Mr. Fisher of
Ross Fork Trading Post
1870-1890

CHAPTERS.

1. The Journey to the "Buffalo Country".
2. Chief Tendoy and his Camp.
3. Indian Medicine and Belief.
4. Hunting Buffalo on Horseback.
5. Trouble with the Crow Indians.
6. Frank Fisher's Experience.
7. Story of the Early Indian Battles.
8. Suffering During the Winter of 1871-72.
9. At the Crow Indian Agency.
10. Arrested for Trading with the Indians.
11. Stories of Ben Johnson, "Fighter".
12. Some Montana Game and its Habits.

Reminiscent of Mr. Fisher, of Ross Fork Trading Post, Idaho.

o
ooo
o

Mr. Fisher, his brother, Frank, and a man named Marion Shields were in the Eastern Montana and Western S. Idaho country from about 1870 to 1890

This is a Pioneer Manuscript

handed to me by

a former student

about 1935.

The Manuscript recalls the

~~Frank~~ Mrs. Fisher

experiences of a

of Ross Fork Trading Post

1870-1896

THE JOURNEY TO THE "BUFFALO COUNTRY".

Early in the fall of 1871, I sold my one-half interest in the Ross Fork (Idaho) Trading Post and in company with my younger brother, Frank, and a wild young Californian named Marion Shields, a nephew of General Shields of Mexican War fame, started for the "Buffalo Country", as the Yellowstone region (Montana) was called at that date by white hunters and trappers as well as the various surrounding tribes of Indians.

Young Shields will, in future, be referred to as "Heenan", a name he won by his successful pugilistic encounters while engaged as bell-boy in packtrains in Oregon and Idaho.

Our outfit included an even dozen head of horses, two of them being race horses, which, as the French trapper said about his horses "were not so soon as some but pretty danged soon".

We also took along a young Bannock Indian, Tommy by name, about eighteen years old, who was to assist in herding the horses, he having a pony of his own.

We left the stage road at Eagle Rock, now called Idaho Falls, taking a shorter route by trail up the north fork of Snake River. Wild game was abundant, bear, elk, deer, and antelope; constantly we were never without fresh meat. What a paradise for hunters!

While traveling up the north fork, on entering a beautiful little valley or park one evening, there was all of the above-named game in sight, besides a large flock of wild geese. As we had killed an antelope during the day, the greater part of which was still in our packs, we decided to take in a big bear. Moving back a short distance out of sight, we unsaddled, took off the pack, and picketed or hobbled our horses. We then sneaked up within about fifty yards of the grizzly, and with our little Ballard carbines downed him the first round, but it required a few more shots to finish him. He was evidently an old war veteran as his head and shoulders were covered with scars and a portion of one ear was missing.

A few days later, we crossed the divide (Rocky Mountains) through Targie's Pass, so-called after a former chief of the Fort Hall Bannocks. Targie was a good friend of mine; a low-spoken, quiet, dignified, old man, who had perfect control over his people. His death near the Crow Agency the previous fall was said to have been due to a dose of "wolf medicine" (strychnia) administered by a jealous under-chief by the name of Pam-sook-a-mogia (Otter Beard).

Following down the Madison River, we came to English George's place. George and his Indian woman were the first people we had seen since leaving Eagle Rock.

Between George's place and Bozeman, Montana, we passed a few stock ranches. At Bozeman, I laid in supplies for the winter, which included 400 pounds of flour. I also took out a merchant's license to trade in Galatin and Bighorn counties.

Just before reaching the Yellowstone River, we were overtaken by a small party of Nez Perce Indians from Umatilla, Oregon, who said they were after buffalo robes, but I think the principal object of their visit was to introduce a new dogma or doctrine to the Bannock, Snake, and Crow Indians, which had recently started among the Oregon and northern Idaho Indians.

I subsequently learned that this new religion or whatever it might be called, had its origin as follows:

Sock-a-lee Tyhe Charley, a Umatilla Indian, had met God somewhere on a trail; God had informed him that a great change in the present order of things would take place the following spring, towit: That all the "pale-faces" would either leave the country or die; that the buffalo and other large game would roam in endless herds where now grazed the white man's cattle, horses and sheep.

A line of red and yellow dots from the outer corner of the eye and extending back to the ear was the insignia worn by the believers. A strange part of it was that Charlie described his new-found God as a white man,

with long white hair and beard. This absurd story of Charlie's was doubtless the beginning of what later developed into the so-called "Messiah craze" and "ghost dances" which terminated in the taking off of Sitting Bull at Wounded Knee, Dakota.

The Indians, who joined us at the Yellowstone, did not confide their great secret to us, but shortly after reaching the main Indian camp, I noticed several of my friends among the Shoshone and Bannock Indians with their faces decorated with this unusual style of painting and when asked the meaning they, or rather one of them, reluctantly told me the whole thing and advised us three whites to leave the mountains very early in the spring before grass started. I asked him if the whites who refused to leave were not to be killed by the Indians. His answer was that God had told Charlie that the whites who refused to leave would surely die, but had said nothing about killing them.

On reaching the old Crow Agency, as it is now called, the new Agency being established further down the River, we met for the first time the most expert thieves in America, the Crow Indians. And I feel safe in saying that these Indians were not the only thieves there, but the white thieves, including their Agent and trader, who were partners, were much more bold and bungling in their thievery. At first I thought I had made a favorable impression as the natives put their arms around me calling me "Wyno masta-

cheda" (good white man) while caressing me and patting me on the back. But I soon discovered that while thus engaged they had plucked all the cartridges from my belt, as well as my sheath knife from its scabbard. After that experience, a Crow siwash wishing to lavish his friendship was compelled to do so at a proper distance. I could stand their compliments but declined their loving embraces.

We pulled out early next morning, as one night in this den of thieves proved quite sufficient to satisfy us of Crow Agency hospitality.

A couple of days later, when on our way down to the camp, we met Sam Shively, a white man, and his friend, Iron Bull, a Crow chief. These two were returning to the Agency from the big Indian camp on the Musselshell River.

Iron Bull had lost the front sight of his gun. While entertaining them that evening and the next morning, I had taken from my "war-bag" a rough block sight and filed it down to fit his .50 caliber Springfield; had opened a case of cartridges, which I had brought along for trade, and used a half dozen or more in the morning while adjusting the sight to its proper place, as I was not mean enough to turn a Crow out with a cross-eyed gun that would not hit where it looked.

Just before taking their leave, Mr. Bull, who spoke no English, after examining the new sight, instructed

to ends. About one inch of the middle of one is covered with a thin piece of antelope skin; this is called the black cache, the other without any covering, the white cache. These two bones are first laid side by side in the open palm of one hand with the hand open, palm up, and are shown to the players. (This is to show there is no deception, and that it is a square deal). The hand holding the caches is then closed and placed above the other hand edge-wise with the backs toward the opposide party, who sit tailor fashion in a row facing their opponents. Either one or both of the bones is then, at the will of the holder, allowed to slide from the upper to lower hand, then the lower hand is placed above the upper hand; this reversal of hands is repeated a dozen or more times; when suddenly the holder separates his clenched hands with backs up. Now one of the opposing party, after many feints and false motions, during which time he is trying to read the countenance of the holder, makes his guess as to which hand holds the black cache. During the whole proceedings, there is kept up a constant sing-song chant or howl by all the players, usually six or eight on a side, besides there is a continual beating with short, dry sticks on a loose lodge pole which lays along in front of each party. The only lull in this terrific din, while the game is in progress, is for a short interval while a guess is made and a stick (count) is tossed over to the winning side. Beads, trinkets, war bonnets, buffalo robes, lodges and horses are won and

Shively to tell me that if I would fill his belt with cartridges and give him two dollars in money he would be my friend. Well, I not only declined to purchase the old scalplifter's friendship, but proceeded to give him the best Rocky Mountain cursing at my command, enough of which, at least, was interpreted to him to add a darker shade to his already shady countenance.

