fire were still alive. A post set in the ground was so arranged as to turn, while fastened to it was a lever or pole about sixteen feet long. As this was moved around, it made a circular path perhaps one hundred feet in circumference, on which were live coals—a well-beaten path where young braves had been required to prove their courage and endurance by walking barefoot over the coals.

Just at daylight one morning we discovered the head of a buffalo that had been freshly killed. We knew what that meant. Removal of the whole carcass of the animal was a sure sign of an Indian camp nearby with women and children. At the summit of an adjacent ridge we saw more than a thousand Indians. What a sight they were, forming less than a hundred yards to our left near the head of a ravine! The tails of many of their ponies had been lengthened out to ten or fifteen feet, with a

small stick plaited or tied crossways in the tail about every three feet. They were, of course, trailing on the ground. The reason for this I have never learned.

I was riding a spirited bay mare. She bolted and was uncontrollable, taking me close to the Indians. It became necessary for me to dismount quickly, seize her by the bit, and lead her back. Not a shot was fired at this time, since the Indians were intent on getting between the advance guard and our main command. This they failed to do. Our main body fell back for some distance. The battle that ensued was later referred to as the Spillman Creek fight. We had less than two hundred men, completely surrounded by many hundred Indians fighting desperately for their squaws and papooses. Our horses were placed in the bottom of the ravine, a few soldiers being left there to guard them. We quickly formed a hollow square, all of us lying flat on the ground. The Indians would shoot from the top of the ridge, principally with arrows that came by the hundreds. They also had a few revolvers.

Occasionally a brave would ride full speed in front of their line at a distance from us of 75 yards or less. All you could see were his head and arm under the back of his pony, and one foot above. Our men took pot shots, but seldom hit. It was necessary to curb the shooting at these Indians runners, for ammunition was getting low.

Our situation was desperate. Not only were we surrounded by bloodthirsty Indians, our ammunition nearly gone, but we were practically out of food and water and were separated from our other two detachments. Already we had a number of dead and wounded men; and few, if any, of us ever expected to get away alive.

About an hour before sundown, a tall Negro sergeant, whom I had previously befriended, came running over to me from the opposite side of the field, tears streaming from his eyes.

"Lieutenant," he gasped, "I heard sharp-shooting over the south ridge, and quite close. It may be our rear guard. Won't you chance a run with me to the top of the ridge and see what it means?"

This from a colored sergeant to a white lieutenant was surprising, to say the least. The sergeant had already run a regular gauntlet by himself. Whenever a man rose to his feet, he at once became a target for the bullets and arrows of the Indians. Nevertheless, we started off together on the run, knowing we were playing with death. Although showered with bullets and arrows, we gained the top of the farther ridge, and what a sight met our eyes! It made the blood run cold! Just a quarter of a mile distant was our lost rear guard on the open prairie, entirely surrounded by Indians and fighting hand-to-hand.

Our return to the command amid flying arrows was accomplished successfully. I lost my mustache and nursed a pair of very sore lips, but the sergeant came in unscathed. I at once reported the situation to Major Armes, who was in command of the front line, and suggested our helping the rear guard. He replied that it was utterly impossible to move.

"Major," I insisted, "I'll tell the boys. You know what they'll do. You'd better give orders."

Major Armes had little use for the officers of the Kansas troops, while the Kansas officers had no use whatever for him. But it was his to command and theirs to obey.

He finally complied with the suggestion, however, and ordered me to notify the commanders on the lines.

This was a dangerous assignment, but was done without a scratch. We placed the dead and wounded men on horses, tying many of them to their mounts. The hollow square formation was retained, but this time by mounted men.

"Forward!" was the order, the Major taking command of the front line.

When we reached the ridge, the Indians gave way and let us pass. Few shots were fired. We were, of course, running from the enemy. There was no getting around that. It hurt these Western boys, many of whom were fresh from the Civil War. Strange to say, after a mile or two, the Indians ceased to harass us in any way. We knew the respite was only temporary, however, and that soon, as the boys put it, "There would be hell to pay."

As the sun went down, a full moon rose in the east. It was almost as light as day and as fine a night as one could wish. Our general direction was southeast towards Fort Harker, but we found no sign of the rear guard that the sergeant and I had seen from the ridge. What had become of it? The main hope now was to strike the trail of our other two detachments. The one with the two big guns had been sent southwest, while the other detachment under Lieutenant Price, wagons containing food and ammunition, was supposedly following a northeasterly course.

Something now took place that was strange and unexplainable. After we had proceeded a few miles, I happened to notice that the moon had either gone to the west or that our command had about-faced. We were

headed northwest, toward the battleground we had just left. I rode back to Captain Barker.

"Captain, what direction are we going?" I asked.

He took a good look. There was the full moon. The startled answer came, "Why, back to our starting-place!"

"We rode to the front, saluted the Major, and asked, "What direction are we going?"

"Southeast, gentlemen," he replied.

Our rejoinder was, "We are going due northwest."

"Impossible!"

We pointed to the moon in our rear. He finally halted the command, dismounted, and placed a small watch compass in his hat. After lighting a match and getting his bearings, he remarked, "Gentlemen, I am completely bewildered!"

Then to me he said, "Lieutenant, take two men and a guide, take a southeastern direction, and keep in front of the command a short distance."

I gave the order, "Attention. About-face. March!"

Only once during the night did the Indians fire on the retreating soldiers. This assault came from the head of a ravine on the left flank. It was answered quickly by the boys. A sharp yelling from the Indians ended the attack. Several times they fired the dry prairie grass. Once, when the smoke came rolling over the marching boys, for some unknown reason, they seemed to be magnified to many times their natural size. Mounted men appeared thirty feet high, their horses stepping in proportion to their height. This strange illusion lasted fully half an hour.

Before dawn we came to a stream—the Republican, I think—and struck camp. The men were told to get

what rest they could, but not to unsaddle their mounts. They were completely worn out after traveling two nights in succession and fighting all day. Many of our men had either an arrow or a bullet wound to show for their part of the work. I was ordered to place guards. As far as I could tell, everyone, including the guards, went to sleep. I, too, slept on the ground, holding my little mare by her halter.

A few hours later I was awakened by the report of gun shots.

"Fall in!" was the order, and in less than three minutes the boys were counted off and ready for action. Up the ravine a mile or so we saw Indians running on horseback and could discern the smoke of their rifles. They occupied all the high points overlooking the valley. There were hundreds of them. The course of the river was crooked and the valley narrow. At times the land jutted out hardly a quarter of a mile above the stream, and every elevation was alive with Indians.

