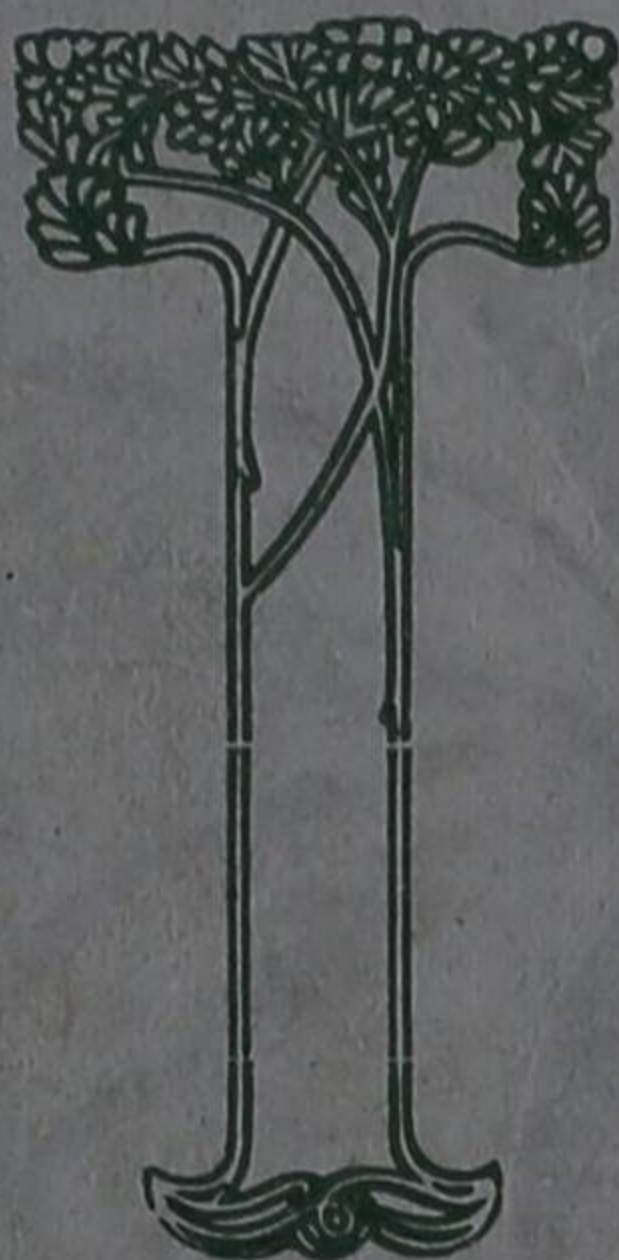
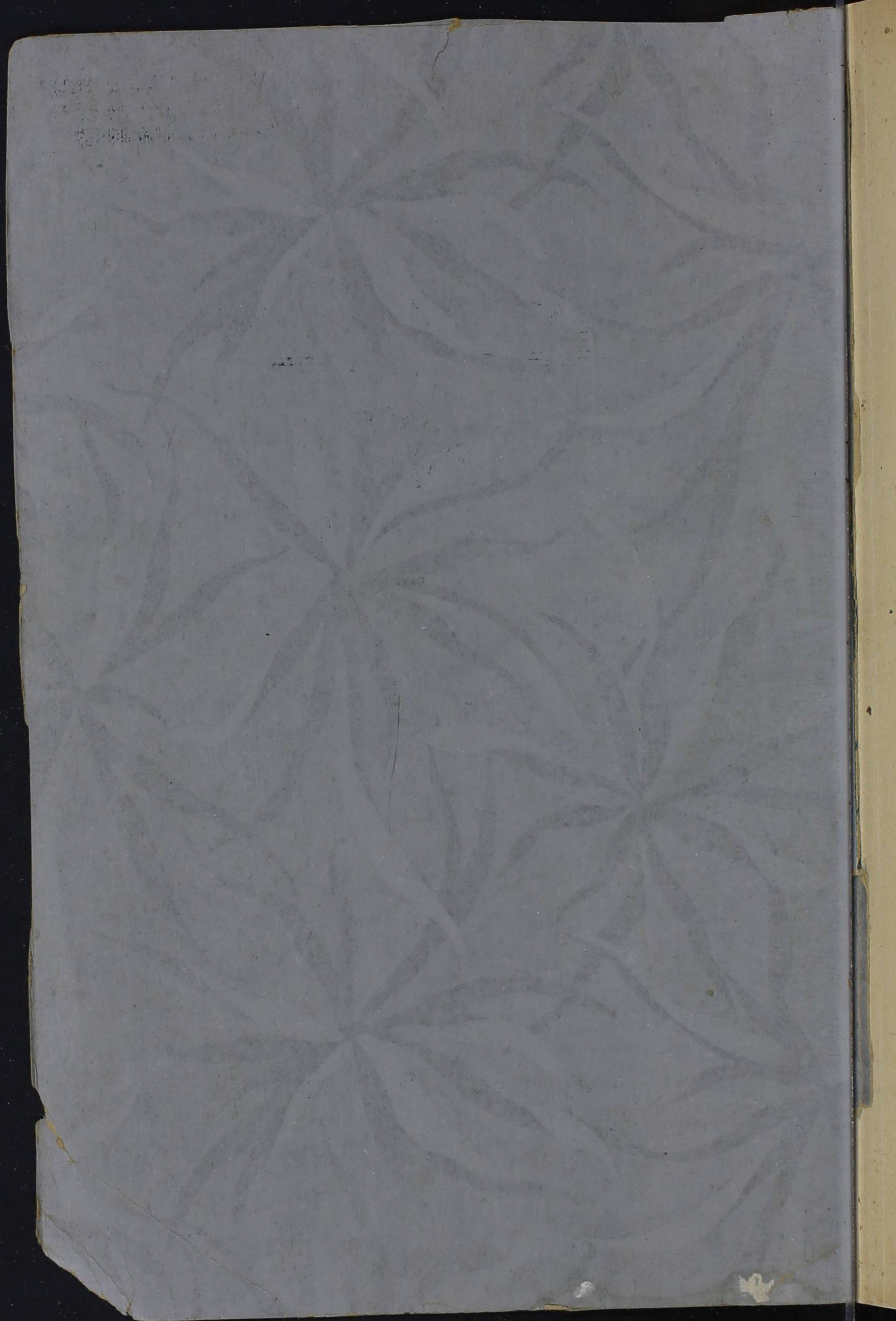


Shirt Tail Inn



BY
M. A. WARREN

45
W291
s558



SOUTHWEST COLLECTION
Texas Tech University
LUBBOCK, TEXAS 79402

45

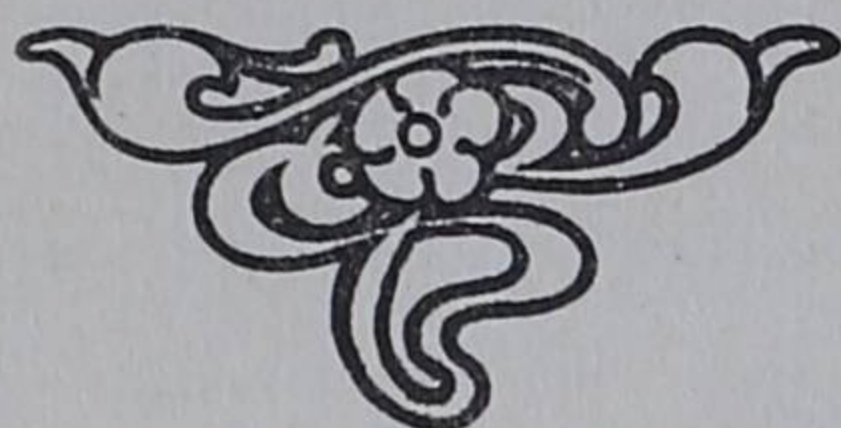
W291

5558

100.00

Shirt Tail Inn

History of a Pioneer's Early Life
in the "Far West"



888115

1988

BY
M. A. WARREN
220 West Alabama Street
HOUSTON, TEXAS

Mike Cox Books

Copyright, 1930

M. A. WARREN

All Rights Reserved

FOREWORD

I am M. A. Warren, aged ninety, wife of Sam Warren and author of the little story of his early life.

For more than sixty years, Sam and I, trudged along life's pathway together. And all the way we *thought* and *said* we *would* write the story of his adventures in the "far West"—and *did not*.

And then one day—came the "Boatman with the silent oars"—and Sam went away, and *I* am left to write it *alone*. I've done my best, but written words lack *so much*. The expression of face, the accent of voice, the gesture and the sparkle of the eyes, that was there when *he* told it, *I* can not get.

How I wish that I could.