On this trip down the river, we crossed a fresh trail of a large Sioux war party. The trail they left showed there were several hundred of them. As we afterwards learned, they were returning from a successful horse stealing and murdering raid on the scattering white settlers further to the northwest. This trail struck terror to our Indian companions, as all northern and western Indians have a wholesome dread of the Sioux. On crossing over a high divide after leaving the trail, we could distinguish in the distance ahead of us three Indian lodges, which our Indians declared at once was a portion of the Sioux camp; that the main portion of it was farther up the stream behind the low ridge that partly hid one of the lodges in sight. Our Indians insisted that we drop back some distance and make a long detour to the left and thus avoid the camp. I did not care to lose a half day's travel in dodging what I believed to be a friendly camp, as the Sioux on such a raid would not encumber themselves with lodges. I instructed my little party to remain concealed in the timber while I rode down the long slope far enough to determine the nature of the

camp.

Changing my saddle onto "Muggins", my long-winded and fleet war horse, I proceeded slowly on my way, stopping often to look the situation over with my field glasses. When yet a mile distant, I saw a couple of persons run for the cottonwood timber from the nearest lodge, which convinced me the more that they were not Sioux, as they would not be apt to run from a lone horseman. However, the situation was not altogether assuring, but having gone thus far and knowing that I had been seen by the enemy, if enemy they were, I worked up a big brave and struck out on a lope for the camp, which I found to consist of three empty lodges, the occupants having evidently left in a hurry, as all their camp equipment including a quantity of half-dried buffalo meat was left in their lodges. After a fruitless effort to call back the stampeded natives, I signalled to my boys to come. Soon after their arrival, our Indians succeeded in calling one lone buck out of the brush, where he had cached himself. They had mistaken me for a Sioux scout, hence their fright. One of the hunters had seen the war party the previous day from the divide we had just passed, which had put them in prime condition to be easily stampeded.

The old fellow told us that the big camp of our friends was two sleeps distant and as it was yet early in the afternoon, we decided to make the next water, a few miles farther on.

On reaching the small stream, Tommy and another young Indian who had been riding some distance on our left, came tearing down a steep, slide-rock hill, yelling, "Pag-i-na-vo. Pag-i-na-vo," which in the Snake language means "Spotted Arrows", the name they give the Sioux. He was also shouting to us to catch the black horse (one of the race horses). We immediately selected the best position for a stand-off fight and opened a case of Ballard cartridges. I could get nothing definite from Tommy until he was mounted on the race horse; he then admitted that they had seen one Spotted Arrow, which later proved to be one of the stampeded Shoshones from the three lodges.

That evening Tommy and two other young braves volunteered to stand guard over the horses and wanted to borrow our three pistols for the occasion. As he had never stood night guard or offered to do so on the trip, I thought his actions a little suspicious so declined to loan my six-shooter. The other two boys readily gave over theirs, thinking it a soft snap to get a full night's sleep.

A full moon in that clear atmosphere made the night almost as light as day. For some cause I could not sleep and was fully awake when about midnight I heard the stealthy tread of moccasined feet close at hand, and on raising up to a sitting position, I saw Tommy approaching very cautiously. I asked him what he was doing there. After some hesitation, he said he wanted matches; these I gave him

but cautioned him not to make a fire; he said he only wanted to smoke. His strange actions had, by this time, fully aroused my suspicions and after he had left, I woke the other boys and told them I believed the three young devils were planning to do us up. They made light of it and were soon sound asleep again. Of course I could not sleep after what had happened. Some hours later, I heard the snap of a twig close by. Raising up suddenly and cocking my pistol at the same time, I saw Tommy again, only a few steps distant; when, with an oath, I demanded to know why he was sneaking around our beds, he started off muttering something in Bannock which I did not understand. There was no occasion for his jargon, as he could speak good English and also Shoshone, which we understood. He was told very forcibly he would soon get "leaded" if he showed up around there again. Before going far, I saw his two companions sneak out from behind some brush and join him. These young savages, with Tommy evidently as leader, had surely planned to murder us. Three simultaneous shots with muzzles a few inches from our heads would have done the work with neatness and dispatch, then promiscious shots and shouts of "Pag-i-na-vo, Pag-i-na-vo" for the benefit of the other Indians who were camped a few hundred yards distant. I do not think the other Indians were in the plot, but doubtless a share of the horses and plunder would have convinced them that it was the bloody work of the Sioux.

About one year later, Tommy was the leader in a like scheme, but one of the two intended victims, although badly wounded, made his escape and after terrible hardships reached the white settlements; the other man, Chatman, lies buried where he fell, now known as Dead Man's Gulch, near Little Wood River, in Idaho. Through my assistance, this last adventure cost Tommy his life some time later.

o
oOo
o

CHIEF TENDOY AND HIS CAMP.

On nearing the main camp the following afternoon, we were met by a large party of Bannock and Shoshone Indians, who, through runners from our party, had been informed of our near approach. The customary greetings, discharges of firearms, used up a lot of valuable ammunition. It was here that I first met Tendoy, head chief of the Lemhi Indians. As we shook hands, he said, "Now my eyes know you, my head and heart have known you a long time and we have exchanged presents, but now we meet for the first time in the land of the Crow Indians and the buffalo." The exchange of presents referred to was two fine Blackfoot scalps on his part and as a return of the compliment I had sent him a beautiful Navajo blanket.

The Lemhi reservation is situated some 200 miles north of the Fort Hall reserve, both of which were established by the Government the previous year.

I will say here, that Chief Tendoy was at that date the finest specimen of the North American Indian I have ever met during my 47 years of wandering west of the Missouri River. The nearest approach to him that I can now call to mind was Iretabe, chief of the Mohave tribe in Arizona, with whom I had been acquainted several years before meeting Tendoy.

Tendoy stood a little more than six feet high in his moccasins, figure as straight as a gun barrel, and perfect in proportion, with about 190 pounds of bone and sinew,

no surplus flesh, and as strong and active as a cougar and I might add, a great deal more courageous. The most striking features were his large, honest, bright, black eyes--eyes that fairly sparkled with excitement or merriment. He had a bold Roman nose, square jaws, a perfect set of teeth, and the clearest, strongest voice I ever heard issue from the mouth of man. An introduction was unnecessary on our meeting. I knew him at once. "Head Chief" was branded in his every feature and movement.

A circle was soon formed and after the pipe had gone its rounds, I made a brief talk, explaining the object of our visit, etc., to which Tendoy replied with words of welcome and the assurance we would fine none but friends among the Indians over which he was chief, but warned us not to put too much confidence in the Crows, which warning was scarcely necessary considering our former experience with them.

The following day, I traded a horse for a large buffalo skin lodge; up to this time we had been without shelter of any kind. I do not know why I selected the largest lodge in camp, unless it was the same principle a Chinaman exercises in buying a pair of boots; as they were all the same price I would take the most material for the outlay.

The Indian camp was situated on the big bend of the Musselshell River. From this bend the river runs north, emptying into the Missouri River. The Indians pres-

ent comprised nearly the entire tribes of river and mountain Crows, at least one-half of the Fort Hall and Lemhi Indians, a few Nez Perces and Flatheads, with an occasional renegade from various other tribes. The camp was strung out for two or three miles along the bank of the stream in the scattering cottonwood timber.

For the first few days, I was greatly annoyed by the Shoshone and Bannock women begging flour, sugar, and coffee; in fact it become so annoying that I decided to put a stop to it by giving one "big feed" of the whole supplies to my numerous friends and then going it on meat straight until we again reached thw white settlements. Frank and Heenan readily agreed to this program. The women were told to bring all their frying pans, kettles, etc., and proceed at once to prepare the feast which was soon an accomplished fact. With a few quarters of buffalo meat added, it truly made a "big eat". Of course the invitations were not extended to the Crows who were camped some little distance below us, as Tendoy had remarked that "he did not care to use water that had passed through a Crow camp."