The Negro sergeant and I were sent ahead to reconnoiter. Upon rounding a point of land and gaining a farther view of the valley, we saw, less than a mile ahead of us, a covered wagon—one of those belonging to our lost detachment. We stopped to consider the situation, and as we stood there, men in blue seemed to come right up out of the ground. One or two climbed on top of the wagon. It was our wagon and those were our boys! The sergeant and I eagerly started toward them, but we were halted by the Major. He had caught up with us and naturally wanted to be in first. The other four wagons of this train were hidden in one of the deep impregnable cuts or gullies, common in that part of Kansas. The In-

dians had tried to attack the train the previous evening, but found it well protected against assault.

That afternoon a man came riding in from the southeast on a wounded horse. It was Allison J. Pliley, who had been with the rear guard and was suffering from a bullet wound in his leg. Pliley, a natural leader and scout at Fort Harker, was one of the bravest and most effective cavalrymen of the West. His story was quickly told. He had participated in the hand-to-hand fighting which the black sergeant and I had witnessed the day before. Though apparently on level ground, they were actually near a deep and rocky arroyo, which they managed to reach, and when night came on they had started in the direction of Fort Harker. All of their horses were killed or captured except two—the big roan that Pliley rode, and a little white pony that carried an arrow in his jaw. We were unable to pull it out until we got back to Harker. Soon after Pliley came in, a couple of our troops went out and brought in the rear guard.

It was a joyful reunion of the three sections of our command. Who dare say that an overruling Power does not bring things to pass? Think of it—there was our attacked party of the morning before without food and nearly out of ammunition, surrounded by howling savages. There was the rear guard, worse off by far, and there was the wagon train with the food and ammunition. None of these three companies knew where the others were, although for ultimate safety they were absolutely dependent on one another.

Each started out, like one of old, "not knowing whither he went." Two of the companies marched all night. In the morning, strange to say, the three groups

found themselves within two miles of one another, and quickly combined forces. Did it just happen that way? I think not. Even the most hardened Western men got down on their knees and gave thanks.

Upon returning to our base at Fort Harker we found large herds of cattle there. They had been driven up from Texas to be shipped by train to Eastern markets. One day, when a construction train came in, loaded with ties and rails, three burly cowboys standing nearby watched a medium-sized man step off. He wore a white shirt, collar, and necktie.

There was an unwritten law of the plains that nobody should wear a "boiled shirt."

"I'm going to have some fun with that fellow," remarked one of the cowboys to his buddies. Stepping up to the newcomer, he said, "Well, Mr. Brown, I see that you are back again."

The little man replied in a mild voice, "My dear sir, you are mistaken; my name is not Brown, and I was never in this town before."

"Indeed you *were* here yesterday," insisted the cowboy. "I talked with you myself and you gave me considerable lip."

"You are certainly mistaken," returned the stranger. "I repeat. I was never here before, nor did you ever speak to me before."

Growing still bolder, the cowboy declared arrogantly, "It's no use for you to lie to me. You knocked my hat off yesterday and I'm going to give you a trouncing!"

He advanced slowly toward the little man, but there was a lightning change. The stranger's necktie and coat

came off with a flash, and he squared himself for action in such good form that the big fellow hesitated.

"Well, sir," the cowboy conceded, "it is possible that I may be mistaken. At any rate I'll give you the benefit of the doubt."

"No, indeed," declared the newcomer, rolling up his sleeves. "You are right; my name is Brown, just as you said. I was here yesterday and knocked your hat off. Pull yourself together. One of us is going to get a trouncing."

The turn things were taking alarmed the cowboy. Remembering his boastful defiance, he knew his partners were waiting to see the fun; there was no way out of it now.

After a pass or two the little fellow "got in," and the cowboy measured his full length on the ground. He staggered to his feet, only to be knocked flat again. This happened three times, the stranger cool as a cucumber and always receiving his opponent with a smile.

Going down for the third time, the challenger stayed there. "Who in creation are you?" he asked weakly.

"My name is Jack Dempsey."

He was the original prize-fighter of that name—middleweight champion of America. It was clear that the onlookers enjoyed the scrap far more than the cowboy, who bit off more than he could chew.

During our four months at Fort Harker excursions into outlying districts covered some 2,200 miles. We had encounters with Kiowas, Comanches, Cheyennes, and Arapahoes.

In October, 1867, five of the most warlike tribes met with a United States commission on the banks of the Medicine River and signed a treaty which did much to

end Indian fighting in Kansas. About 15,000 tribesmen were present, each of whom received gifts of food and clothing and the promise of a new outfit annually. Seed and farming implements were also supplied in abundance.

Under terms of the compact the Indians agreed to cease their attacks on railroad construction crews and to capture no more women or children. They were to move farther south, away from the Kansas branch of the Union Pacific Railroad, but were permitted to hunt on their old reservations until white settlements increased.

There were violations of these agreements by Indians and white men alike. Congress failed to make appropriations to carry out the provisions, and as a result, there were subsequent outbreaks. After a bitter winter campaign by the Nineteenth Kansas Regiment of Cavalry in

1868, the five tribes were finally compelled to keep the peace, and harmony and friendship have continued ever since between the Indians and white men. In November, 1867, when there seemed to be no further need of the Eighteenth Battalion, we were mustered out of service, glad to return to our homes after the rigors of warfare.

XVIII *Stone Fences*

THE DREAMY HAZE OF LATE INDIAN SUMMER hovered over the gentle slopes and timbered valleys of Auburn. It was good to be back on the farm with Mother and to follow bypaths to the homes of old friends. Robert Simerwell still lived in the log cabin to which he had welcomed me ten years before. His daughter Elizabeth greeted me at the door and introduced her husband, John S. Carter, a graduate of Indiana University. After a brief courtship, he had persuaded her to abandon her career as a schoolmistress and marry him.

She had already taught two or more terms at Auburn and at Shawnee Center, where she received the prescribed salary of twenty dollars a month, with the privilege of "boarding around" at homes of her pupils. In Ottawa, she was associated with the noted Chippewa Indian, John Tecumseh Jones, better known as Tauy,[1] who with his wife, an experienced white missionary, had a school for both Indian and white students. This soon grew into Ottawa University.

John Carter had been a teacher in Indiana before coming to Kansas. The young couple now made a home for Elizabeth's aging father, whose mental vigor and religious zeal were still evident. It was a privilege to know such a man.