DEDICATION

To my boys and girls

This little story
of their father's early life
and his struggles and privations
is lovingly dedicated

Mother

Shirt Tail Inn



CHAPTER I.

Yes, I am Sam Warren.

Sam Warren, the Third. The last of three generations of Sam Warrens, and I, too, have long since crossed the "Great Divide" and am well down on the western slope, waiting the "Boatman with the Silent Oars."

My grandfather, or "Grandpap," as we children used to call him, was an English boy, and came over to this country on one of His Majesty's ships, just in time to round into his eighteenth year, and to serve as "high private," in the Continental army. After the war was over he went back to his home in the Green Mountains of Vermont. There he married and settled down—or *tried to*.

No use. The war had put into his veins the inherent lure of the Wanderlust.

THE WANDERLUST

Grandpap was a natural rover. He just could not "stay put" and the lure of the Wild West was calling him.

Calling, calling, perpetually calling him. He hungered for the winds, whispering softly through the pines, and for mountains lifting their peaks

skyward, and for the vastness and the stillness of the everywhere.

For the long-drawn call of the timber wolf, and the hoot of the owl in the night time. For the flickering light of the camp fire, for rivers that ran and flashed and plunged, and for all that was new, and strange and wild.

THE EMIGRANTS

So he, and Grandmother, put their few small belongings into a two-wheeled cart drawn by a yoke of oxen, and slowly rolled their way a-down those verdant hills, and across the soft green meadows at their feet, so soft, so green, so smiling, and finally landed in the then far-off state of New York (or York State, as they called it), then an almost unbroken wilderness. There, save for the bird song, the moan of the winds in the pine trees and the mating call of all nature everywhere, silence reigned supreme.

Silence so great, so loud, it seemed one could *almost* hear it, and here they established a home.

Grandpap and Grandmother were strong and brave and true, and filled with a faith in God, and a faith in each other unfathomable, and here they *did* "*stay put*."

FOUNDED A HOME

Grubbed out the stumps, and in the meantime raised a large family, *mostly boys*.

Large families were at a premium those days. Here my father was born, and raised Sam Warren, the Second. My father married young, as did all boys at that time, and their children came into the world rapidly—so rapidly that, when I was six, there were seven boys, and three girls (ahead of me), and one boy and two girls came trailing after.

Then came to father's ears wonderful tales of the opportunities that far-off Michigan offered. Tales of the great lakes and the advantages they offered. Tales of its vast and wonderful timber tracts, and of its far reaching *open* spaces, and the advantages *they* offered the stock farmer, which was father's natural bent.

The sleeping wanderlust *awoke*, and father said: "And that's the very place. To Michigan we go, *where the boys will have a chance.*"

GRANDMOTHER DIES

But Mother, poor mother, didn't want to go. Two little graves there were that mother didn't want to leave, but father's will was law; an opportunity came to sell the home and, *mother cried*. Poor mother, and the house that mother loved, with its home-made furniture and furnishings, and the many little things with their homey and homely associations, things so dear to the mother heart, passed into the hands of strangers.

By this time Grandpap had lost his wife, and had come to live with *us*. I have but a dim recollection

of my grandfather, as I was but six. The most vivid is that he carried a cane, which caused us younger boys to stand in respectful awe. But I do recollect one incident that occurred in the bar-room of a tavern, a tavern by the roadside.

I don't know how it happened that I was there; perhaps I followed Grandpap in. I shouldn't wonder. At any rate, I *was* in, and all eyes and ears. The barroom was full of men and boys, some of whom had seen service in the Revolutionary War, same as Grandpap, and the talk was mostly *war talk*, to which we boys listened greedily. Was there ever a youngster who was *not* all eyes and ears when war talk was going on?

Among the rest was a new arrival from England, and the talk with its accompanying boastfulness "riled him." With sneers and jeers he made some insulting and personal remarks. Grandpap said not a word, but walked back and forth—back and forth across the room. Then stepping squarely in front of the jeering Englishman, he sent a whole deluge of tobacco juice straight into his face.

GRANDPAP COMES TO US

Instantly the whole room was aroar with cheers, jeers and laughter. The fellow sprang to his feet, his fists doubled and his face (what could be seen of it), flushed with anger. But, realizing his surroundings, he left without a word.

And now, father and the boys (all those that

were big enough) were busy making preparations for the long journey overland from York State to Michigan. That new "Land of Canaan—*where the boys could have a chance.*" The wagon reach was lengthened to make our schooner longer, and side extensions put on to make it wider. A feed box was fastened to the rear end. Bows of seasoned hickory were made and put on top, and over *them*, a heavy canvas cover, to protect us from rain and cold. A large lantern in which we burned tallow candles (mother had made a generous supply of these), and a whopping big bucket of axle grease, and another bucket with which we watered the team, all hung on the rear axle. And our traveling home was complete. Father, being not so much a *dirt farmer*, but a natural stock farmer, decided not to use oxen to the wagon, but *cows* instead.

WE MOVE AGAIN

So he broke to the yoke three big cows and old Moses, the patriarch of the herd. *He* had to wear the yoke every day, while the cows worked every third day only. The whole outfit was shod with those funny little split shoes of iron (called "*ox shoes*") to prevent the wearing of the hoof, and consequent lameness and loss of time and delay in travel.

While these preparations were in progress, my two oldest brothers married. They had no hanker-

ing for the hardships of a newer country, than their present one, so they remained and also persuaded my eldest sister, Lucy, to stay. This was another source of grief to mother.

At last we are ready. Here we go. Headed for Michigan with hearts filled with hope and yet, filled with sadness like unto one who is leaving his motherland forever! Going to Michigan, where the waters are big and blue, and the open spaces endless; "Where the boys can have a chance."

HEADED FOR MICHIGAN

We started in the early spring. Took our time and rested when the team began to tire. At these resting places mother did the family washing and an enormous amount of cooking and mending, and if there chanced to be an ailing child, do something for its comfort. Mother, with her stock of herbs and teas, was a wonderful doctor. For more than two months we were on the trail, without roads or bridges, following the hatchet marks on the trees made for the benefit of hunters and homeseekers, in the seemingly never-ending forest.

The memory of this long drawn-out journey is indistinct to me, as I was but six years old, and the eighth boy in the family. The eighth boy in the family is not quite as much of a miracle, I notice, as the first, and doesn't receive quite as much attention as the first one, which, perhaps, accounts in part for my lack of memory. But a few things I do

remember. One is when a hungry bear attracted by the smell of mother's cooking, came prowling around the camp in the night, and the terror and bawling of the cattle, especially "old Moses." He seemed to think, judging from the noise he made and the amount of dirt he pawed up and threw over his back, that he was about to be bereft of his whole harem.

THE LADDER BEHIND THE DOOR

Another time, an owl screeched in the early night time, and my terror and bawling rivaled that of old Moses. Another thing that I still *love* to remember is the milking of the cows. Mother did the milking and we youngsters stood around and watched her do it. Then she gave us younger children all the fresh warm milk we could drink and poured the balance into a small churn that we carried. Each night, after we had bumped along over the rough road, all day, mother would take from the churn a good, big, honest lump of butter, which, fresh from the churn, would last all the next day, when used sparingly. And say, wasn't that fresh buttermilk lickin' good?

I also have a dim recollection of arriving at a point that suited father and father was hard to please. It was where range for the stock was plentiful and the pine trees cast deep, restful shadows. It was a place where father seemed *just to fit in!*

Here we made permanent camp, staked off our claim, felled trees, and with them built our new home. A one-room log cabin, with its attic and its ladder, made of poles, that stood behind the door.

THE BIG FIREPLACE AND ITS USES

The floor of the lower room was made of small logs that were hewn on the top side only, and laid close together; that is, as close as possible. But it made a pretty bumpy floor at best. The upper room, if it might be dignified with the name of room, was pretty close under the roof, and floored with poles that had no hewing at all, but fitted fairly close together. Still, there was space enough in between for the warmth and fire light to come up from the room below. This supplied all the heat and light that we really needed, *or ever had*. Heat and light were furnished by a big fireplace that extended across nearly the whole end of the house in the room below.

The big, outside chimney that contained the fireplace was constructed of sticks, stones and mud—clay mud—and plastered thickly with it both on the outside and the inside. Within the fireplace was a great swinging crane with its many pot hooks that we brought with us when we migrated from York State to Michigan. With memory's eyes, I can yet see father and the boys rolling backlogs into its cavernous mouth with wooden handspikes.

Ever-enduring are the things that are cradled into our consciousness.