My big lodge soon became a sort of council house, town hall, club room, and theater. The game of "hand" or stick game was often kept running during the whole night. In playing this game two smooth, round bones about three inches in length and of the thickness of a lead pencil are used, each they having a slight taper from center

lost at this game, which is usually a ten stick game, that is, each side starts with ten sticks which are uniform in size and length and are sharpened at one end so they can be stuck in the ground in front of the respective players. Every time a guess is made a stick passes from losing to winning side, as do also the caches providing a successful guess was made; otherwise it remained with the holder. Occasionally a single game would last for hours, and I have seen ten counts won without a skip.

Frank and I never took part in these games, but Heenan never missed a chance to sit in one. As conversation was out of the question while this bedlam was going on, we would turn in and sleep to the music, our sweet slumber being broken only when there was a cessation of the horrible din for a moment. It is a game of chance, pure and simple, there is no science to it.

What was much more interesting than the hand game to Frank and me, was the rehearsal by the old Indians of their past deeds, a sort of autobiography of their lives, which is by no means a narrative of cold, dry facts but includes mimicry, pantomine and stage play of the highest quality, and as the average siwash is not a big modest or adverse to self-praise during his recital, he not only steals a good many horses, but at least takes the scalps of a few of his enemies. To give the performer ample room, about one-third of the big lodge was set apart for his use. A lodge

pole lying on the ground marked the stage proper while a bright fire in the center of the lodge served as footlights. Now he is flat on the ground, watching an imaginary Blackfoot or other enemy as the case may be; now skulking and dodging from imaginary tree to tree and shooting arrows in rapid succession; then comes the pantomime of scalping; the mounting of his horse; the plying of his whip, etc. Some of these rehearsals or reminiscences would consume the better part of two nights, especially when some old veteran, given to romancing, occupied the stage. Of course he was duly applauded by the audience at proper times.

o
oOo
o

INDIAN MEDICINE AND BELIEF.

While in camp here, Tendoy came to my lodge one morning and invited me to go with him to the lower camp, where a Crow medicine man was making medicine to drive the Sioux farther away and also bring the buffalo up closer--sort of killing two birds with one stone.

A brisk half-hour's walk brought us to the scene of the operation just in time to see the old medicine man, who was rigged out with an indescribable headdress, and whose naked body was most hideously painted, emerge from his lodge. Near at hand the preliminaries, necessary to the solemn occasion, were already completed, as follows:

Suspended from the limb of a tree, dangled an old cinnamon bear skin which was rudely stuffed with grass and leaves. A few paces distant was a pile of burning buffalo chips, presided over by two ancient dames, who seized the old sinner, one on either side, and rushed him to the smouldering mass, bent his head forward and with naked hands actually crammed his mouth full of this smoking filth, then releasing their hold, the old fellow first faced the east and with closed eyes and head erect, blew the still burning stuff toward the heavens. Suddenly wheeling around, with unearthly howls, he clasped the ragged old skin in his arms, dancing round and round forward and back, all the while keeping up a somewhat subdued howl or more nearly a

wail or chant. On releasing his hold, his two assistants would seize him as before, when the same performance would be enacted, except that his miniature volcano would be directed to a different point in the heavens. This little stunt was gone through no less than four times before he retired from the stage. There was no jugglery or slight-of-hand work practiced in this exhibition. He was no magician; simply a Crow medicine man doing his duty as he understood it.

On passing through the camp, it was amusing to see the little Crow kids stampede at the sight of a white man. They would fairly tumble over each other in their mad efforts to get into a lodge, some crying, and all badly frightened. This fear was due, no doubt, to the fact that their mothers used the white man as a bugaboo to scare them into good behavior; as is often the case in the west by their white sisters using the bad Indian as a means to the same end.

Tendoy asked my opinion as to the effect of the old man's medicine, stating that he had no faith in it. I told him that while doubtless the old man had a very sore mouth, it would not in the least cause any decided changes in the locality of either Sioux or buffalo. In fact I tried to explain to him that all such superstitions, sorcery, incantations, and the efficacy of charms were a humbug. In answer he said he was not so sure about that as one of his warriors

was bullet-proof; that in a recent fight with the Blackfeet, this man Han-ne-quas-so (Beaver-coat), was struck fair in the breast and the bullet fell to the ground in front of him, leaving only a small red mark over his heart. By this time we had reached the lodge and it so happened that Beaver-coat was inside. When asked about it, he confirmed Tendoy's statement and further said he was positively sure that a bullet would not penetrate his skin. Heenan, being present, promptly challenged the statement and offered to bet his two horses against Han-ne-quas-so's two, that he could shoot a lead bullet through him, at ten paces, with his pistol at the first shot. As the Indian seemed about to accept the wager, I got a little uneasy and siding up to Heenan, said, "You fool, what will you do if he takes the bet?" "What will I do?--Why, I will kill him, of course. I hope you don't think for a minute I am tin-horn enough to throw a game that would set me afoot." I felt much easier when the Indian, after much deliberation, decided that possibly his medicine was not as strong at present as it had been on former occasions. As Heenan could snip off the head of a grouse at ten paces, it was evident that had the old warrior faced the music he would have reached the end of his trail right there. Doubtless had the game been played to a finish, Beaver-coat's friends would have delivered up the two horses to Heenan and aside from sending up a howl for the loss of a kinsman, things would have moved along just as though nothing unusual had happened.

I felt quite different at a bluff Heenan made to Bird-in-the-neck, a Crow chief. This chief, in accounting for his extremely large "Adam's apple", claimed that it contained a live bird, which he stated got there as follows. A long time ago, his medicine was in not eating venison, but that on a certain occasion, when no other food could be had, hunger drove him to shoot a deer. Hastily building a fire, he roasted some of the meat and the very first mouthful he swallowed, a small bird flew down his throat, and as he remarked, placing his finger on the protruding portion of his wind-pipe, "That bird is alive and there now, and it is my biggest medicine." Well, Heenan being a natural-born gambler, immediately offered to bet his two horses against two of the chief's that the bird was not there. After much banter and badgering, it dawned on the old liar to ask Heenan how he could prove the bird was not there. "Why," said Heenan, drawing his old sheath knife and feeling its edge, "I will cut open the cage and if the bird is there, you win." It is hardly necessary to state that the bet was called off.

o
oOo
o

HUNTING BUFFALO ON HORSEBACK.

Running buffalo with bare-footed horses on frozen ground, that was well pitted with badger and prairie-dog holes, was rather dangerous amusement. We had provided against some of the danger in having light steel shoes with small, sharp calks fitted up for a few of our best horses before leaving the white settlement, but when ready to put them on we found that some siwash had swiped the nails, which had been put into a small package and slipped into a buckskin purse for safe-keeping. A buckskin purse containing something heavy could not well be overlooked by a Crow gentleman. Profanity took the frost out of the ground near our lodge, but did not recover the nails, neither did the offer of a liberal reward, no questions asked, have the desired effect. The nails had, doubtless, been chucked into the river by the thief. Notwithstanding our loss, we joined the natives in making a few runs. On one of these chases, I had the pleasure of seeing a big Crow buck literally disemboweled (my sympathy was always with the buffalo when the other fellow was after him. Besides, while I do not fully agree with the old saying that, "All good Indians are dead ones", I thought at the time that Crow Indians averaged better that

way). He, being one of the foolhardy kind, had urged his horse too near the center of the herd, which consisted of several hundred. A badger hole, the fall of his horse, and the horn of a passing buffalo caused his undoing. I did not actually witness the surgical operation, but those who did declared poor Lo was tossed as high as the top of a lodge. Heenan was too much interested in the chase, as were nearly all the others, to halt for such a trifling affair, but Frank and I pulled up, dismounted and viewed the remains. The horn had caught him just above the breech-clout and literally split him to the collar bone. A young buck was sent to the camp to break the sad news to wife, mother, or sweetheart. Our self-appointed inquest had lost us too much time to take further part in the chase, so we returned slowly to camp, only stopping to secure the tongues of a couple of buffalo that had fallen to our six-shooters. Before reaching camp, we met the hearse, a lodge pole litter, operated by a cayuse pony, accompanied by the wails and howls of its conductor. We also met a motley crowd of squaws, who were not mourners, but after buffalo meat and skins. On passing over the slaughter pen, for such it really was, we saw a big buffalo cow staggering around with an arrow protruding nearly its entire length from the opposite side from which it had entered. It must have been sent with a terrific force, as it had entered just in front of the hip bone on the right side, passing diagonally through the body, coming out lower down on the left side. A pistol

shot ended her misery.