One Sunday afternoon, James Dickson and I strolled aimlessly across the stubble fields to the banks of the Wakarusa. We scuffed through the leaf-strewn paths and teased the chattering squirrels. It was a fine time to be

[1] Said to be shortened from "Ottawa" or "Ottaway," Jones sometimes being known by the latter name.

in the woods. Walnut, oak, hackberry, and sycamore trees made a picture more colorful than artist's palette could produce. We breathed deep of the cool autumn air, and laughed as we recalled early prophecies that one day large boats would be steaming up the quiet waters of the Wakarusa, bringing heavy commerce to Auburn.

The town had never regained the population it boasted in 1858, when our mill wheels were turning. All hope of becoming the state capital, or even the county seat, had long since faded. The final blow to Auburn's future growth came later, in 1868, when the Santa Fe Railway bypassed the town by seven miles.

The sun was still high when our wanderings brought us back to the open fields.

"Let's go where there are some girls," I suggested, not mentioning the particular lass I had in mind.

Jim must have read my thoughts. "There are girls at my house," he said. "Why not go there?"

We found Jennie and her sisters on the porch. They were merry and full of fun. Jennie blushingly admitted having peeked at me through the crack two years before.

"I couldn't let an Army officer see me in an old apron, and my hair going every which way!"

To be truthful, I could not imagine her hair looking other than lovely, falling in dark cascades over her shoulders and framing her sunny face, so full of animation. She was the same pretty child that I remembered, now ripened into womanhood; modest and unassuming, but carefree and gay. A man could lose his heart to a girl like that!

For a while my time was taken up with farm chores on Mother's place. There was wood to be cut and piled

in sheds for the winter; potatoes, squash, and apples to be stored in the cyclone cellar; besides raking, trimming, and pruning in the garden and orchard. Dusk came early, with kitchen lamps sending out a warm cheerful light and the stove giving just the right heat for comfort.

The place stood in need of a fence; so I gave my attention to that, making it out of stone. This led to the building of many stone walls throughout the township along bottomlands and timber to protect farmers' crops from cattle. The work included the grueling task of quarrying and hauling rock from limestone ledges. Good construction called for careful selecting of stones, fitting the first tier into the earth to insure a level foundation, and placing longer rocks on the outside of the wall to give it strength. Small chips were pounded into chinks and crevices. With a sharp tool for dressing the rock, I knocked off any rough protrusions that jutted out and squared the corners. My technique improved with practice and I kept busy year in and year out, receiving $2.50 a rod.

In 1861 the state legislature had enacted a law stipulating that any farmer who failed to maintain adequate fences could not recover damages for injury done to his crops by stock running at large. At that time very little of the upland prairie was enclosed and a cattleman had almost unrestricted use of the range. Cattle were turned loose with bells around their necks and allowed to roam for months.

Barbed wire eventually proved the most economical and effective fencing material. Osage orange was also popular, making rapid growth, and becoming so dense and thorny that neither man nor beast could penetrate

it. To determine just where a fence should run effectively was something of an art. My two years' experience in building stone barricades led eventually to my having a farm of my own.

I was working one day not far from the Dickson place and kept looking up, hoping to catch a glimpse of Jennie's sunbonnet. Disappointed in not seeing her, I decided to walk up to her house. As I turned into the driveway I discovered two young Auburn swains seated on the porch. After hesitating a moment, I started back towards the road. How absurd it was for an old duffer like me to be courting Jennie's favor! She had dozens of admirers.

"My cake's dough," I acknowledged gloomily to myself.

Just then I heard a tap on the windowpane and glanced in that direction. Jennie was beckoning to me. No further urging was need, and before I knew it, I was enjoying fresh gingerbread and a glass of cold buttermilk, with Jennie a gracious hostess.

From that time on I saw more and more of Jennie and realized she was the only girl in the world for me. It soon became clear that she returned my affection. One evening I found Mr. Dickson sitting alone in the yard. This gave me the opportunity I had been wanting to ask for his daughter's hand.

"A good fencer makes a successful farmer," he said. "I am sure you will make a good home for Jennie. Remember, I told you years ago, I had just the lass for you. I'm glad she is now to be yours."

Jennie and I were married in 1869 and our cup of joy was full. We began housekeeping amid humble surroundings in a little log cabin in the woods. I had saved enough

to buy 160 acres of fertile land a few miles southwest of Auburn and soon built a larger dwelling of native lumber. I took delight in breaking my own piece of ground, tilling the soil, and following the constant rhythm of sowing and reaping.

After purchasing some fine Texas cattle, I spent much time in the saddle, rounding up the stock. You might almost say that all of Kansas was our grazing ground. The faithful mount that carried me through the war was now retired from heavy duty, and I rode a high-grade Morgan stallion, a rather vicious animal but another fast pacer.

One day, while we were still living in the one-room cabin, I started off as usual to see to the cattle and was gone several hours. When I returned, Jennie was greatly agitated. A group of Indians had entered the house and taken everything they could find in the way of food.

Soon after that I succeeded in obtaining a good watchdog that we named Bruno. He barked menacingly when strangers came around and proved a strong deterrent to further plundering.

Friendly members of the Pottawatomie tribe, on the other hand, remembered the Simerwells with undying gratitude because of their work at the Baptist mission. They often visited the grave of their beloved teacher, Mrs. Simerwell, on a gentle slope across Six Mile Creek.

Later, when John Carter was building a two-story house north of the Simerwell cabin for Elizabeth and their children, Indians camping on the grounds nearby were invited to spend a stormy night in the unfinished structure. The floor to the second story had not yet been laid. About twenty men rolled themselves in blankets and stretched out in front of the blazing fireplace. They were heard to exclaim, as they looked up at the roof, "Big wigwam, big wigwam!"

As a token of friendship, the Pottawatomies brought some red calico and a silk sash to Elizabeth's daughter Fannie, named for their teacher, and some sleigh bells to her son John.

When Jim Dickson married, Jennie and I persuaded

him and his bride, Lizzie, to live in part of our new house until they could build their own adjacent to ours. Jim had never completely recovered from a physical weakness resulting from hardships during the war, and died when comparatively young. We gave what assistance we could to Lizzie in bringing up her six children.