THE FURNITURE OF THE NEW HOME

And there's the furniture, every bit of it home made. Wooden benches instead of chairs, a home made table, mother's bedstead, made of poles, on which was a tick filled with pine needles. On top of it was a whopping big, fat *feather bed*, which was the pride of the family. And what a *luxury* that feather bed seemed to the "fortunate" youngster who happened to get sick. There were wonderful curative properties in mother's bed. The beds in the up-the-ladder room were filled with long grass, sun-dried and fragrant, and laid upon the floor. The heat from below made them warm and cozy. As soon as we were able to climb the ladder, up we went; and how we did sleep and grow! Many was the time that we awakened in the morning to find our beds covered with snow that had drifted in through our thatched roof. And, yum, yum. I can almost smell, yet, the odor of the saddle of venison that came up through the floor as I lay warm and happy in my bed. Father was a good shot, and game was plentiful, so that the matter of meats was no problem at all.

THE VINE COVERED PORCH

In the timbered country, the fireplace is the pioneer's greatest asset. It is the heating plant;

cook stove; laundry and oft-times, the only light; the Lord and the pioneer's wife only know what else.

Many's the time mother sent us up the ladder to bed, long before the "Sandman's" arrival, so that she could wash our only suit and hang them in front of the fire, and slept with one eye open, so that she could get up and turn the wet side to the fire, in order that they might be dry for us to put on in the morning. But all in all, we got along beautifully. It isn't so much the things that we need and can't get that hurts us; it's the things the other fellow has. So, as all the other mothers were doing the same thing, it seemed no hardship. Many hands make light work, and we were all workers. Even the little ones had their little chores to do. Little by little our log cabin in the shadow of the tall pines lost its nakedness. The thatched roof disappeared, and a real one made of boards was put on, and a vine covered porch, made of poles placed at our only door, became a reality.

To us, the best of it all was that *we boys* made the porch, and *we boys* brought from the forest the the wild roses that soon covered its ugliness. This pleased mother so much that she cried.

The country settled up fast with a fine lot of energetic pioneers.

FATHER GETS SICK—HE DIES

Father took what little means he had left, and bought young live stock. Colts, calves, pigs and

lambs. Lands increased in value, and we got along swimmingly for the first three years, and, *then father took sick.*

First his feet got sore. Mother used all the home remedies she knew, but the infection spread rapidly. Then she dispatched one of the boys on horseback to the nearest doctor. The doctor came, looked very wise, gave, or rather left, father some medicine and prescribed a *cat skin poultice.*

Here's the formula. First a healthy cat in good condition. Chop off the head and skin with all possible dispatch, and apply while the animal heat remains. We followed directions to the letter, and sacrificed not only our own cats—but, also, some that were not ours, provided we could catch them.

But father got worse. The treatment did not cure.

The infection spread, and *father died.*

The memory of his last hour was seared into my childish brain. He called us one by one to his bedside, talked to each with hand on our head, gave to each of us his blessing, then said: "Turn my face to the wall, that I may die in 'peace.'"

KIND HANDS MAKE HIS COFFIN

There were no coffins in the little settlement that later became Adrian, but kind hands fashioned the rude casket in which we placed him, and the simple cross that marked his resting place.

Soon after the funeral, appraisers came to take

an inventory of the property, both personal and real, and make allotments according to law; everything had to be listed.

I remember that mother had a mirror which she prized highly. A mirror was considered a luxury in those days, and mother, fearing the appraisers would not consider it a necessity, hid it beneath the feather bed where she slept.

That fall two more of the boys married, and the two oldest girls soon followed. Then mother had a hard struggle to get along with only we younger boys to help. We were willing, but we were but children. So the next year she remarried, and her new husband came to live *with us*.

THE DEACON

Her new husband was a deacon in the church. One of the kind that prays on his knees on Sunday and preys on his neighbors all the rest of the week. He certainly made it hard and hot for us children, especially Jimmy and me. So, one by one they left home until but one sister and my youngest brother and myself remained.

Then we three had to bear the brunt of it all, but he did treat mother decently, I will say that much for him. He used to compel Jimmy and I to sit in a chair and read the Bible all day Sunday, and if we so much as whistled we were punished. Oh, how I did hate Sunday, and the Bible, and the old deacon worst of all.

He soon began to dispose of the loose stuff on the place, and appropriate the benefits to himself. One by one, not only the loose stuff slipped away like "the waters to the sea," but also the horses, cattle and hogs and even mother's precious mirror, went the way of all the rest.

Then mother, too, "flew the coop." My oldest brother lost his wife, and mother, sister, Jimmy and I went to live with him.

SOMETHING HAPPENS

Soon after going there Jimmy took sick. Measles developed and Jimmy died, and within a year my brother took to himself a new wife, and she certainly did look cross-eyed at us, so much so that mother "boarded 'round," first with one child, then with another, as they needed her.

Sister found a place to work at fifty cents a week, and later for nothing, as she married into the family. I was "farmed out" to my two brothers to work for my board and clothes. Neither of them wanted me and both declared that I was a "good for nothing lazy pup."

But I really wasn't. I did my best, but I was given work that was a man's job, and I was a child of eleven. Then one day something happened. The day of my emancipation. 'Twas early fall and I was set to plowing a stubble field with a yoke of big oxen that were but half broken. John plowed the first two furrows to get me started and then

went to the house. I did my best, but that pesky plow would either dig a deep hole in the hard ground and stop the team, or come clear up to the top and turn over. I gee'd and hawed and used the gad to the best of my ability, but to no purpose. 'Twas a man's job and I was a child. Looking back at my furrow, it looked like nothing, so much as a place where a hog had rooted. A patch of dirt, then a patch of stubble. Finally, as we were nearing a deep pond in the field, the oxen took command and ran away and plunged into the pond, *plow and all*.

I stood on the bank and cried, and threw stones and commands at them, which they minded not at all. They just stood up to their bellies in the cool water and, with half closed eyes, chewed and chewed and chewed, and switched the water up onto their backs with their tails.

Then I had to go to the house for help. I was sorely afraid of my brother's wrath, and suppose

I looked guilty. And mad he was, sure enough, and angrier still, when, after getting the plow out of the pond, he found that the point was broken and that it must be sent to the shop. The very next day it happened again. The oxen had not forgotten. *Neither had I*, and I was terrified beyond measure, when, again, I had to go to the house for help.

MY BROTHER BEATS ME

This time his anger knew no bounds. Seizing me by the collar, he accused me of doing it purposely, calling me a lying whelp, and, snatching the bull whip from my hand, began to lay it over my shoulders.

At the first blow I screamed. Then I took the rest in silence. When, after a final blow, accompanied by a kick, he let loose of me, I issued my Declaration of Independence.

I said: "Damn you, I have quit. You gol darn fool. Do you hear, I've quit. I've had enough of big brothers, *I've quit*, and without another word I started for the house, packed my few belongings consisting of one well-worn shirt, a ragged pair of overalls, a few little trinkets that had been given me at Christmas, all tied up in a red bandana that mother had given me the Christmas before and which I had never used. It was too precious.

Barefoot and alone, "without coat or scrip," a *mere baby*, I started out to find a job. To buck the world. I was so much afraid that my brother would hop a horse and take me back to another beating, that I started on the run, and ran until I was completely exhausted, and could run no farther. From head to foot, adrip with sweat, and oh, how that salty sweat did make my bleeding back smart.

I knew there was a lumber camp ahead of me with a wagon trail leading to it, and thought that

when I reached *it*, I would turn in and lay down on the cool ground and rest.

But before I came to it I saw an ox team drawing a log wagon come out, and on the wagon was a monstrous log. I thought it was the largest I had ever seen and I guess it was. The driver was seated on the front end of the log. Again, I took to my heels and ran and caught up with the slow moving team, and, promptly, invited myself to take a seat on the rear.

I RUN AWAY

Then what a relief I experienced. *I was no longer alone*, and I felt that I could ride that log forever, and was in mortal terror lest I be discovered, for he, too, held an ox gad in his hand. After a bit he did glance backward. I made ready to jump and run, but he *smiled* and said: "Hello, Bud! Where in tarnation did you come from?" I wasn't expecting kindness and it got me and I began to cry. "*Oh, oh,*" he said, with a world of gentle kindness in his voice. "Now, now, *I wouldn't cry* (God bless such men) about it. Who be ye and whar be ye goin,' and whar's yer home, and be ye runnin' away?" Yes, I hold him, I be runnin' away, but I hain't got no home, nor nobody nor nuthin.'