The most deadly weapon, used by the Crows at that time, in killing buffalo, was the old .50 caliber Springfield musket with the greater portion of the stock and barrel cut off, which, after its abbreviation, resembled an overgrown horse pistol, and was used with one hand. Full length muskets, Colt's pistols, and occasionally bows and arrows were in use, the latter mostly by the old bucks. We saw no spears used.

The Indians did not run buffalo for pastime or pleasure. After a big killing they would lie around camp gorging themselves and their numerous, worthless dogs, while the meat lasted, putting off the next slaughter until their children were crying for meat and they themselves well gaunted up. The skins of the cows were usually saved for robes, split down the center of the back and belly to make it more easily handles while tanning, after which it was sewed together with sinew. The skins are first stretched on frames or on the ground to dry. When dry, they are fleshed, chipped down, formerly with flint chipping knives attached to shank bone with sinew and pitch, and used like a hoe. Since the advent of the whites, steel or hoop iron is used instead of flint. I saw, however, some of the flint knives or scrapers used by the "old girls" who, it seems, had not taken up the later fashion. It takes a woman from two to three weeks to tan a large robe and I have often seen a well-tanned robe traded for ten .50 caliber cartridges.

The lay of the ground permitting, the Indians ran the buffalo toward their camp, making their killing as near home as possible, which made it easier for the squaws to secure the meat and hides. The bucks never assist the womenfolk in any kind of work whatever. I have seen them even make the women carry their guns when traveling where there was no game.

I remember while traveling along with a big outfit one day, in crossing a deep, narrow wash, we came upon an old woman who was trying in vain to get a heavily laden pack pony upon its feet after it had falled down with her perched up on top of the pack. In sympathy, I dismounted and with her assistance got the old beast again on its feet, then picking up the little, old, dried-up woman, I tossed her on top of the load. A few minutes later, one of my friends among the bucks, who had seen my act of charity, rode along side my horse and told me not to be guilty of such a degrading action, and I noticed that even the smile of the old woman was one of contempt instead of gratitude.

I have never yet seen an Indian show the least love or sympathy or respect for his aged parents; they think nothing of leaving them to die alone as soon as they have outlived their usefulness and become a burden. It is astonishing the amount of hardship these same old people can stand. I have seen women, not less than seventy-five

years old, riding against the wind and drifting snow across divides, sitting on top of a pack with a long willow in their bare hands, driving loose horses, and this in January when the temperature was from 10 to 20 degrees below zero.

It is generally supposed that an Indian has great love for his horse, yet I have never seen one show a spark of sympathy for his horse under any conditions. On one occasion, during the winter, I saw a strong, young buck ride into camp on his horse with one of its fore legs broken between the knee and fetlock, and a portion of the bone protruding through the skin. He, with others, had been out a few miles from camp circling antelope; a badger hole had caused the accident and that young brute, too lazy to walk, had forced the poor animal to carry him to camp on three legs. And even when there, after slipping the rawhide thong from its jaw (they never use saddles when chasing game), beat the poor horse out of camp with a club whip; would not even use a cartridge to put the beast out of its misery. Well, I did not begrudge the cartridge used for that purpose, and I felt like using one more.

The buffalo chase that I enjoyed the most was one that I did not take an active part in.

The Indians had talked me into the notion of making a run bareback instead of using my saddle, as I had been in the habit of doing. We had located a large herd

feeding in a long, narrow valley, and in order to run them toward camp, decided to follow up a parallel ravine or narrow side valley and when past the herd, cross the low intervening divide and come in above them, but the buffalo had either got sight or wind of us, for when crossing over when we thought we were beyond them, found that they were running up the valley and instead of our crossing in above them we were near the tail end of the herd, which necessitated a further ride at a faster gait. As we had already ridden five or six miles on a sweeping lope, jumping rocks and washouts, and dodging badger holes, the constant grip of my knees on the horse's side necessary to keep my seat, was beginning to have its effect, besides other parts of my mortal frame were beginning to get a little the worse for wear.

This, with the thought of eight or ten miles more of wear and tear, decided me to drop out, and the "O hell, come on" from the others had no effect.

I had one companion, however, in Big-ee George, a Shoshone of nearly three hundred pounds weight, who was riding a pony of only about double his own weight. In this case the horse had called the halt. Selecting a rocky point that commanded a good view of the whole valley, I lighted my pipe, adjusted my field glasses, and awaited developments. While waiting, I was taking in the low, rocky ridge on the opposite side of the valley, about one-half mile distant, when I discovered some gray objects moving about in the

scattering dwarf timber. On a closer scrutiny it proved to be a number of gray wolves, buffalo wolves they are called in that country; they, too, were awaiting developments. These wolves can always be found hanging around the outskirts of a band of buffalo, they come on the scene in act three. First, Indian slaughter; second, squaw butcher; third, wolf scavenger. These wolves also find and finish a greater or less number of buffalo that are badly wounded but stay with the herd until after the chase is over. A number of them, working together, often pull down an old bull that has been driven out of the band by his younger and stronger rivals.

While I was half-dozing over my second pipe, and wondering if the day would ever come when the buffalo would be wiped from the face of the earth, my revery was suddenly broken by Big-ee George punching me in the ribs and saying, "Me see um". Sure enough, looking up the valley, there appeared what at first looked like the shadow of a cloud on the white buffalo grass, which on closer observation, was surely moving in our direction and as the intervening space grew less and less I could see with the aid of the glasses, puff after puff of white smoke behind and on either side of the moving mass. Nearer and nearer they came until with the naked eye I could distinguish horsemen from buffalo in the on-coming avalanche, and could distinctly hear the bang-bang of the guns. But the grand and awe-inspiring panorama

reached its climax as the living deluge thundered past, almost under and within a stone's throw from where I stood. With lowering heads, wild glaring eyes, nostrils shooting out jets of apparent steam, this hard-pressed, living mass of black monsters fairly shook the ground, and the sound from the thousand hoofs that gored the sod was like the fall of a mighty cataract. This, with the shouting, shooting, swaying mass of red savages on either flank and intermingling with its living flood, red streamers floating from their horses' tails, all combined to make an awe-inspiring picture I shall never forget. As they passed from view, all that remained to mark the struggle between wild animals and wilder men, were the black bunches strung along the line of carnage, some seeming like mere black specks in the distance.

Tendoy and I each had a remarkably good horse, his chestnut sorrel, raised in the east, while mine was a large mountain-bred dapply gray. Either could run for hours without a show of fatigue. These two horses we had held in reserve, but unfortunately one morning, decided to show our Crow neighbors what a good horse could do. I mounted Heenan on "Muggins", as he was lighter than Frank or I; Tendoy put his son, Jack, a boy of about sixteen, on his thorough-bred; each rider carrying a pair of Smith & Wesson pistols with belts filled with cartridges. Thus equipped, we turned them loose with a crowd of two hundred or more Crow Indians after a large herd of buffalo. Well,

after every Crow's horse had thrown up his tail and quit, being no longer able to stay with the herd, Muggins and the sorrel were still well in the bunch as the crack of their riders' pistols showed as they passed out of sight over a low divide.

The following morning a snake-eyed, old Crow warrior came to my lodge leading three good looking horses, which, through an interpreter, he offered me for my gray buffalo horse. Of course I declined his offer as well as another one with another horse added. Later in the day, he came back with five, all large, good looking and cooly informed me that I could either take the five or he would steal my horse. I told the old scalplifter that the trade did not go, but if he could steal my horse without getting killed, it would cost him nothing.