Jennie and I were blessed with eight children of our own—six boys and two girls. Two of the boys were twins. In time I acquired 640 acres of land, enough to keep a man well occupied. Nevertheless, I accepted such responsibilities as Master of the Grange, Worshipful Master of our Masonic lodge, and superintendent of the Sunday School. In 1892 I was one of fourteen Republicans elected to the state legislature, and two years later, became treasurer of Shawnee County. This necessitated moving from the farm to Topeka for four years, but I kept my legal residence in the country.

XIX *Prohibition Picnics*

EVER SINCE I WAS A BOY, abstinence from intoxicating liquors had been with me a subject of vital concern. I had seen enough of alcohol's evil effects to want to wage war against it. The Order of Good Templars, which I joined at the age of seventeen, had co-operated with other societies in a great temperance revival all over the state. Temperance reform had followed close on the heels of the antislavery movement. The saloon in its worst aspect was strongly entrenched in many cities of Kansas. Brawls and shooting scrapes were common in wide-open "cow towns" that served as a rendezvous for gamblers, outlaws, and fugitives from justice. In backfiring against the dry sentiment gradually sweeping the prairies, liquor dealers defiantly violated every restrictive feature of the laws, selling liquor on Sunday, selling to minors, and disregarding other ordinances.

The evils of the saloon became so apparent that Governor John P. St. John, a leader of the temperance movement, urged the 1879 legislature to submit a prohibition amendment to the people.

During the frenzied campaign that followed, farmers around Auburn planned a rally to create sentiment for the passage of this constitutional measure. The gathering took the form of a huge picnic in a shady grove on my farm along the south branch of the Wakarusa. We invited preachers of the community to speak.

The struggle between the two factions in the legislature was bitter, women trying to influence their legislative husbands. The Woman's Christian Temperance

Union, convening in Baltimore, set aside a month for prayer, with Kansas' campaign in view.

The Senate finally passed the bill unanimously, sending it to the House, where the vote was close. Mrs. G. W. Greever, wife of a member from Wyandotte County, rushed to the floor, when she heard her husband say "Nay," and persuaded him to change his vote. This made the required two-thirds to carry the measure. The next day the Governor presented Mrs. Greever with a scroll designating her "the Mother of Prohibition in Kansas."

In the general election of 1880 the amendment won by a vote of 92,302 for and 84,304 against, making Kansas the first state in the Union to adopt constitutional prohibition. It went into effect on May 1, 1881, and from that time on alcoholic liquor was legally outlawed in Kansas. We celebrated the achievement of this goal by another picnic in our grove the following year, and continued to hold annual jubilee celebrations thereafter, partly to keep the dry forces on their toes.

We arranged an outdoor amphitheater with seats on the side of a hill and a large stage, equipped with appropriate scenery. The seating capacity was two thousand. A lumberyard in Burlingame, nine miles away, donated planks for seats and tables, seven or eight men with farm teams hauling them back and forth.

Women brought flowers, flags, and bunting to decorate the grounds and posted temperance banners everywhere. Soft drinks, lemonade, and ice cream were sold, concession fees just about paying expenses. Children received free ice cream tickets. The Auburn Sunday Schools put on programs, flag drills, band concerts, and other

entertainment, with a home-talent prohibition play after dark. People from far and near came early and stayed late.

We always had the very best speakers—governors, senators, and other persons of prominence. Prohibition was the central theme of all. It was at one of these picnics that Charles Curtis, then county attorney, declared, "From this time on, I'm a prohibitionist!"

One year bootleggers tried to sell liquor near the grounds.

"Go buy a bottle," I said to one of our group.

He got it; then three or four of us started after the scamps. We were on foot. They saw us coming, and so ran for their buggy and clambered in. Just then my nephew came along with a spirited team of horses. We climbed into his wagon and the race was on.

Being a justice of the peace, I ordered, "Stop!"

The bootleggers drove all the harder. I whipped out my revolver, intending to bring them to a halt by getting one of their horses, but I missed. We continued the race another mile. Ahead was a bridge with half a dozen boards gone from the flooring. The men drove right on, making their horses jump the gaps. We didn't attempt this hair-raising stunt, and they got away.

We did succeed eventually in catching them, however, by swearing out warrants and having them arrested. Our case was clear, and the man who sold the bottle of whisky near the picnic grounds was duly convicted and punished. They never disturbed us again.

Old-timers in Kansas well remember that adoption of the prohibition amendment was but the real beginning of the fight. It took more than a score of years to make prohibition really prohibit. Liquor dealers did not give up

without a struggle and public sentiment often favored the outlaws. Law enforcement was a farce. The wets were far better organized for political work than the dry forces. Kansas was an "island in a sea of whisky." Not only that, but there were no interstate commerce laws to prevent liquor from being shipped in from all sides. This little ditty of mine describes the situation:

> I'm legally dry as a state can be,
> But lawlessly wet as the deep, deep sea.
> Is that a paradox? Search and see!

During my second term as treasurer of Shawnee County, a "Committee of Seventeen" was organized to aid in enforcing the prohibition laws. We met every Sunday afternoon at four o'clock, and I was elected chairman. Later we increased the membership, calling ourselves the "Committee of Two Hundred."

The saloon-keepers set up a steering committee of their own to keep tab on our activities. They had considerable fun at our expense, but we managed to keep them guessing and rather "got on their nerves." One of their most trusted men brought us information as to their plans and purposes.

Although we became adept at securing evidence, our cause was almost hopeless, and little was actually accomplished in the way of law enforcement. "Hung juries" were inevitable. Many well-prepared cases with names of witnesses given to the county attorney from the police court, as the law directs, were passed on to a grand jury and died a natural death. Such was the state of affairs when I left Topeka in 1898 to return to the farm.

One showery afternoon two years later, when soggy

fields prevented work with the teams, some of the boys and I were down by the creek, trying to dislodge wasps' nests from the trees. A horse-drawn buggy came through the gate and stopped close by. The Topeka friend who greeted me I knew well as a member of our Committee of Two Hundred and secretary of the State Temperance Union.

"Mayor Drew wants you to come over to the city," he said, "and my instructions are not to return without you."

"What does the mayor want with me?" I asked.

"To appoint you Chief of Police."

"That's impossible!" I replied emphatically. "I'm not going with you."

My friend was so insistent that I finally agreed to ride over the following evening to talk with the mayor.

I met with fifteen or twenty others. Things were not going to suit an honest man like Mayor Drew, who had just been elected by the dry forces. He needed a police chief who would see that the liquor laws were enforced, and wanted me to take the job.