"Well, well, just slide up alongside and tell yer Uncle Joe." As I did so he laid a comforting arm around my shoulder. I cringed with the hurt of it. He looked, saw my bloody shirt, then—"What

in thunder. Boy, what the divil's the matter with yer pore little back, and who's the cuss that did it?" I told him all. He sat in silence, never once taking his eyes from my face, but I saw both the sympathy and the anger that flashed across that tell-tale face, and that brought the tears again. He said: "Be yer father and mother both dead?" I told him no, father's dead, and mother's boardin' roun'. "Boardin' roun', boardin' roun'," he repeated; "what d'ye mean by *boardin' roun'*?" "Why, you see, when there's a new baby comes to one of my brother's house, or to one of my big sister's, then mother goes there and *stays* there, until a new one comes to the next place. Heard her say the other day she expected she would go to John's next, and she would not be a mite s'prised if it was another gal. They already have three gals, all of 'em red-headed like Sally Ann.

"Should think they'd git tired of that sort of thing after a while. If I could have *my* ruthers, I'd rather have a pup," I said scornfully.

THE PILL SHOP

He sat in silence for a time, his face set and stern. "God, I wish I had my hand on that feller's throat and my ox gad in t'other. Hell is too good for him," and then silence again.

Presently he said: "Son, there's a nice old doctor down the road apiece. I know him; keeps his pill shop in one room of his house; we'll jist stop

there a bit and have him do somepin' for that poor little back o'yourn," and he did. By the time we reached the pill shop however, the bleeding had ceased and my shirt was stuck fast to my back.

In answer to a loud "ho, there," the smiling face of the old doctor appeared at the door.

"Mornin', Saddlebags. Got a job fur ye. Jist come and look at this poor child's back." The doctor immediately got busy. Soaked the blood stained shirt from my back, then: "Hell, Joe, pore leetle feller, just a baby, and yet a hungry, bloody, tattered tramp. Who's the devil that did it?" Uncle Joe said: "Tell him, son." And I told him all.

The doctor's comment was: "Hope he will get sick and call on me; it's worse than they treat niggers down South, by a damned sight. I'd be one of a bunch to go and give the damned brute a dose of his own medicine."

"Saddlebags, I want you to fix this boy up and keep him here while I go on down to the mill with this 'ere log, and I'll stop and git him when I come back, 'long towards evenin' and then I'll make it right with you. God, how I wish I could make it right with the skunk that done it," Uncle Joe said. "We hain't got much room to our house, and we got a lot of children and another a-comin', God bless 'em, but mother's got a heart 'sbig as a wash-tub, and she'll find room for him someway, you can bet on that."

After he had gone, the doctor called to his wife:

"Oh, Molly, Molly, come here." Molly came, looked and went white. "Tell her," the doctor said, and again I told my story.

Then Molly took both my hands in hers and said: "Simon, God has never given to us a little son to gladden our home. I believe He has kept the place for this one. Let's keep him."

The old doctor put one arm around Molly, and the other hand upon my head and said reverently: "My son, when the sunset comes, and the log wagon halts before the pill shop, the old doctor will say: 'Drive on Joe, drive on, he's mine, *a gift from God.*'"

I never saw my brother again. I think he knew where I was, but he never came to me, and I never went to him, as I had told him when I left, I had had enough of big brothers.

To my foster parents I owe all that I am or can ever hope to be. They sent me to school, when there was one, three months in the year, and, when I was seventeen, they put me in school at Albion. The doctor said he wanted me to take his place when I was ready for it, but the next year my foster father died, and my education was finished.

There were debts, and the home was broken up, and again I was out bucking the world, seeking a job. I worked at anything I could find to do; in the harvest field; in the woods cutting logs, splitting rails; threshing wheat with a flail; even driving oxen, notwithstanding my early experience. I joined the church, and tried *just once* to

preach a sermon; and, to cap the climax, to teach school.

One day a couple of backwoodsmen came to me with the proposition that I go out into the woods and teach a three-month's school; they said they had just completed a new log school house and wanted a teacher, but the teacher crop had all been harvested before their house was ready.

TAUGHT SCHOOL

They offered me twelve dollars a month and board around.

I accepted.

I needed that thirty-six dollars badly. So the next Monday morning found me on hand with the books, which I felt would be *very* necessary, made into a bundle and tied with a string. I wore a very dignified look on my face and carried a very doubtful heart under my waistcoat.

But we got along quite well. I had no complaint to make about my students. They were mostly boys anxious to learn, and were studious and obedient, although some of them were nearly or quite as old as myself.

And in that boarding around business, I found *the girl*.

I thought her the dearest, sweetest thing God ever made, and I never changed my mind. She was an eastern girl graduate, visiting her aunt, and intending to teach.

BOYS DEMAND TREAT AND LOCK DOOR

One morning, I went early to the school house to build a fire, as was my custom, and, as I came in sight of it, I saw smoke issuing from the chimney. There were several of the big boys loitering around on the outside. The rest were inside, and when I tried to enter, behold, the *door was locked*, or rather, *barred*. I angrily commanded them to open it.

They merely stood and grinned, and I stormed and threatened. I was fighting mad and they only grinned the wider. Then the biggest buck of them all said: "Sall right teacher, 'sall right, jist you promise to treat and she'll open up as wide as the whale what swallowed Joner."

I was too mad to realize that it was only a boy's prank. Too mad to be reasonable, and I knew also, that it was a joke which was often played in the country schools on the teacher. So I got me a long, strong pole and tried to force the door, but no use.

TREATS

It was strongly barred on the inside. I threw down the pole, said farewell and started to leave. Then they crowded about me and the big fellow produced a saw. He wasn't mad in the least. Not a bit. But he was determined.

"Did you ever hear tell," he demanded, "of a-cut-tin' two holes in the ice, an' a-puttin' the teacher in

the upper one an' a-ketchin' of him at the lower one as he come down?" That was too much. I yielded, for I knew it was no idle threat and they really would do it, so I promised, and the next morning, had a bushel of apples delivered at the schoolhouse. Apples were a rarity those days.

But, from that day on, I lost interest in the school, and, like my first attempt at preaching, it was also my last. But I waded through till the end of the term, for I needed the thirty-six dollars badly, and, too, there was *THE GIRL*.

PIKE'S PEAK CALLS TO HIM

The Pike's Peak fever broke out soon after, and I was wild to go. My mother had died in the meantime and the farm was sold. My share of the holdings was just even one hundred dollars. It looked like a million to me and I immediately decided that Pike's Peak and I should get intimately acquainted.

I would climb its mountain peaks, reaching skyward. I would search its vastness for the gold I wanted. I would hunger, I would thirst, I would freeze, I would fight on until there should come a day when I should win. I *must win*, for there was *THE GIRL*.

I immediately began to make preparations to go. There was no means of travel westward in those days except overland in the wagon, so I bought a couple of work horses and an old wagon that I virtually made over, and was about ready to pull

out when a young man named Ben Casey came to me with the proposition that we double up. Said he had one horse that he would take along to use when my team tired, or to use every third day and by so doing, each horse would get a rest every third day. Also said he would furnish his share of the grub. I had been hoping someone might come along with a proposition like this, and had visions of the lone nights after the long, lonely days' drive was done, and the silence of the night had come—so silent that one could almost hear it.

TAKES IN A FRIEND

So I took him in on these terms, though I didn't at all like the "cut of his jib." He was a Southerner and always boasting of his Kentucky blood. I countered by declaring that I was a distant descendant of King George of England. Then came a friend of mine and said wistfully: "Sam, I wish *I could go*, but I haven't the means. But I *could* furnish the grub for both of us." "Get in, John, get in." And John did. Then there were three of us.

So I tinkered the wagon some more. I extended the wagon reach, put another bow on the cover, but even so, but two of us could sleep in the wagon. So Ben got a dog tent for himself, to sleep under. As a matter of fact, John and I both slept *under* the wagon, rolled up in our blankets; that is, unless it rained, which it seldom did.

Ben was domineering and nasty from the first,

and I regretted taking him in. He got worse and worse. Always boasting and blustering.

One morning I was tinkering at the wagon tongue. In a very commanding tone he ordered me to get his gun that was hanging in the wagon (he was lying in his tent), and bring it to him.

HAS FIGHT

I paid no attention but tinkered on. Again he issued his command, this time with an oath and again *I tinkered on*. Then he rushed me and slapped my face.

I controlled my temper, for a wonder, but I stopped tinkering and said: "This has come to an end. Clean yourself and we will see who is the best man."

"Clean myself? Clean myself?" he shouted, "You damn fool what do you mean by *that*?"

"I mean," I said, still controlling myself, and at the same time pulling my coat, "I mean take off your small gun and your knife, and fight like a *he-man*. I am going to beat some of that Kentucky blood out of you."

He was older than I and heavier, and I had but faint hopes of whipping him, but it was a case of rule or be ruled. I had no choice, and but one advantage. I was the quickest. We clinched, struck and fell, I on top, and pummeled him with every ounce of strength I had. He hollered: "Enough;" and I let him up.