Tendoy had a like experience. From that time on, we kept our horses together with a shotgun guard over them night and day. A few weeks later, one cold stormy afternoon, the guard then on duty came to my lodge after matches. I at once asked him where the horses were. He replied "Just over the hill", pointing to a low ridge a half-mile distant. I asked no further questions, but snatched the shot gun, which was well charged with buckshot, out of his hands and started on a run for the ridge, but alas, on reaching it, I found the other horses all right but no Muggins or sorrel thoroughbred. I sent word at once to Tendoy,

who was camped close by, but we both saw the uselessness of trying to overtake the thieves on any of the horses we had left. Old Snake-eye had made good his threat. After it was all too late, I saw my mistake in not accepting the $200 offered me in Bozeman for Muggins, or even taking the five Crow horses for him; besides there were the many, many cold nights I had lain, concealed with the shotgun, praying for Snake-eyes to show up.

While at this camp, I was told there was a white man living with the Crows. After considerable effort, I found him, a young German, who, I afterward learned, had deserted or some said been run out of the United States army a year or two previous to this time. Of all the low-down, dirty brutes I ever met, he was the worst; dressed like a Crow, that is, with breech clout and moccasins, body and legs bare and his long, dirty yellow hair one solid mass of lice and nits. He gave his name as "Bravo" and the first question he asked me was, if I wanted to buy or trade for a squaw. To draw the beast out, I asked him about how many squaws he had for sale. He said he only cared to trade off one, that he owned "them two", pointing to a couple of dirty, lousy, fat young squaws and explaining he had won one of them at a game of cards. He was playing cards with some Crow bucks while I was interviewing him, using two or three decks of very dirty, worn cards all mussed together. When I asked him what he valued the squaws at, he said, "Oh, about $30, or a good pony, or gun, or lodge", at which price he would give

a man his choice, as he needed only one in his business. At this stage of the game, I commenced giving him some good advice. I told him how I had seen the Mohave squaws get rid of their lice and nits by plastering their hair full of soft mud and after it had thoroughly dried, they beat it loose with a stick or rock and it would dislodge every louse and nit. At first he got mad or pretended to be, but when I opened out on him in real earnest he probably thought I was trying to get him to make some bad break that would give me an excuse to kill him, and he simmered down like a good, little cur. I do not believe the cur intended his proposition as an insult, but somehow I couldn't see it in any other light. I have never since met "Bravo", but saw later in the papers where he had gone to Washington, D. C., as interpreter for a lot of Crow chiefs, and I wondered whether or not he had used the Mohave squaw prescription for his head affliction before starting.

o
oOo
o

TROUBLE WITH THE CROW INDIANS

About this time, to add to our discomfiture, the Crows had commenced sending out scouts in the night to change the location of the buffalo herd, giving their hunters the tip. They would sneak out of camp before daylight, and by the time that Tendoy's outfit got to where the herd had been last seen, there would be no meat in sight and nearly or quite the whole day would be wasted in trailing up and locating it.

As we were all living on meat straight, this Crow game soon became rather annoying and added to our other grievances, put Tendoy in an ugly mood. I shall never forget the straight talk he gave them one cold morning, in a voice that I think could have been distinctly heard a mile distant. It ran about as follows: "You Crows pretent to be our friends. You sent runners to my country to ask us to join you here to hunt buffalo. At the first chance you had, you stole our best horses. Now you are trying to starve us and our children. You get up in the night and without washing your dirty heads, sneak out like a hungry wolf after the buffalo. When my people get up, they first wash themselves clean. Then they eat their breakfast or did so when there was any meat, and, if necessary, waiting for the light of day before starting out to hunt. When we get to where the buffalo should be, we find that your Crow dogs have run

them during the night to some other place. Now my belly is full of your meanness and I am going to move my camp to some other place a long way from you thieves." The above harangue was made in the Shoshone tongue, accompanied by the sign language in which Tendoy was an expert, translated into Crow and passed down the entire length of their camp. In reply, a young Crow chief said, "You are in our country, hunting and killing our buffalo. It is true that we invited your people to come here, but it was more for your help in fighting the Sioux in case they attack us than for killing our buffalo"--here Tendoy interrupted the Crow spokesman. "Yes, you would have us live on grass and brush like horses and help you fight the Sioux. You, the brave Crows as you call yourselves. I have heard some of you say you can whip the whites. I can't, my skin is thin (warriors few in number), but I can whip you Crows here and now. I am done."

"Well," said the Crow chief, "you shall not leave our camp, if you try to do so we will whip your horses on their heads and drive you back."

Turning his back to the Crows, Tendoy told his men to have the women take down the lodges and get ready to move camp, that if any of them or the Fort Hall people were afraid to fight the Crows, they could stay where they were. While our lodges were being pulled down and put on the horses, the Crows were rushing here and there, donning war bonnets, daubing on paints, collecting their war horses, guns, and spears.

Shedding their robes and blankets, stripped to the breech clout, head dress, and moccasins, notwithstanding it had in the meantime commenced snowing, made it look as though there would certainly be something doing when we pulled out. While all these preparations were going on, we three whites were not idle, as we had several horses to pack, opening and issuing cartridges, besides this I loaned the dozen .44 caliber long barrel Smith & Wesson revolvers (which I had in stock for trade) to those of our crowd most in need of fire-arms. Our pack animals with the others, were sent ahead unmolested, as even a Crow Indian will not stoop to interfere with women and pack horses under such conditions. By this time, several hundred of the Crows, mostly young men, were circling around us and as they numbered five to one, I admit I thought our chance in the game a desperate one. However, Frank, Heenan, and I put up a bold front and lined up alongside of Tendoy, who sat silent on his horse with Winchester lying across the saddle in front of him and a Colt's navy pistol on each hip. As soon as the camp outfit passed over a low divide to the south and the last animal went out of sight, Tendoy said to the Crows who were massed on our front, "Now I am going first. Whip my horse's head." At the same time he raised his Winchester at full cock. Talk about eyes flashing fire: I have often read about such a thing, but never actually saw it before or since. Desperate as was our situation, those eyes, set jaws, and determined looks fairly held me spell-bound. I remember at the time wondering if there

was a man on the face of the earth, no matter what his color, who would dare to strike his horse. When starting Tendoy, in a low even voice, said, "Keep back, I want to be the length of my horse ahead." Well, I don't think there was a man in our outfit but was willing to grant him the honor of leading through that mob of yelling fiends. Occasionally some young blood of a Crow would raise his club whip and make a dash as though he intended to strike the horse, but on every such a move Mr. Crow saw that Tendoy's gun as well as eyes were following him, and the whip did not descend.

The simple facts were that they positively knew that the man daring to strike that horse would surely die right there and not one of them was brave or foolhardy enough to take the dose. Of course every mother's son of us held a cocked pistol or gun ready for quick work if the ball opened. We rode in a slow walk formed in a close double line, with Tendoy in the lead. After circling around us for a few hundred yards the Crows drew off and sullenly rode back to their camp.

After they had left us, Tendoy said, "Well, I am glad we did not have to fight; of course we would have whipped them, but then a good many of us would have been killed."

I heard Tendoy give the Crows another straight talk a few months later while we were camped on the Yellowstone opposite the Crow agency.