"But I know nothing about police work," I protested, "and if *I* lived in a city of 33,000 people, I should resent the idea of going to the country in search of a city marshal."

The others agreed that my arguments sounded plausible. Considering the matter settled, I mounted my horse and rode home. Two days later a letter from Topeka urged me to reconsider the position. Another meeting followed, lasting into the early morning hours.

Jennie and I talked the matter over together, carefully and prayerfully. The farm needed me. To leave it now meant a great sacrifice of time and money. I was

making a good living, and a little more, off the land during a period when farming was highly profitable. On the other hand, the pressure from Topeka was hard to resist. There was an even stronger urge within me that could not be ignored.

Finally Jennie settled the question by declaring, "Frank, the call is higher than men."

I realized more than ever what a true-hearted, unselfish woman she was. "Yours will be the hardest part," I said, "to stay on the farm and direct things here."

XX *"Old Alfalfa's" Raids*

WHILE SERVING IN THE SECOND CAVALRY, I took part in about all the scraps available, but they seemed as nothing compared to the skirmishes I now faced in grappling with the liquor element. Being a veteran fighter, I adopted the wrecking-crew method of raiding joints, arming my squads with axes, rather than guns.

My first raid was at "Murphy's Place," where I found Murphy doing business. The warrant called for all appurtenances, and I took them—bars, glasses, chairs, pipes, pumps, and everything else. The custom had been to take only the liquid goods and the beer pumps.

Murphy remained good-natured, saying, "So you are the new chief?"

"Sure."

"Are you going to tear up things like this every time?"

"Sure."

"Well, if this is your method, you will not be bothered with me very long."

"It's not you, Murphy; it's your business," I explained.

The next evening I found him selling intoxicants through a window on the alley. Men were drinking and everything was going as usual. Murphy had set up a temporary bar. We raided him again, taking everything he had.

"We were told that you were a square man, but you're not," he said sullenly.

"Why not?"

"Your men raided Klauer last night and left his bar and fixtures, while you took mine. Do you call that fair?"

"No, sir," I replied, "it is not fair. The men had a warrant and orders to take all the fixtures and wet goods. There's a raid going on there now. If his fixtures aren't taken, I'll give yours back."

Murphy was all smiles. "That's fine," he said. "All we want is fair play."

Although these men were outlaws and criminals, they had respect for anyone who gave them what they considered a square deal. One of the offenders said to me later, "While you were chief, if we could get a keg of beer and slip it through, we made far more than under the old regime. With former chiefs we had to divvy; with you we got it all."

It was useless to start from the station with a squad of men. In the upper window of an office building facing the jail there were spies to report by telephone the route we took. To carry out a successful raid it became necessary to send the men out one by one in different directions, with orders to meet at a certain point.

"Old Alfalfa won't last long," the bootleggers predicted. "This is only a spasm."

They removed their expensive bars and stored them in basements, waiting for the day when they could use them again. That day never came. It was the beginning of the end.

A prominent lawyer—a go-between—came to me one day, saying, "I am authorized to give you $3,000 a month, if you will let the 'Big Four' alone." The "Big Four" was the King Bee of the city, a saloon and gambling annex.

My answer was, "Not enough money."

One of the best weapons used by the jointists was to get the city ordinance under which we made arrests de-

cleared void by the courts. This resulted in two things: first, no law to work under; and second, seizures were considered illegal until a new ordinance was passed.

We often had on hand wet goods valued at thousands of dollars; perhaps two hundred pumps worth $7.50 each. If the court had ordered the goods returned, a day was set and a receipt ready for every man to sign, listing the articles in question. This was a trap that caught every offender in the city except one, who saw the point.

"Must I sign that receipt to get these goods?" he asked.

"Sure thing."

"Then I don't want them."

One of our largest seizures was made at a wholesale liquor house in north Topeka. A carload of beer and sixty gallons of whisky were taken. The evidence was clear and the judge declared the jointist guilty.

Turning to me, he said, "I order the wet goods destroyed, as the law directs."

Preparations had been made for this order under advice from first-class lawyers. I was told that the liquor was mine until an appeal bond had been given and approved.

I ran from the courtroom to my office directly above, and commenced throwing five-gallon jugs out of the window. They landed with a crash on a pile of rocks in the prison yard. The judge came up to watch the sport.

"Have you approved an appeal bond, your honor?" I asked.

"N-o," he replied.

I kept on throwing until twenty-nine jugs of whisky, two kegs of wine and gin, and a dozen bottles of other

liquor had been precipitated to the ground. The prison yard looked like a wrecked greenhouse.

We then went to the cellar where a half dozen policemen were crashing through beer kegs with heavy picks and axes. When a vent was made, the liquor spurted out in all directions. It now covered the floor to a depth of several inches.

The attorney for the convicted owner of the "booze" threatened us with all sorts of penalties for the destruction of his client's property. Then he rushed from the room. The police judge stayed, and annihilation of kegs and cases continued.

I was watching every move, realizing that if a cog slipped, it would catch me. The attorney came back and handed a paper to the judge. He signed it.

"Have you approved the appeal bond, Judge?" I asked.

"Yes."

"Stop the work, boys," I ordered.

One hundred kegs had been emptied and the cellar was a lake of beer.

The jointists gradually lost their open, aboveboard defiance, and took to hiding. The combination was broken. It was now every man for himself. The game had developed into one of hide-and-seek. Illicit dealers knew that unless we could produce the goods, we had no case in the opinion of the courts. They kept only small quantities on hand; the rest was secreted in the stove, between floors, behind trapdoors, underground, in horse mangers, in locked trunks, in safes—everywhere.

Guards were stationed by the outlaws to warn of our approach. This gave them time to conceal the pump and

destroy or hide the liquor. I fooled them several times by hiring a hack and driving slowly past their den with two or three policemen. The "cops" jumped out, ran in, evading the guards, and got the goods. Another successful raid was accomplished by hiding two officers in the wagon of a farmer who came along with a load of hogs.

There were three social drinking clubs that presented a problem. By paying twenty-five dollars to a member of the Amity, I got a key, and let myself in one evening, following right behind two of their men. I reached the center of the room before anyone recognized me. There was a long bar where scores of men were drinking, and several kegs of beer were in evidence. The couple who preceded me were blamed by the others for failing to close the door as they entered. I made two more surprise entrances before the members "got wise" and changed lock and keys.