THE FIGHT STILL ON

He no sooner got on his feet than he struck me a blow on the side of my head that sent me reeling. *Then* control left me. I was crazy mad. I got him down again and in our struggle he managed to get the end of my left thumb in his mouth, and came down on it. I heard the bone crush. Then in some way, I don't know how, I twisted my hand around until I got two of my fingers over his two eyes and began to push downward. "Let go that thumb," I yelled, "or out come your eyes." *He let go*, and I battered him until John pulled me off, saying softly, as he did so: "Sam, Sam, 'Thou shalt not kill.'"

I was sobered instantly and helped John lift him and put him in the wagon, where John tended him for several days. I couldn't see that it was my duty to help, and didn't.

He was sulky and mean, mean as the devil, for some time and then suddenly became quite amiable. But I saw the side glances of hate he shot at me when he thought I wasn't looking and told John to watch out, as I knew he had something up his sleeve.

HOME SICK

'Twas a long call and a long haul from Michigan to Pike's Peak. Lonely too, and desolate. But the lure of the gold was upon us, ever beckoning, beckoning, beckoning and we wanted it and were an-

swering it—or would it prove the call of death and the grave?

In the first stages of our journey we took no supplies, save a small amount of grain for the team. Grass and game was abundant and the little trading places we came to, supplied our other small wants.

There was hardly a day passed that we did not sight a deer, and small game—prairie chickens, quail, ducks, geese and cotton tails were abundant. But there was a hunger that these did not satisfy. The hunger of men who longed for the *HOME*, no matter how humble, and the fireside, and the log cabin with the porch of poles and with wild roses and morning glories climbing over the top. A home brimful of comfort and joy and with *a woman in it*. And so, because of that kind of hunger gnawing at our heartstrings, whenever we saw in the distance, pictured against the sky, the cottonwood grove of the early pioneer, we would detour and go a long distance out of our way just to give and get a friendly greeting with these millionaires of the future, and get a drink of clear, cold water from "the old oaken bucket that hangs in the well," and resume in a small way relations with the world.

ON THE DESERT

After leaving Council Bluff, the wild game was scarce until finally, by the time we reached Chadron, Nebraska, there was practically none at all.

The grass had changed from the long billowy grass of the Iowa prairies to the short buffalo bunches and we were entering into what was once called the Great American Desert. No more game, so we had to depend on salt meats, of which we obtained what we considered a generous supply at our last trading post.

We are now in that part of the country that the Indians laid claim to and the Indians were not at all friendly, but the wolves, of which there were many, were, and it became necessary for one of us to go on guard at night lest the Indians steal our horses and the wolves our grub.

TRouble IN CAMP

The first night, after we established guard duty, Ben volunteered to go on. In fact, he was the one who first suggested it.

In the morning he said to John: "John, did you hear anything around the camp last night?" "No, why?" "Well, I did. 'Twas pitch dark. Couldn't tell whether 'twas an Indian or a wolf, or what, but it was sure something. It might have been a wolf or a lost dog or an Indian. I didn't dare shoot until I knew."

"It may have been me, Ben," said John, "must have been, for I got up to see if the horses were all right. You know, yours seemed to be a little off feed yesterday. Lucky for me that you didn't shoot."

"No, it wasn't you, John, I think it was an Indian trying to steal a horse. Hope the darned sneak tries it again. Am sure he will. After this, if I hear *anything* I'm going to *shoot*, whether it's my watch or not."

Instantly I knew the secret of his sudden amiability, his glances of hate and his plan of revenge and why he had suggested guard duty and insisted on being the first.

MORE TROUBLE

The coming night was to be mine on duty. He intended to shoot me and claim that he was but half awake when he heard me and thought me an Indian.

I told him so then and there, and added: "We have come to the parting of the ways."

"The parting of the ways," he sneered. "The parting of the ways? You damn fool, what do you mean by *that*?"

"I mean—you take your horse and all your belongings, everything but your gun. Take part of the grub and you go your way and I go mine. John can come with me if he wants to."

"To hell you say. I'm not going alone. John is going with *me*."

I caught a look from John. "All right, John and I will start in twenty minutes. Pick up your duds, all but your gun. You can't have that. It's in the wagon and will stay there and you will stay

right here just one hour from the time we start. When we have been gone one hour, then I will put your gun across the wheel track and leave it there and you can go and get it. I wouldn't turn you loose, you poor devil, without your gun and let you starve. I am human yet, thank God, but remember, none of your shenanigans. I have a field glass and a long range gun. Keep your distance."

"But Sam, Sam," he cried, "I can't get anywhere horseback and alone. The Indians will kill me for the horse and grub. For God's sake let me go on with you and John. I confess I did intend to shoot you, but now you shoot *me* instead. Take my horse, my gun, my watch, everything that is mine, but don't leave me. In God's name, I implore you, take me along to the first trading station or else shoot me here."

The tears rolled down his cheeks and my own eyes went blind. Grasping his hand, I said: "Get into the wagon, old man. Get in. It's time we were moving if we don't want that other feller to get our share of the gold."

REACH A CAMP

When the next trading post was reached, and the last shanty house was passed, neither of us said a word, but Ben reached out his hand and gripped mine, and the incident was closed.

At the next post we found a number of Peakers having their horses shod, repairing their wagons,

loading supplies, doing their washing and getting ready for the second long desert drive. And now there was five wagons instead of two.

AGAIN ON DESERT PLAINS

Now our first real privations began.

What, with the burning sun overhead and the burning sands underneath our feet, our progress was necessarily slow. Just a moving dot on the great expanse of glimmering, simmering, scorching desert prairie.

There was no game and our stock of foodstuffs was getting alarmingly low. Hunger, real, honest-to-goodness hunger, had arrived. Just a few more days and the sacrifice of one of the horses would be necessary. Our patient, faithful horses, that had become as part of our own lives. But there seemed no alternative.

How longingly we looked back on the "flesh pots of Egypt."

Then one night I was awakened by the long, drawn-out howl of a wolf. I have lived to be an old, old man, but to me it was the sweetest music I have ever heard. Grabbing my gun, I started out after him.

It was full moon and I soon located him, and with one shot from my good old "Long John," brought him down, slung him over my shoulder and brought him into camp.

SHORT ON GRUB

Possibly some of you would turn up your nose at the mere mention of wolf meat, but I assure you we licked his bones clean.

But soon we were on short rations again. Our dried fruit was all gone, also our sugar and we were living on salt meats and pancakes.

Then one of the boys got sick. He had been the fattest, jolliest one of the crowd, and the biggest eater. Scurvy developed and he died. We carried the body three days. Then coming to a dry canyon, we dug a deep grave and wrapping him in his blanket, we buried him there and covered the body with stones, so that the wolves couldn't dig it out, breathed a silent prayer and stood, with uncovered heads, while the young wives sang the old hymn:

*"Gathering home, gathering home,
Never to sorrow and never to roam.
Gathering home, gathering home,
God's children are gathering home."*

and left him to God's mercy.

But somewhere some mother mourns and stretches empty arms from earth to Heaven.

'Twas the saddest funeral I have ever known. We covered the grave with stones and at his head placed a cross made of two small pines to mark his resting place.

CHAPTER II.

A CHILD IS BORN

And now we are again enroute for Denver, but we're destined to have many experiences before reaching there that we had not thought of. The new-old miracle of Life and Death came into the lives of one of the young couples in one of the wagons. The miracle of Life and the tragedy of Death.

"For unto them a child was born, a son was given." A wee baby boy who tarried a few hours, then closed his eyes on earth and opened them in heaven.

This necessitated a stop for a few days of two wagons, and as we were unwilling to leave them alone, we told the rest of the train to move on and wait for us at Denver, which they did.

When next we were on our way and before we reached Denver, we came to a small sod house settlement. The last place where Uncle Sam delivered mail by carrier. Over the door of the only shack made of boards was printed with black ink, the words

"POST OFFICE"

Not a human being or sign of life was visible. On opening the door, no one was to be seen except a man who sat at a table with his head in his hands.

"What's the matter?" I asked.

"Smallpox," he answered.

If there was a letter there from THE GIRL, I never knew.

KILLS A BUFFALO

In time, and it did seem a long time, some small signs of vegetable life appeared and some tiny, creeping, crawling things—the forerunners of animal life. Then here and there a dwarf shrub or a stunted cactus.

And now we are on the buffalo migrating trail, where buffalo chips are plenty. These chips settled our fuel question.

Lest you may need an introduction, I will tell you that they are the droppings of the herd when migrating or on a stampede, which dry quickly in the hot sun, are clean to handle, and make a quick fire, but not very lasting.