The Crows had kept at their horse stealing until a number of our outfit was nearly set afoot. To retaliate, quite a lot of our fellows had pulled out for their homes behind bunches of Crow horses and the cowards being afraid to follow and fight for their stock, came over where Tendoy and I were camped, complaining about their loss. After listening to their complaints for some time, Tendoy opened up on them about as follows: "I have known you Crows for a long time, but I know you now better than ever before. If you lose a dog, you will not only cry about it yourselves but you also want all your friends to cry for you. You thieves stole from my white friend here, and me, better horses than you ever owned. Of course our hearts felt bad about it for a while, but we did not cry or ask our friends to cry for us. I don't steal horses myself except from peopl I am at open war with, but if some of my young men have taken your horses it was to get even with you for the horses you have stolen from them. Now you can go to your lodges and cry your fill but don't come here expecting us to help you cry." I remember hearing Tendoy give one more of his plain talks, this time to a jealous Fort Hall Bannock chief, who had formerly lived with the Lemhi Indians. The talk as near as I can remember, ran as follows: "You don't like me because I have whipped you twice and driven you out of my country. The first time I whipped you for stealing two horse

from a white miner and made you return the horses. Some time after that you went to a white rancher's house; the white man being away, you scared the woman and made her cook for you after you had taken the fat (cream) from her pan of milk with your dirty hands. When the white man came home and the woman told him about it he was very mad and the next day he came to my camp and knew you by the bear claw necklace and the scar on your nose, which the woman told him about. He was a brave man and wanted to beat you with his fist but you were afraid to fight him. I think the white man would have shot you then but I told him to wait until I got through with you. You have not forgotten the whipping I gave you that time. If you could see your own back you would see the scars from the lash of my club whip. Then I drove you out of my camp and told you never to come back. The white man shook my hand and said you had been well punished. I think his heart felt better for he was laughing when he went away."

"You went from my country to Fort Hall and now you claim to be some kind of a chief and are mad because I do not treat you like a chief. Now, Widah-tanga-ga-ro-cun (Bear Claws Around His Neck), if you know of any mean thing I ever did to a white person, you tell these three Fort Hall white men and these Indians. I will not get mad. I am done." Well, "Mr. Bear Claws, etc." hung his head and sneaked out of camp.

After our exciting break with the Crows, we located our camp near Dry Lake. The following day I decided that instead of running buffalo with the others, I would go out by myself and hunt black tail deer, as I had noticed many signs of them the previous day. For this purpose I had saddled up one of my horses that was unfit for hunting buffalo on account of his great fear of them. The sight or smell of a buffalo at close range would throw him into such a terror that he became unmanageable. There was only one thing that frightened him more, and that was shooting from his back.

The whole outfit had already left camp for their chase and I was in my lodge making deliberate preparations for my side hunt when a little tad of an Indian kid came running his pony almost into the lodge, yelling in Shoshone as he came, "Friend, friend, come quick and kill the buffalo. He is stealing all our arrows." "Stealing your arrows?", I queried. "Yes, Yes, come quick." On stepping out of the lodge I saw what at first looked like a huge porcupine, coming toward the camp, so completely were his sides and rump filled with arrows. Two dozen or more Indian kids ranging in age from six to twelve years, were pressing hard on his rear and flanks. They had shot all of their arrows with just force enough to go through the old bull's hide, but not hard enough to penetrate any vital spot. As it would so greatly embarrass my little friends to lose their arrows, I decided

to stop the thief, if possible. Mounting "Wild John" I lit out and when within twenty yards and opposite the left side of the venerable old bull, I pulled my left side pistol and commenced firing into the ground, which caused John to forget all about the buffalo and in running away from the reports brought me alongside the game wanted; quickly changing the reins to my left hand which still held the smoking pistol, I snatched the right hand pistol and placed a couple of chunks of lead where they would do the most good before John realized what he was up against. Dismounting, I watched the little, native sons of America plucking and distributing the unappreciated plumage. After cleaning up one side of the buffalo, I tossed them the end of my lariat (rawhide rope) which they fastened to a foot and then with a turn around the saddle horn I rolled the carcass over. Many of their arrows were broken on that side, however, they were quite happy to recover so much of their stolen property.

I will here state that buffalo killed by runners on horseback is at close range, the game seldom being more than ten feet distant. One of our Bannock hunters would not shoot a buffalo without his foot resting on its rump when the fatal shot was fired. He explained that was his "big medicine."

The ribs, hump and marrow bones are most prized by the natives. As for myself, the tongue proved most satisfactory; buried in a bed of hot earth and ashes with a

covering of live coals for a couple of hours, then after the outside skin or covering was pulled off, salt and pepper added, they were fine--but oh, how I longed for a little bread "like Mother used to make" to go along with them. My craving for bread would often follow me into dreamland, where I would enter a frontier restaurant, shie my old hat into a corner, plant myself at the nearest table, reach for a fresh roll and--awake.

o
oOo
o

FRANK FISHER'S EXPERIENCE

It turned very cold while we were at Dry Lake and there being no shelter from the wind, we moved camp some twenty odd miles to the southwest, finding a more sheltered place in a thick growth of scrub cedar on a slope facing the south. It was while in this camp that my brother came near losing his life. We were then out of the buffalo range and were depending on elk and black tail deer for our meat.

A fresh fall of snow during the previous night caused Frank to decide on a hunt. Before starting he asked me for matches, and as there happened to be none out of the packs, I commenced unlashing one of the rawhide covered packs when he said, "Never mind, I will get some of Whisky Joe". Joe was an Indian whose lodge stood but a few steps from ours. It snowed hard nearly all day, but cleared up and turned very cold toward night. As Frank failed to return by dark, I became very uneasy and my anxiety was increased when I learned he had failed to get matches at Joe's lodge. Saddling a horse, I rode back several miles in the direction I supposed he had taken, stopping on a high knoll to fire several heavy charges from the shot gun, but getting no answer. I also started a fire in some dry cedars, hoping thus to attract his attention, but all to no purpose. At daylight

the next morning Heenan and several Indians as well as myself started out in different directions to search for him. The drifted snow had so completely covered his tracks that we were unable to get any trace of him. That night I called the Indians together and talked over the situation. By this time the weather was bitterly cold, not less than forty degrees below zero. The Indians united in saying it was impossible for a man to live through a single night in the hills without a fire, robe or blanket. I gave up all hope of ever seeing him alive again, but offered a large reward to the Indian who would find and bring in his body. God, what I suffered during that night!

Anxious to get the reward, nearly every able-bodied Indian in camp was to start out at daybreak. Before it was fairly light the next morning Tin-ni (old chief Targie's son), a boy about sixteen who had started out to drive in the horses, came running back and rushed into my lodge saying, "I seen Frank". My answer was "You lie." "No, no, I don't lie, he is coming right out here." I fairly shot out of the lodge and sure enough, there was Frank riding his old horse "Sandy" on a slow walk and humming one of his favorite tunes. Well, I guess Tin-ni did not lie when he told his Indian chums later, that I was so glad to see Frank that my eyes leaded lots of water.

Frank had been out for 48 hours in the coldest weather I had ever endured in my life and without fire or

food. True, his feet were severely frozen, but with the application of plenty of snow we brought them out all right with the exception of the temporary loss of a few toe nails. In explanation of his absence, Frank said that early the first day he had wounded a monstrous black tail buck and had followed him for hours, winding around through the rolling hills until he realized it was time for him to be starting back for camp. After traveling for some distance in what he thought the right direction, he suddenly came to a small valley or open plain that he had not seen during the day, and this convinced him he had lost his bearings, and he decided it would be safer to follow his back tracks. He soon found, however, that owing to the drifting snow his tracks were completely obliterated. As night was coming on he gave old Sandy the reins, hoping he would strike for camp as is usually the case with a horse, but instead of doing so, he would stop and commence pawing away the snow in search of bunch grass. Seeing there was no possibility of reaching camp that night, he commenced looking for shelter, and luckily found a shallow cave of projecting rock underneath which the ground was dry and soft. It was apparently the temporary den of some wild animal. Banking a mass of cedar boughs around the outside, he tied his horse to a tree and taking the single damp and dirty blanket from under his saddle, crawled into this hole; took off his boots, and

as he remarked, "Fought it out until daylight", not daring to go to sleep, but constantly chafing and rubbing his hands and feet to keep his blood in circulation. At daybreak he again endeavored to find his back trail, but failing in this, he climbed to the top of the highest hill in sight, from which, the weather being clear, he could see the Yellowstone River and in the dim distance could make out Crazy Mountain, a noted landmark opposite and to the north of the Crow Agency. This he knew to be not less than a hundred miles distant, but having then given up all hope of finding camp, he thought to reach there was the only chance left him.