At the "Scat Club" our seizure was large. I had stationed myself outside the front door, hoping to get in when someone came down the stairs inside. Almost immediately a large man opened the door. I put my foot in the crack, gave him a pull and a push, and told him to keep his mouth closed. He didn't peep. Two of my officers directly across the street had orders to come quickly if they saw the door open. When we got upstairs, we took a roomful of tipsy revelers completely by surprise. More policemen arrived and we made a clean sweep, but there were no convictions.

Notwithstanding the fact that convicting evidence in all the club raids was perfect, the time came when, under a court order, what we had seized was returned. Nevertheless we were making progress. The offenders were

growing nervous and fidgety. They never knew when or where we would strike next.

It was while I was police chief that Carry Nation came to Topeka with hatchet in hand to lead her forces against the rum traffic. Although she sometimes resorted to prayer meetings in front of liquor joints, her methods, as a rule, were far more belligerent. This militant reformer in poke bonnet and black alpaca dress had taken it upon herself to enforce the prohibition laws by personally wrecking saloons and emptying kegs of "devil's broth," as she called the hated intoxicants.

I tried to explain that she was violating the law in acting without a warrant, but she would not listen. When I saw her smash doors and windows of saloons and even break the lock on a cold-storage building where game was kept, I had no alternative but to arrest her for malicious destruction of property. Whenever I met her on the street, which was often, she boiled with indignation and flung out such salutations as "How are you today, scoundrel?" or "How are you, hell-hound?" Although other women told her that she was mistaken about me—that we were working for the same cause—she remained bitter in her denunciations.

Mrs. Nation left the city for many months. Then one night, as I entered the waiting room at the Rock Island station, I heard a loud summons, "You, chief, come over here. I want to talk to you."

The voice was unmistakable. "Aunt Carry" was seated in a far corner of the room. I went over to take my medicine, and could hardly believe my ears when she said, "I was wrong about you, chief. Here is one of my souvenir hatchets; I want you to wear it."

I declined, thanking her for the honor.

"Do let me fasten it on your coat," she insisted. "It is gold and set with pearls. Won't you wear it two days for me?"

"Pin it on, Aunt Carry," I said. It is still treasured among my keepsakes, reposing in a leather-bound case in my home.

Despite her eccentricities and chaotic methods, Carry Nation started things and made people think. Eastern newspapers sent reporters to interview her. Certain liquor dealers later acknowledged that they gave up their business and sought honest work because of a feeling of shame in the face of this lone woman's courage.

After Mrs. Nation's crusade took the form of public lectures, she was billed to speak in the Topeka auditorium and asked me to introduce her. This I did, giving her a good "send-off." During her lecture she referred to the fact that I had arrested her and placed her in jail, adding, "He winked at me when he done it."

XXI *Gambling Must Go*

DARING AND QUICK WITS were needed to cope with the wily gamblers. Nothing short of a complete surprise could win. They had secluded rooms, guards, and buzzers. With half a minute's warning, the money disappeared from the tables and all convicting evidence was gone. In place of a gamblers' den, we would find a quiet clubroom with pitch games in progress and guests innocently reading or conversing.

They had just such a "hangout" on the top floor of the Copeland Hotel, but how to get there was the problem. The white clerk and four colored boys downstairs had orders to buzz a warning if the police chief or any of his men came in. Fortunately I had a friend at court who brought me information. A chance to play cost each gambler five dollars, he explained, offering this suggestion:

"If you'll give me twenty-five dollars, I'll get you into the game yourself."

"The money is yours," I replied.

"Meet me this evening at Dexter's parsonage," he said, "and I'll tell you my scheme."

Mr. Dexter, a Methodist minister and superintendent of the Kansas State Temperance Union, was glad to co-operate in such a worthy cause. We met as agreed, and I learned that the first thing required of me was to part with my whiskers.

I had kept company with this facial adornment for many years and was loath to give it up. Finally I yielded.

"Have it your way," I said.

After shearing my long chin whiskers to a pointed vandyke, the make-up artist hesitated.

"I hate to cut off your mustache," he said.

The embellishment on my upper lip was wide and heavy, reaching back to my ears. I felt that it was my one distinctive feature and betokened authority. The stiff hairy growth quivered apprehensively as the shiny blades drew near.

"It would take months to grow another," I pleaded.

To my relief, the others agreed that waxing the mustache and curling the ends, Italian style, would serve the same purpose. After it was blackened, along with my hair and beard, and my skin was covered with a brown cosmetic, the disguise was perfect.

I always wore civilian clothes. These I now exchanged for the preacher's broadcloth suit, since we were of about the same size. I donned his high silk hat—he was a good dresser—and put on gloves to hide my battle-scarred wrist. Mr. Dexter wore my clothes, and we started off together for the Copeland.

As we entered the lobby arm in arm, I played a stiff leg. Seated in chairs along the wall were the four bellboys I dreaded. One advanced, bowing.

"What can I do for you, sir?"

"Is Senator —— in his room?"

"I'll go and see, sir. Just wait."

"Thank you," I replied, "but I know his room. I'll walk up."

Dexter and I started up the stairs. With my stiff leg, it was slow going until we got out of sight. Then the stiffness suddenly disappeared, and I dashed up several

flights, leaving the preacher behind. I had to act quickly.

My diagram of the upper floor showed but one hall, whereas there were two, branching off from the main corridor. I took the wrong one, ran back down the other, opened the door of the gambling room, and rushed up to the table with an automatic in my hand. This was the only time I used a pistol in seizing goods.

"I'll take the stuff!" I said.

There were about ten men in the game. They did not recognize me, and thought it was a holdup. They stood and put up their hands, while I gathered the money—around $2,500.

"Get yourselves together," I ordered. "You are going to the station."

The legislature was in session, and the group included several Representatives, besides a leading politician and a prominent doctor.

"Great Scott, is that you, Frank?" the politician exclaimed.

"Sure."

"I can't go!" he protested. "Think of the wife and girls! They'll go crazy!"

"You *are* going, just the same."

The legislators insisted, "We are immune from arrest while attending the session."

"I don't know who you are," I replied. "You can talk to the judge."

The next plea was, "Don't book us in our right names!"

"If, knowing your names, I book you in some other," I replied, "I forfeit my office and subject myself to a fine

of one hundred dollars."

They then pleaded for non-publicity in the papers.

"It is in your hands," I answered.

Meanwhile two officers had entered the lobby downstairs, according to previous instructions. The buzzer sounded but was too late. The hotel staff wondered what was up. You can imagine their surprise and consternation when I stepped out of the elevator with the group of distinguished men under arrest.