Then one day, while doing some scouting ahead of the wagons, I came upon a lone buffalo bull feeding in a grassy hollew. He was old and lame and thin and bore the scars of many battles.

He had been unable to keep up with the stampeding herd and had wandered far. He became our meat.

Afterwards we came in sight of several small herds and every one on a stampede. We wondered *why*, as it was not the migrating period.

DISCOVERS COVERED WAGON

We followed their trail and one day discovered a covered wagon concealed in a bunch of shrubs

in a dry canyon. There were no horses to be seen but it was clearly evident that there had been and that very recently as *they had left their cards*. Also that the wagon was being used as a place of hiding.

Next we began to find dead buffalo. Many of them. All had been shot. And a little farther on we found the carcasses of seven dead ponies. These, too, had been shot.

SEES ARMED HORSEMEN

Things began to *look spooky*, and the Irishman of the crowd voiced the feelings of us all when he said: "Indade and indade, an' it's wishin' that back in ole Irelan' I was, begorry."

After a time I saw with my field glass, two horsemen, fully armed, and the mystery of the covered wagon was solved.

But the riders of the dead ponies, whether they were robbed and their ponies killed, or left to perish in the wilds, no one knows. They had "drifted into the harbor of missing men."

Jumping onto the extra horse and taking my glass and my long range rifle, I rode toward them. They made no effort to avoid me and I rode right up to them.

"Howdy," I said.

"Howdy" and "Howdy" they countered.

INTERVIEWS HORSEMEN

"What in the world are you two doing out here alone?" I said. "What's the game; I would like to know?"

"And what the devil are you doing out here alone, is what we would like to know?" they replied.

I explained that my crowd was over there and handed them my glass that they might satisfy themselves that I was telling the truth. Then I explained that we were prospective gold hunters on our way to Pike's Peak.

They said they were tongue hunters, killing buffalo for their tongues. Said they were worth a dollar apiece back in the States.

Of course, I knew they were lying and felt *sure* they were fugitives from justice, and learned later that such was the case.

At last we arrived in Denver.

TRADES OUTFIT FOR BURRO

Denver was, in those days, considered as being *the tail end* of the universe. Beyond was the Great Unknown, known as Pike's Peak, and Denver, at that time, seemed to be made up of all the rag-tag and bob-tail of the whole world.

Here the main business was gambling, drinking, cheating and downright robbery.

Here the second-hand men, mostly Jews, did a flourishing business; they would exchange with the prospector for anything he happened to have, no

matter what, big or little. Everything that came to his *mill* was *grist*.

Here the Peakers, all of them, swapped their worn and weary teams and wagons for the little mountains climbers called burros (poor little, overloaded, abused beasts), and for pick, pan and shovel and a multitude of other things a prospector *must* have.

I, too, traded in my outfit, but my mount was entirely too small. I could do no better. It was take what you can get or go on foot, so I tried to be satisfied. I called him Dick.

NAMES BURRO DICK

Dick and I had many experiences together. While in Denver I wrote to *THE GIRL*, as I had done all along the journey when at a place where mail was taken up. As my clothes were about played out, I made a few purchases, consisting of a leather vest and coat, a couple of wool shirts, wool socks, and a pair of leather breeches, and for present use, while in Denver, a pair of second-hand pants of cloth.

So, when attired in these and with the red bandana that mother had given me tied around my neck, I felt that I looked *quite swell*, and wished *THE GIRL* was there to see.

But my pride was doomed to take a sudden fall.

In a few days a rash appeared on my body. I couldn't imagine *what it was*. I knew that I had had

all the infantile diseases—chicken pox, measles, etc., so concluded that my blood must be out of order.

There was a small creek in the near vicinity so I went out very early each morning and took a bath, thinking *that* might help, and, having a box of pills with me, relics of the pill shop of my earlier years, I took of them until I felt that there was not much left of me but my—but my ears. But to no purpose. The more I took, the worse I got.

Finally I confided in an old mountain scout that was wiser than I.

He laughed long and loud.

“And whar did ye git them thar breeches youse a-wearin?” he demanded, while his old eyes twinkled with fun.

“Why I bought them downtown of old Isaac,” I said, “at the second hand store.” And he laughed longer and louder.

“Reckon you’s e didn’t allow you’s e a-buyin’ live stock, did ye? An’ how much extra did he charge you for ’em?” And he laughed some more.

“Well, just slip off one leg of ’em and less see what we kin fin’.”

SEEKS NORA DOOLAN

And then, it popped into my mind as to what we *might* find, and off they came, not one leg, but both of them.

"Turn 'em wrong side out," he said, "an' look in the seams of 'em."

We looked.

"God-a-mity!" he exploded, "Biggest I ever seen, darned if they ain't. Backs wide enough to stomp yer name on."

"But what in thunder shall I do?" I said.

"Oh! That's easy. Just you git in 'the water an' I will go and git your old ones. Where be they at? And you can take these 'ere ones to Nora Doolan's place and she'll fix 'em for you for fifty cents."

You bet I went. Thinking that sometime I might again have like trouble and no Nora about, I said: "Tell me how you did it, Nora, and I will give you another fifty."

"Jist turn 'em wrong side out," she said, an' spread a real wet rag over 'em and iron 'em with an allfired hot iron. That'll fix 'em."

BUYS A SQUAW

Another experience that I had while in that camp at Denver, was that of buying a cook. An Indian came to our wagon with the proposition that I buy his squaw. He could speak but little English—just a few words—and his speech consisted mostly of nods, grunts and gesticulations.

When at last I comprehended, I told him "No," with all the emphasis I could command and my nods and grunts rivaled his.

Then he began to enumerate her good qualities and reduce the price. With many motions he made me understand that white man shoot deer. Squaw go out, skin deer, bring in on squaw's back. Squaw cook. Squaw feed horses and cut wood, tan hides and work for white man. I still refused to buy, and just then I pulled an extra large plug of tobacco from my pocket and took a chew.

HUNTS FOR SQUAW

His eyes glistened as he saw me bite, and his mouth began to work and drool and his whole body was aquiver with desire. He made one more proposition. I accepted, and *traded the plug for the squaw*.

The next thing was to find her. I started out with him and fearing Mrs. Squaw was a myth, I held onto the plug until he should deliver the goods. He found her alright. A great big, muscular creature, larger than either of us. He began to tell her about the bargain we had made and asked for the tobacco as proof of his statement. Then she instantly demanded that he give it to *her*.

He refused and she at once turned on *me*, and gave me the worst drubbing I ever got in my life. At her first onslaught, I tried to defend myself, but she was the better man of the two, and I turned and ran.

She soon overtook me and the battle was on again.

We struggled to the edge of a deep gulch and I

thought my hour had surely come, but I had one advantage. I was next to the wall, she next to the gulch.

My opportunity came. I gave her a vicious push—and overboard she went. Down, down, down, until she landed at the bottom and all was still.

So I lost both cook and plug. Later I saw her in Denver with her arm in a sling. I did not push my claim.

TROUBLE WITH ANOTHER SQUAW

Another time I had trouble with a squaw. I did not seem to be very popular with the ladies.

I went to a public watering place, just a spring that bubbled up, and had been hollowed out a bit, and what a Godsend it really was. I carried a tin cup and tin bucket and I wanted a drink of water for myself and a sip each for the horses. I got mine and had the bucket nearly full when a big squaw tackled me. She gave me a vicious push that spilled half the water out of my bucket, and taking my place began filling her own.

Instantly I up with the bucket and threw the balance all over her. With a yell of rage she snatched a butcher knife from her belt and came at me. I surely would have run if I had had time to do so, but I had not. When she thought I was *too brave* to run, she reversed the knife and struck me a terrible blow with the handle.

I surely thought my escape a special act of Providence.

PART TWO

AGAIN ON THE TRAIL

And now our resting spell, with its week of fun and frolic was over. And the grim working side of our adventure was uppermost again. The two girl wives had found employment, and the packing of the burros was the next thing in order. I had never loaded a burro, or even seen it done, and I assure you I found it "a hell of a job," but I thought, "Well, what man has done, man can do," so at it I went. There were so many things that I had been accustomed to having and thought I couldn't do without, that by the time I had half of them on, space was nil. I packed and unpacked and packed again. No use, it simply couldn't be done. So I selected the things that were imperative and could not be done without, and even then the pile looked discouraging enough.

I had "oft been told" that necessity is the mother of invention. So I proceeded to invent. I first cut two short poles. These I fastened together with three wide leather straps, made of rawhide. Each strap three feet long, and securely held to the pole by hob nails that I had purchased to lengthen the life of my boots.

This contraption I swung over Dick's back. It made him look as though he was standing between buggy thills. Next I made numerous small packages containing pills, plasters and bandages, left-

overs from the pill shop. Pins, patches and needles. Buttons, brads and boot leather, pipes and tobacco.