After allowing his horse to graze for some time on a knoll where the wind had taken off most of the snow, he struck out on a walk, leading his horse to keep from freezing, and headed for the Crow Agency. Some time during the afternoon, he struck the trail that I or some of the other fellows had made in our vain search for him during the earlier part of the day. This trail led him in a long circle through the hills, but being satisfied of the nature of it, he resolved to stay with it to the end. Thus the second night, if possible colder than the preceeding one, found him still on the trail. Not caring to take any chances of losing it, and as night was coming on, he began to watch for a place to put in the night. As no friendly cave presented itself, the best he could do was to fix up

a sort of lean-to, with boughs, against a big granite boulder, where he passed another miserable night. This place proved to be within less than one mile from our camp. I have never quite forgiven myself for not firing signal shots that night, but as everyone was so positive he could not be alive, it seemed absurd to try to attract the attention of a dead man.

o
oOo
o

STORY OF THE EARLY INDIAN BATTLES

While in this camp or one near it, I asked Tendoy one day where he got the two Blackfoot scalps that he had sent me a couple of years before. In answer he said, "If you will go with me tomorrow I will show you the place and tell you all about it and will also show you where my father, who was a big war chief, had a hard fight with the Blackfeet before I was born." I readily accepted his proposition. Accordingly, the next morning we were mounted and off at daylight. A ride of about fifteen miles brought us to the foot of steep "Sugar-loaf Butte" which terminated in quite a narrow point about one hundred feet above its base. Tying our horses, we proceeded on foot to the top of this round peak. There, after seating ourselves on some rocks, I lighted my pipe and listened to Tendoy's story, which ran about as follows: "Five or six snows ago I was with a small party of my people over near Virginia City hunting and fishing; it was in the summertime and we had our women and children with us. One day we left our families near the paper wagon house (stage station) and several of us went up to Virginia City to buy flour, sugar, and coffee; maybe we bought a little whisky too, anyway we stayed in town that night and I don't know how long we would have stayed

there, but the next day about noon one of my little boys, about ten years old, came into camp almost tired out, for he had come on foot, running nearly all the way, and he told us that someone had stolen all of our horses the night before. Well, what he said killed the whisky in us quickly, and we hurried back to our camp. The few old men and large boys left in our camp had followed the tracks of our stolen horses to the hill. They said there were only two or three of the thieves, but did not know whether they were Blackfeet or Crows. There were seven, maybe eight of us, all of our other horses were gone, so we had only the horses that we had ridden to town, but they were our best horses. After eating, we tied some dried meat and fish to our saddles, and started after our stolen horses. We rode part of the night, but were afraid of losing the trail, so we camped until morning, which gave our horses a good rest and a chance to fill their bellies. We rode hard all of the next day and part of the night, giving our horses but little rest. We rode fast for three days, maybe it was four days, but the last day we did not follow on the trail, but divided into two parties, one on each side but quite a ways off the trail, but in sight of each other 'most of the time. Sometimes one of our party would strike the trail where they had changed their course; then we would signal to each other and change our

course too, so as to keep the trail between us. Well, when we got to that hill (pointing to a ridge a short distance to the west) I knew by the tracks that we were close to them. Getting off my horse, I crawled up until I could see over, and there they were right down there by that little creek. They were all lying down and I think they were asleep. Then I crawled back out of sight and signalled my men to come on. Then we had a short smoke and council. After that I looked over again and they were in the same positions. There were only two of them and they were not very old, just grown boys. They were not very smart, either, for they had not tied any of their horses, which were all over there on that little flat where the grass was good then. Well, we rode around that point there and before the fellows woke up we made a dash, getting between them and the horses, and at the same time we commenced yelling and shooting at them. When they jumped up and saw they were cut off from the horses, they started on the run for this hill, and before we could load our guns again they got up here and were making a fort out of these stones, just big enough for them to hide in. Then we divided up and got on both sides, some over there and the rest down by the trees there. Of course they kept shooting at us as fast as they could load their guns. We all had muzzle loading

guns except one of our men; he was an old man and had only a spear with an iron point. Well, we kept fighting for a long time, but as they were behind those rocks and we were behind rocks or trees, none of us could do much good. So after a while, I got mad and told my men to watch close and be ready to shoot if the Blackfeet showed their heads. Then I took the old man's spear and gave him my gun and went back in the thick trees out of sight of the place until I got around on this side, where as you see, there is the most cover of brush and trees; then I crawled up the hill until I was right behind them. I was careful and made no noise, and they did not hear or see me until I raised up, and then it was too late for them to do anything, for I drove the old man's spear through one and at the same time I jumped on the other with my feet; they were lying down here on their bellies. Well, I soon pinned the other one to the ground right there where your feet are. Then I pulled my knife and gave each a few stabs to make sure, and before my men got there I had taken off there scalps. That is all."

While he was giving me the details of the closing scene, he was on his feet giving force to every word by going through quick motions representing every act narrated in the tragedy, and his keen black eyes were sparkling as they did when bantering the Crows to strike his horse's head. I regretted then that I had not known

the history of the two scalps and sent it to "Clum", Chief Clerk in the Indian Office at Washington, D. C., when I sent him the scalps.

Mounting our horses again, we rode a mile or two to the east or northeast, where I was shown the history of a desperate encounter between the Bannocks and the Blackfeet. A history recorded in stone upon the face of Mother Earth which was as plain as print when once pointed out and explained.

The whole battle scene covered several acres stretched along the side of a sloping hill, cut with numerous shallow ravines or draws. At its western base, in a growth of timber, numerous mounds of small rocks were placed behind the trees facing the hillside upon which the fight took place. From behind these trees, in which the Bannocks had been concealed, leading to the main battle ground, small rocks were placed in various lines at intervals of about three or four feet, representing the track of a warrior in his advance on the enemy. Every halt of each individual was shown by a small circle of stones, in which was also noted the number of arrows or shots fired from that particular place. When one of them crawled on his hands and knees in order to conceal himself, while gaining a more desirable position, rocks placed together, closer and in double lines, were used. Where a warrior fell, killed or mortally

wounded, the ground was marked showing where he fell, and in some instances even showing the position of his body and limbs. Where the dead or wounded were carried from the field, the records showed whether it was done by footman or horseman. Thus, by starting from the timber on a warrior's stone tracks, you could easily follow up and read his whole movements from beginning to end.

There was no armistice during these battles for the benefit of historians or burying squads, but the grounds were later visited by the surviving participants at different times and the history of the battle mapped out by the respective parties. I understand that neither party will interfere or destroy the history of their enemies. Such an act would be bad medicine and dire calamity would follow.

It must require considerable time and labor to "write up" in detail one of these conflicts, as, at least, in this case the stone tablets were packed some distance, presumably on horses. Whether these historians are, as is the case with some of the white historians, given to romancing, I am unable to say.

o
oOo
o

SUFFERING DURING THE WINTER OF 1871-72

On account of the deep snow and the scarcity of feed for our horses, we moved from the cedars over to Sweetgrass, and from there to Big Timber Creek, where later we were compelled to cut down cottonwood trees and feed our horses on the boughs and bark of the limbs. We, also at times, kept log fires burning to keep them from freezing to death.

Getting short of meat, Frank, Heenan, and I, with a few of the natives, started out on a hunt. Before pulling out, Tendoy advised us not to go over toward the east as his scouts had seen fresh Sioux signs over there recently. "Yes," I said, "but your scouts also report seeing a small bunch of elk over there, too, so I think we will go that way, but will only use one eye for elk and the other for Sioux." We had scarcely passed over the divide about a half mile from camp, when we saw the elk a few hundred yards lower down, but before we could get within close range they took fright and started up the opposite hill. It was a long distance for our light guns, but we all commenced slinging lead after them, firing fast from our breech loading guns, until some chance shot knocked an elk down. However, some of the boys kept on firing as long as they were in sight. We then went down,

crossed the ravine, and by the time we reached the dead elk we saw Tendoy coming, tearing over the hill like a whirlwind. He was on foot, rifle in hand. As soon as he saw us he slowed up, but came on down where we were; the sweat was fairly streaming down his face and he was puffing like a horse at the end of a buffalo chase. He said he heard so much shooting that he thought we were surely fighting the Sioux, and he had run fast all the way up the hill to get there in time to help us.