At the station they were booked in their proper names, if I knew them; others in the names they gave. The charge was gambling. Each man put up a cash forfeit and, of course, never came back. The city was two hundred dollars ahead. The Representatives made no fuss, and there was no more gaming during the legislative session. The doctor often had a good laugh over the affair. The prominent politician never mentioned it.

In another hotel, while games were in progress, a colored boy stood by the stairway with a buzzer under his hand. He had orders to buzz if the chief stepped inside.

One evening just after dark I planned a little stratagem. An officer was to run diagonally across the avenue near the hotel with two others in hot pursuit, shooting into the air and creating a great hullabaloo.

It worked perfectly. Everybody, including the clerk and colored boy, ran to the door, while another officer and I walked upstairs and caught the gamblers. Later the proprietor chided the boy for leaving his post.

"Didn't I tell you that chief needed watching?"

"Well, boss," the boy responded, "I did run *some* to

the door; but I never took my eyes off dem stairs. I tells you dat chief never went up dem stairs!"

Nevertheless the poor fellow lost his job.

Our most dramatic surprise raids were at Mike's Place, a combination saloon and gambling joint with rooms on the second floor. Over the stairway was a heavy "deadfall," drawn up with ropes and pulleys and set so that it could be sprung at the opportune moment. There was another instrument of torture—a large hand bellows filled with red pepper for the special benefit of the chief. The heavy front door had a lock that defied breaking. It was a two-by-six with one end resting on the stairs and the other on the heavy centerpiece of the door. A guard inside permitted entrance only if the proper signal was given. The way seemed completely barred.

It so happened that the main gambling room at the west end of the second floor had a low skylight. I rented an upstairs room nearby, with a window just above the roof of the adjoining building. We had a ladder ready if needed.

One snowy night Hutton, my assistant, and I crawled out of this window. We made our way stealthily along the roofs until we found the skylight. Despite the snow, we could see the movements of poker players below us. Some fifteen officers were stationed not far from the building, with orders to close in at the sound of a pistol shot.

Hutton tied a strong rope to some framework and coiled it over the glass. I took hold of the rope, pulling it taut. Hutton then fired his pistol and smashed the panes of the skylight to smithereens. As I went down with the glass, I lost my grip on the rope, owing to my game left

hand. Throwing up my feet instinctively, I landed flat on my back on top of the table, with bottles, money, and cards underneath.

Angered by the way I descended upon them, the ringleader shouted with an oath, "That's a confounded way to enter a man's house. Why couldn't you come in at the door like a gentleman?"

He swore that he would not go to the station in a patrol wagon, but he did. Mike may have been the only chronic lawbreaker who held a grudge. His plea was, "I am running an honest game."

The very next night we again took the place by storm. Since the boys objected to my going down the rope, Hutton went instead. Mike took immediate steps to block the skylight entrance by boarding it over.

Although my task as police chief was not an easy one, the excitement and uncertainty of every move held a fascination for me. Most of the city officials were opposed to the "country rube," and the city council refused to confirm me as city marshal, forcing Mayor Drew to swear me in each month. The mayor himself, however, gave me his complete confidence, declaring, "I can sleep of nights now." I understood what he meant.

XXII *Mission Accomplished*

After five years as Chief of Police I returned to the farm expecting to remain there the rest of my life, but fate had not so decreed. A call came almost immediately to serve as superintendent of the Kansas State Temperance Union. I could not refuse, although it meant a full schedule of lecturing, educating, distributing literature, editing a monthly paper, analyzing suspicious beverages for city and county officials, and running a detective bureau and law enforcement department.

At conventions, chautauquas, and street fairs I made vigorous appeals for prohibition and had five speakers in various parts of the state nearly every Sunday. We answered questions and refuted arguments, the most common being, "You can't take away my personal liberty."

I pointed out that there is "no such animal" as personal liberty. The Ten Commandments, written on tablets of stone, contain eight "Thou shalt nots" direct and two others by implication. We are also hedged in by man-made laws from every quarter. The law tries to make a good citizen of you by taking away your personal liberty. To those who insisted that "we need the revenue," I replied, "The saloon on the corner pays into the city treasury $1,000 each year for what? The privilege of catching everyone it can and turning men into drunkards, vagabonds, and jailbirds."

A marked change in public sentiment gradually became evident, and enforcement machinery grew stronger and more efficient. Numerous amendments by the Kan-

sas legislators tightened the clamp upon offenders until our state had the most stringent anti-liquor laws in the country and was considered the standard-bearer of the prohibition cause.

The victory in Kansas was far-reaching, serving as a mighty lever in Eastern campaigns. I was asked to help in whirlwind crusades throughout Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Ohio. Our meetings were usually in the open; the speaker's stand was a wagon alongside a saloon. A driver, two speakers, and a bugler made up the group. One or two lusty blasts from the horn gave us a start by attracting passers-by, and soon we would have a crowd. Hostile gangs, egged on by saloon-keepers, often tried to break up the meetings without success.

Our Ohio campaign lasted a month, giving me an opportunity to revisit New Harrison, the place of my birth. I had never returned since that day, more than half a century before, when I bade my comrades goodby, expecting to be back in two years, provided the "border ruffians" were driven out of Kansas by that time. There was little chance, I knew, of seeing a familiar face. Boyhood friends had either gone off to war or moved to larger cities.

There were many changes. Swamps once impassable for man or beast had become tillable land, and most of the timber was gone. Greenville Creek seemed much smaller. Macadamized highways, railroads, and electric interurban cars had revolutionized transportation.

Our farm seemed shrunken in size, with a railroad cutting diagonally across the fields. The little house showed signs of age; but attachment to one's birthplace,

no matter if it is time-worn and weather-beaten, cannot be shaken off. Conjured up from the past were all the early associations, as well as my own budding hopes and ambitions.

As I wandered about the countryside incidents long forgotten flashed across my memory. I thought of the otter slides, the bee trees, and the holes of coons high up in leafy branches. Barns, as of old, were considerably larger and more substantial than the houses. On farms the hand rake had been replaced by the sulky rake, the old chaff-piler by the threshing machine, and the one-horse shovel plow by the two-horse cultivator and double-row weeder. I learned that whisky at sheep shearings and in the harvest field was a thing of the past.

When I crossed the common at Greenville I recalled the drunken riot there and my father's admonition. Did my long, persistent fight against the liquor traffic stem from that day of violence?