The tobacco didn't last long, but we learned to smoke barks of various kinds and weeds. Of these a weed known as Indian tobacco, we liked best. All these small bundles I tied securely to the poles until little Dick looked like an animated variety store. On the upper deck I loaded flour, salt and soda. Pick, pan and shovel, my gun and compass, ammunition for both gun and pistol, a pair of wool socks and my "tother" shirt.

When these were all on there was no room for me.

BUILDS BOUGH HOUSE

But "misery loves company." All the rest of the boys were in the same plight, so it didn't matter much after all. When I put the light bundles on Dick, he stood quiet and unconcerned, but when the heavy ones began to come onto the upper deck, he awoke to "newness of life." Decidedly so, his tail began to switch, his eyes took on a look of protest, and the moment that I put my knee against his side and began to tighten the cinch, he *swelled* out to his fullest capacity, and stayed swelled until I ceased to pull. What could a feller do? To make more space was impossible, and we all did the same thing. We walked.

For several days we traveled together, eagerly looking for an open gold mine, or loose nuggets

laying around, and finding none, of course. We didn't know how or where to look for it.

Then we split up, each man taking a different direction, but before leaving camp we built what we called a bough house. This was to be our home. Our central point, and every seventh day we met there and rested and reported. In this tacit way we observed the Sabbath day, and kept our self-respect.

We built the bough house on the south side of an immense perpendicular rock, cut and piled small pine trees and brush on the other three sides, trimmed all the limbs from a tall pine that stood on top of the big hill, and to the top of the tree we nailed, with some of my hob nails, a wornout shirt, as a signal and land mark. It was not a very commodious house we constructed, but in a small way it expressed the homing instinct. We named it "Shirrtail Inn." When the family were all at home, we found it a tight squeeze to find sleeping room for so many. The mountain sloped sharply and to keep from rolling out of bed, we cut some logs and staked them in front of the lower side. But even so our quarters were so small, that all had to sleep the same side up. When one turned all must turn, and many's the time the lower man would yell: "Turn over there, turn over, you're killing a man. Turn over." The roof, which was the sky, leaked badly when it rained, but what cared we! Think of the splendors and the comforts

that would be ours when we came, "bringing home the gold." When the cold weather came it found us still prospecting for gold. And finding a trace here and there, but *only* traces. But when winter came we gathered in to what we accustomed ourselves to call home. We enlarged our quarters, made a sort of a roof overhead, put more poles and brush around the sides, and because we had become so toughened and hardened to the climate that winter had no terrors for us, we went into winter quarters with hope beating high in our breasts.

HAS INDIAN VISITOR

One day the buffalo hide that served as a door, was thrust aside, and an Indian stood in the doorway. He was a chief and fully dressed in his war togs and paint. Advancing into the room, he said: "Whisk." John shook his head. The Indian's face darkened. Next he asked for flour. John again shook his head and said: "No" His face flamed with anger. He could speak but little English and it was mostly grunts and nods, then he muttered "Six moons. Warrior back, many." Stretching out his arm and sighting over it; "Poof, poof." And making motions on his head of scalping, gave one unearthly yell and with one leap, was gone.

A few days later we saw them on their annual move south to winter. The braves were wearing their war paint, but we were not afraid of an attack, as they had their squaws and papooses along

with them. When the chief fled from our winter camp he left his bow and arrow leaning against the wall. It was a beautiful thing, and I fully expected he would call a halt and come and demand it. But he never did. When I went back to the States I took it with me. I have often sent the pointed arrow head through a one-inch board. Time went on. We were still impatiently waiting. Anxious to get out and dig for gold where gold was an impossibility. Eating bear meat without any bread. When a white man rode into camp. "Howdy, boys," he shouted. "How goes it," he called. He came and ate bear meat without any bread with us. We told him of our vain efforts to find gold. He laughed and said: "No wonder you can't find it, you don't know how or where to look for it." And when we told him we were about to confess ourselves licked and go home, he said: "Wall, if I was you'ns I don't reckon I'd go gist yit awhile. I think somethin' will open up by spring." He had no sooner gone than I said: "Strike camp, boys, strike camp. Didn't you see the look in his eyes when he said 'something' will be found in the spring? He's found it." With a hurrah we began to pack the burros.

DICK DISAPPEARS

To my dismay Dick was gone. He was nowhere in sight.

He had pulled up his stake and disappeared. All

hands turned out to find him. No use. One by one they came in without him, and I openly accused our visitor of the morning of stealing him. I told the boys to pull out, take his trail. There was snow on the ground, and the trail would be easy to follow, and some prospector might get in ahead of us if we lost any time. They objected, but I convinced them that it was the proper thing to do.

The next morning I found him. His lariat stake had caught in the crevice of a rock, and the more he pulled the tighter it got. In fact, I had to cut the rope to get him loose.

The boys easily followed the gold hunter's track and I, as easily, followed theirs. The find was about fifty miles from our camp, and the road hard to travel. There were mountains to climb, rivers to ford, and oh, how cold it was. Not one of us escaped frost bites. Some of them, serious ones. At one place we had a deep, narrow river to cross. The water was so deep that our little mounts couldn't touch bottom, so we were obliged to slip off and join the swimming party. Dick and I were yet on the bank. I didn't mind the swimming so much, though the water was ice cold. But I did want to keep my boots and socks dry. So I pulled the boots and placed the socks inside and attempted to throw them across. With a whirl around my head I let the first one go. It landed safely and the boys cheered the performance. Then

I sent the second after. My finger caught in the boot strap, and the boot landed in midstream and at once began a voyage on its own account. Of course, there was nothing for me to do but to bowse in after it. And I assure you I bowsed, and the boys cheered as heartily at the second performance as at the first. At another stream I saw an animal lying on the bank. I had no idea what it was, but I leveledd my long range and shot it. It instantly plunged into the water. I cut a long pole, trimmed it back so as to leave a hook on the end of it, and pulled him out. And even then I had no idea that I had shot an otter. I found that out later, and I learned that the skin was even then of great value. But had I known, it would not have had any significance to me. It was gold, not otter skins that I was after. Deer, mountain sheep, bear and bobcats were numerous, and we frequently came across the half consumed carcass of a sheep or deer that had been killed by a mountain lion. When we crossed the rim the day I came so near drowning my boot, one of the boys, Bob Alexander, refused to take off his pants. Said the water was too damn cold. So in he went, breeches and all. Now those breeches had been bought in Denver, and had seen a mighty hard time. Whenever a hole appeared Bob would patch it with a piece of dressed sheep or deer skin that we got from the squaws that occasionally came into camp. We all did the same thing, but Bob's were the *most* patched breech-

es of any. The fact is, they were mostly patch. Had just enough cloth left to tack to. And the soakings they got from time to time caused them to shrink, from the top down and from the bottom up, until it was hard to tell from the look of him whether he was boy or beast. His boots that were always too small for his feet, (had to take what he could get), softened when wet and run over at the back and turned up at the toes. His fur cap that he fashioned for himself, also shrunk and just merely did hang onto his head by a piece of rawhide. He looked like anything but a human being. We had many hard mountain climbs, and underwent many hardships, but never lost our enthusiasm. And—we located the find at last and got busy. *You bet.*

The original finder had staked out a number of claims and we rigidly respected them, but staked claim after claim close to his. To winter there was simply impossible. So we staked out claims and numbered them on a piece of sheepskin, named the diggin's California Gulch and went back to *Home*. To the camp beside the big rock with its shirttail signal, and waited for spring. We were fairly comfortable. Could have all the fire we wanted. And game. Why we could stand and shoot from the camp almost any morning, all the meat we wanted, but it was strictly a meat diet, no vegetables. Our nearest approach to these was the dried berries that remained on the bushes and the

pine nuts that were very nourishing and were plentiful.

Bears are very fond of both berries and nuts. One morning Bob started out on his burro to gather a supply. A little later we heard a great rattling of stones down the mountain side. Every feller grabbed his gun and rushed outside. There, plunging madly down the mountain side was Bob's burro. And astride his neck and holding on for dear sake, and yelling at the top of his voice was Bob. And behind them and gaining on them rapidly was the biggest bear I ever saw. Bob had been picking berries on one side of a big rock. The bear was doing the same thing on the other. And mistaking Bob for something he was not, he made for him lickety split, and the race was on, Bruin still going. Spectators with rifles at sight—but afraid to shoot. Bob was still yelling. Then the bronc made a misstep, stumbled and over his head went Bob. The rifles cracked and down in a heap went Mr. Bear, rolling. And when he knew he was safe, down in a heap went Bob, in a dead faint, and he too came in a-rolling, but Bob made the first inning.

A little later I, too, had a similar experience, only different. I started out for a tramp. I took my gun along, not because we needed meat, or for protection, but for company. I was decidedly homesick, and had about lost my ambition as a gold seeker, and oh, how desperately I did want to see that

girl. I really believe I could have cried. I was walking along the edge of a narrow canyon with my head hanging down, seeing nothing, hearing nothing, just indulging in fancies, when I heard the breaking of a dead stick.

ADVENTURE WITH MOUNTAIN LION

Looking across, I saw a mountain lion walking on the opposite rim, and he saw me and had for some time. His rough was raised, but he was not switching his tail, so I knew the old rascal was biding his time. He knew as well as I did that the canyon narrowed farther down and when the space narrowed enough he would rush me. I concluded not to wait too long. I said, old fellow, you have gone far enough. I brought up my rifle, sighted across and fired. The shot hit him, but not in a vital place. With a terrible roar he sprang into the canyon and made for me. Again I sent a bullet into him and with another roar he sank his ferocious teeth into the bark of a small pine tree and died. I think that was the first and only time that I was ever really scared by a woods pirate. I was shaking like a leaf and dropped to the ground in utter exhaustion.

We waited in camp until the snow on the mountains began to melt. As there was in my day no use in trying to mine without water, there was then no such thing as crushers. It was all placer mining. We would find what was called a "pay streak"

meaning a small crevice between two rocks or a split in one of them, and work it out.

FINDS GOLD

These mountains are composed mostly of rocks, which stand slightly aslant instead of lying flat, as they do in this country, caused probably by some great upheaval in the long ago. The water from the melting snow as it rushed downward, formed small rivulets, and as they went they carried the gold dust together with the fine sand along with them, and deposited both in these crevasses and had done so for ages. This dust we secured by directing or controlling the stream in such a way that it washed out the gold and sand and carried both down into what we called a pot, where all sediment settled to the bottom.

There were two of these pots close together and we emptied each twice each day with a syphon. While one was being emptied the other was filling. These pots, made with a miner's pick, were made as smooth as possible, and it was some job, *you bet*. They were about three feet wide at the top, and rounded at the bottom. The syphons were of hollow reeds, the little end inserted into the larger.

While one pot was settling, and the water being drawn off, the other was filling. After the gold and silver, of which there was a small amount, and the sand had settled to the bottom, we scraped out the

accumulation, dried it, picked out the bits of rock and panned it out with a miner's pan.

The gold and silver we separated from the sand, by the use of quicksilver, which every gold miner carried with him. One day we found a nugget of gold as large as a pigeon's egg. I promptly appropriated it, and brought it back to the States with me, and had it made into a wedding ring for "*The Girl*." We surely were elated with our find and built our dream castles high, and were certain we were millionaires in embryo. *Then*, suddenly our pay streak went blind. How were our "castles fallen." Again we dug and delved with pick and shovel. Up the mountain and down the mountain. No use. Disappointment met us at every turn. Then almost within an hour it seemed, winter came, and the thought of spending it there was intolerable. We *couldn't stay*, and we were not yet ready to leave. Still we hadn't done so bad. Each had dust enough to count into the thousands, but it was not thousands, but millions, we had set our stake for. So after much planning and re-planning, we decided to hide our mining outfits, cover our camp as well as we could, straddle our broncs and go back to Denver for the winter and return in the spring.

BACK TO DENVER

At Denver we would exchange the dust for coin and place it in the bank. So said, so done—only, I failed to go back. I think the others did go.

I was home hungry, homesick. I never had a real home. It was my idea of paradise or, perchance, of heaven itself. I stayed in Denver all winter, as did the other boys, all but the two married ones. They each traded in their burros for a team and covered wagon, and lit out for the States, first thing. How I did hate to see them go, and how I envied them, and how my homesickness increased. Denver had grown "to beat the band," in the short time I had been away. But it was saloons, gambling places and the things they bring with them, that comprised the growth.

One preacher, one priest, one doctor and a very small hospital had put in an appearance. Also a bank, and there were thieves galore, both male and female. I was the victim of one of the latter. I was sitting on a bench in what was dignified by the name of "The Park," when a young woman approached me and very sweetly asked if she might have a seat. I assured her that it would give me great pleasure to share the seat with her, and continued, "I believe I saw you in the bank a few moments ago." She smiled and looked very childish and bashful and answered, "Yes, sir." As she did not seem inclined to talk, I, of course, respected her silence. In a short time she arose to depart, tripped and fell squarely into my arms, scrambling wildly to her feet, she exclaimed, "Oh, pardon me, sir. I am so sorry." and hurried away. My business at the bank that morning had been to check

out some money. On presenting my check, the cashier handed me a twenty-dollar gold piece which I carelessly slipped into my vest pocket. As soon as the girl left me I put my thumb and finger into the pocket. The gold piece was gone. I felt in all the other pockets, looked around on the ground. It was nowhere to be seen. The woman was still in sight, walking leisurely. I took up the chase and called to her to halt. She stopped and looked at me.

I said: "Old gal, I want that twenty." "What twenty?" she asked. "The one you stole from my pocket," I replied. She answered never a word, but turned to go. I grabbed hold of her. She at once screamed for help—and got it. And I got put in jail. It so happened that a small boy, the son of my landlady, was near, and witnessed my arrest. He rushed for home and told his mother. She at once took steps for my release, but I lay in that filthy, rat infested, bug infested, germ infested hole all night, and when I was brought up before the judge and stated my case, I could furnish no proof of my statement. But the woman could, and did. A *handy man* across the street saw the whole performance.

"Verdict, twenty dollars."

Among other things that I witnessed was a prize fight. After the fight was over, one of the fighters accused the other of unfairness. Accusations and oaths flew back and forth until one challenged the other to fight a duel. The challenge was accepted.

Time, nine o'clock the next morning. Weapons, pistols, distance twelve feet. Place, not to be made public, but the secret leaked out. I got there before nine, as did many others. The space was stepped off, the seconds were ready. The two combatants were placed back to back. At the word "Fire," they were to turn and shoot. I happened to be looking directly at Jim Bradly when the command came: "Fire!" I saw him leap into the air, then fall to the ground. *His* gun had not been fired. Nothing was ever done about it. It was their own affair.

A DUEL

Another time trouble came up between two men about a woman. One proposed a duel. The other, who was no shot, wouldn't agree to it. Finally they agreed to shoot on sight, without warning, whenever the opportunity offered.

One day one of the disputants was in a saloon. It happened that he came to the door just as the other was about to enter. Each saw and recognized the other, but the man on the inside was quickest on the trigger. He drew and shot, and the other fell on the sidewalk. Nothing was done about it. It was their own private affair.

The same winter we heard many rumors about findings in the vicinity of what is now Boulder City, so to Boulder I went. There was a big wave of excitement and rush. Many people swarmed into

the place and the belief became quite general that Boulder would wipe Denver off the map. So we decided to lay off the city, survey its boundaries, lay off its streets and boulevards, and make Denver hang its head with shame. And for a time it really looked as though Denver was doomed. Prices of choice lots went up like a cat's back. I, myself, secured one lot for which I was offered thirty-two lots in Denver, and wasn't wise enough to take the offer, and close the bargain. How many times have I wished I had. When spring came, my homesickness increased. I saw the other boys pack up and start back to the diggin's, without a pang. But with their going, my homesickness increased again. I just hadn't the guts to resist the home call. I checked out my gold that was in the bank, bought a small black trunk, had my name painted on two sides of it, put my suitcase that had three thousand dollars worth of dust sewed up in a canvas covering, inside of the trunk, and paid a man fifty dollars to drive me to a place on the stage line where the stage came in every two weeks. When we got there I found every seat taken. So I paid the driver one hundred dollars more for the privilege of dangling my legs on the outside and freezing my ears, as I sat on the seat with him. Put my precious trunk on the top as the back was already full, lashed it fast, and, WHOOP-LA!

HOME

We're off! Going home. Going home, and no home to go to. Only those whose circumstances have banished them into the wilds, away from civilization, living their lives among wild beasts and wild men, enduring perils and privations and heart aches, yet grimly "carrying on" can have any realization of what the sight of homes, real homes, even the home of the poorest pioneer meant to me. And as I came in view of familiar scenes, I could have shouted aloud:

"Home at last. Home at last!
Praise the Lord, oh, my soul,
And let all that is within me,
Give thanks."

And yet I had no Home.

But—I found The Girl.

THE END.

SOUTHWEST COLLECTION
Texas Tech University
LUBBOCK, TEXAS 79409

SOUTHWEST PRINTING PLANT, HOUSTON