A few years ago my oldest son remarked, "Pa, if you had never left the farm to work for prohibition, you'd be $100,000 better off than you are today." He was probably right; yet I have no regrets. At a critical time in our state's history I was given an opportunity that comes to few men to inaugurate a new deal.

Now, as I approach my ninety-fifth year,[1] I live all alone, spending the winters in Burlingame and summers in a little cottage near the farmhouse where my brave sweet Jennie and I started housekeeping. My thoughts go back continually to those happy days with her and with our eight children, who are scattered far and wide,

[1] Frank M. Stahl died on March 4, 1937, at the age of ninety-five.

having homes of their own and little ones fast growing up. There is no cause to complain. It is the way of life.

At the dedication of a boulder on the Simerwell burial site across Six Mile Creek, I was glad to pay tribute to the kind old missionary, whose homestead is now owned by his grandson, John Carter, a former county superintendent of Shawnee County.

Other Auburn boys have won distinction. There was William Quayle, who attended my Sunday School class at the age of thirteen. One stormy night he walked to a Methodist revival meeting at Prairie Center about two miles away. When someone inquired the following day how many converts there were, the reply was, "Only one —a little red-headed boy."

That one, Will Quayle, took his conversion seriously, becoming an illustrious bishop of the Methodist Church. At the age of thirty he was made president of Baker University, from which he had graduated only five years before. He later presented to the university his famous collection of Bibles, one of the finest in the nation. During his busy career he also found time to write many books.

Lewis Lindsay Dyche was but a few weeks old when his parents came to Auburn in a covered wagon. He spent his boyhood exploring the woods and fields of this region, and was twelve years old before he learned to read and write. His father used to say, "I don't know what I'm going to do with Lew. He is smart, but all he wants to do is to hunt, fish, and gather insects, bugs, and butterflies." As Professor of Zoology at the University of Kansas, he established a remarkable collection of mammals, now

displayed in a museum appropriately named for him. His numerous scientific expeditions took him from South America to the Arctic regions.

On my tramps around Burlingame—I walk as much as a man of fifty—I pass the home of a Mr. Twitchell, whose son originated Coca-Cola. On Buttermilk Lane lived a Civil War veteran, John J. Flinn, who heard Lincoln deliver his Gettysburg address. He hired a Connecticut Yankee to build his house, paying him $1.75 a day, but always subtracted a few cents for the time he spent lighting his pipe.

Something in the atmosphere of this locality seems conducive to longevity. Jesse Yeager, who lives a mile west of Auburn, has passed the century mark. Sam Moran, another early settler, had the reputation of being the oldest white man born in Kansas. I myself am the last living officer of the Eighteenth Kansas Cavalry Regiment, which played a part in protecting the lives and property of early settlers from the terrors of Indian raids. We veterans agreed a good many years ago to meet annually to talk over old times as long as two of our number remained. There is a feeling of *camaraderie* among those who have stood together in peril and have drunk from the same canteen.

For all of its trials and conflict, life has brought a good measure of contentment and peace. On warm sunny days I sit out under the lilacs and chat with neighbors and friends who stop to admire my zinnias, gladioli, and dahlias. As I prune my grapevines or work among the fruit trees in the orchard, I look across rich harvest fields

stretching far into the distance. Kansas is by no means a "Great American Desert."

In a nearby pasture, where the hard sod has not been touched by the plow, one may still trace deep ruts cut by covered wagons and lumbering Concord coaches. The old Santa Fe Trail traversed the entire length of Burlingame from east to west, and it was here that the overland stage changed horses. I have seen four horses led out with twitches, each horse held by one man while another hitched them to the stage. When everything was set and the driver seated with lines in his hands, the twitches were removed, allowing the horses to dash off at full speed across the plains.

Past events are as clear and vivid in my memory as when they were happening. These recollections sometimes have a way of spinning themselves into verse. So let me end my story with a rhyme which, for want of a better name, I'll call

Pioneer Days

In the long time ago, when the country was young,
Before her glories and praises were sung,

The roads we traveled were over trails
That had been blazed through hills and vales.

The trek was on; 'twas Westward Ho!
And bye and bye to Ohio.

Then on, still on, by slow advances,
Until they came to a place called Kansas.

Their maps, tradition, and papers said
The land beyond that line was dead,

That still beyond was a desert great
That never could be made a state.

But there was a tale by campfires told,
That still beyond was a land of gold.

Adventurous men, for the sake of gain,
Started to cross that trekless plain.

The motor power was the oxen way,
And they trudged along from day to day....

While grass was green the road was live
And busy as bees in the Kansas hive.

When the grass was dead that once was green,
Not a wagon on all the road was seen.

The men were scattered everywhere;
Some went here and some went there.

Some built a cabin beside a rill,
Some dug a hole in the side of a hill,

Some built a 'dobe of grass and clay,
Called it home, and a place to stay.

Then the laws of God and man were obeyed;
Women came, and the men they stayed.

Wonder of wonders, seeds planted grew
And the few became a mighty crew.

The land that was once a barren plain
Became a sea of golden grain,

And the place we called the desert great
Became a great and wonderful state.

Then things were changed in many ways,
Since the time of the oxen was fifty days.

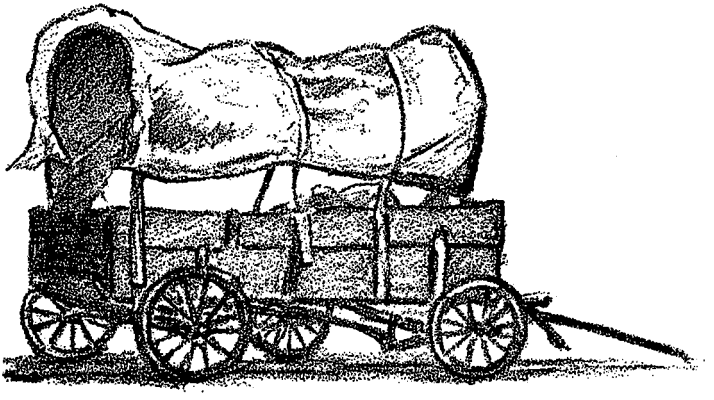
The stagecoach came with an all-night drive
And the fifty days were reduced to five.

Then the train came along with a wheeze and a choo,
And the five days were reduced to two.

Then the telephone came, and the train wasn't in it;
The time was reduced to less than a minute.

Then the radio came, and it took a part,
And now we're there before we start.

Take the past and present for a text;
Can we but wonder what comes next?



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