I asked him why he did not get his horse. "Well, said he, "the horses were nearly as far off as you were and in the opposite direction, so I thought I could get here quicker on foot."

We soon had the elk skinned and cut up for loading. Frank led up "Polar Bear", our white pack horse. Tendoy, taking up the elk skin, spread it over the horse and saddle, raw side up; then cutting open the elk's stomach, took out a quantity of its contents with his hands and smeared it over the skin before loading on the meat. When I asked him why he did so, after some hesitation he replied, "My father always did so, and I have seen my father's father do it, but why they did it I do not know."

This act had been remembered, but the reason for it had been forgotten. Doubtless some old superstition or "medicine" supposed to bring about some desired results.

When about half the meat had been loaded, I called for another horse, but Tendoy said there was no use for another horse, that one horse could carry one elk. I thought he was mistaken, but said nothing.

Tendoy and the other natives loaded all the meat, strung from the horse's neck to the roots of his tail; a portion of it hanging near the ground, but all securely tied or lashed with rawhide thongs and ropes. Well, old Polar Bear made camp all right, with not less than half his own weight on his back.

From this camp we moved down to near the mouth of Big Timber Creek, and from there to a small creek farther up the Yellowstone, from which place I decided to make a trip to the Crow Agency to get news from the outside world, and a little flour.

Soon after crossing to the south side of the Yellowstone on the ice, higher up, I was overtaken by a solitary Crow Indian. A short confab in the sign language showed that we were both bound for the Agency. He was riding a strong horse and carried a full length .50 caliber Springfield resting across his saddle in front of him. I was mounted on Wild John, a fine looking horse, but carried only two six-shooters, having left my gun in camp. Not caring to ride ahead of him, as riding alone that way sometimes proves unhealthy, I told him to ride ahead, making the excuse that I did not know the trail very well. After thoroughly looking me and my

horse over with his little, beady, black eyes, we proceeded on our way, I keeping some little distance behind.

During the early afternoon, a small band of elk crossed the river a short distance above us, and started up the steep bluff ahead and to our left, in single file. Running his horse full tilt to the bottom of the hill, the Crow flung himself out of the saddle, and resting his tun on crossed sticks, carried for that purpose, brought down an elk in the rear, at the first shot. The ground being very steep and covered with snow, the elk slid and rolled back down the bluff almost to the trail.

Going over to the river bank, he secured a five or six pound boulder and after partly skinning the legs below the gambrel and knee joints, smashed them with the rock. He then took out his sheath knife and ripped open the carcass and after pulling out the paunch, dug out the kidneys and apparently enjoyed his dinner of raw kidney and marrow, the latter he dug or punched out of the bones with his resting sticks.

I received no invitation to the feast but, without dismounting, had in the meantime dined on cooked buffalo tongue brought along for that purpose. The repast over, we jogged along, reaching the Agency about dark.

o
oOo
o

AT THE CROW INDIAN AGENCY

I first called at the Indian Agent's office and asked him if it was possible to get hay enough to feed my horse over night. Pease, the Agent, commenced kicking at once, saying the damned soldiers and bummers worried the life out of him. I waited no further growl on his part, but proceeded by the proper oath to give it force. I told him I wanted it distinctly understood that I was neither a soldier nor bummer; that I had money to pay my way wherever I went. At this his bristles lowered a little, and picking up a pencil, he scrawled the following without date or signature, "Dick, give the bearer hay for his horse." This brief note, as a sort of souvenir, is still in my possession.

On leaving the office, I met one of the employees and asked him if it was possible to get a little hay from anyone there outside of the Agent. He told me that Hoffman, the trader, had a little there for his own use; that I might possibly get some of him, and that he also kept a boarding house where I could get my meals. After thanking him for the information, I went directly to the trader and on assuring him that $2. for a night's feed for my horse and a like amount for two "feeds" for myself would be quite satisfactory, the deal was closed. After caring

for my horse and seeing that the little stable was securely bolted and locked, I struck out for the hash house and was just in time for bread, potatoes, and beans. I presume there was meat also on the table, but if so it had no attraction for me. I remember the next morning when the Chinaman, who filled the double position of cook and waiter, shoved a platter of meat under my nose, saying, "You no likee meat?", of telling him that being a strict vegetarian I never ate meat.

In going to the trader's store that morning after my little dab of flour, I could not help noticing the great precaution necessary in trading with the Crow Indians. The store was provided with a wide counter placed ten or more feet from the shelves, and extending from wall to wall with iron bars reaching from the front of the counter to the ceiling above. These bars or rods were arranged about eight inches apart and the trade was carried on between them. The front space or "Indian room" as it was called was perfectly bare. Not a bench or even a stove in the coldest weather. In fact the Indians were not allowed to enter a room that contained anything movable.

A week later found us camped on Shield's River or Twenty-five Yard Creek, as it is usually called. We were then within a few miles of the Agency, but off the Reserve, being on the opposite side of the Yellowstone.

The Reserve is confined to the south east side of said river.

Here we were joined by a Mexican by the name of Thomas Lavatte, who had an Indian wife and quite a large family. There was also in camp an old Canadian Frenchman or half breed who answered to the name of Bonepart. With him was a boy and girl whom he called his grandchildren, but as I was informed were no blood relation to him whatever. The boy was about twelve and the girl fifteen or sixteen, and both of them had light flaxen hair and blue eyes. They showed but little, if any, Indian blood. The surname of these two youngsters was Ogden. They were the children or grandchildren, I forget which, of Peter Ogden, one of the leading men in the employ of the Hudson Bay Fur Company, who is said to have been the first white man to explore the Ogden River in Utah, which still bears his name. These children spoke French and Flathead, but would not or could not speak English. Frank, on several occasions, tried to engage the girl in conversation, but his efforts were met with a "cold shoulder", as she invariably turned her back on him.

One day as Frank and I were returning from a short hunt on foot, on entering a dry wash about a mile above camp but leading directly to it, we suddenly surprised the girl, who at once started for camp. Frank, handing me his gun, said, "I will make that little heifer

talk to me." Well, the race was on at once. Talk about running, she didn't run, she flew. Following the wash I found Frank sitting on a boulder several hundred yards below the starting point, mopping his steaming brow with both hands. My greeting was, "Well, did she talk to you?" "Talk to me!"--"Say, I am sorry you lost Muggins. I would just like to bet old Sandy against a glass bead that she can outrun Muggins any mark in the road. To think that I, the champion foot racer of the 23d Wisconsin regiment, was so badly beaten by a little girl. Say, don't tell anyone, it's too humiliating. I wish I could forget it." It is hardly necessary to say that Frank made no further effort to cultivate her acquaintance, and I have never since heard him boast of his running qualities.

While we were camped on Twenty-five Yard Creek, someone employed in the trader's store proposed to some of our crowd to trade groceries for elk meat. This was hailed as good news, as we knew that there was a large band of elk at no great distance above us on the creek. A day was spent cleaning guns, sharpening knives, and putting everything in good shape for a big hunt. Early the next morning a mixed crowd, about twenty in all, started out and after riding six or eight miles, we sighted the band of elk on a side hill a mile or more ahead of us. Stopping here, we held a council or rather laid plans for the slaughter.

First we sent Heenan and "Three-fingered Jack", a young Shoshone, to make a big circuit in order to get around to the windward side of the game. A band of elk when jumped up, will, if the nature of the ground admits it, invariably run toward the wind; in this way they can always scent danger ahead and avoid an ambush. When the boys had gained the desired position, they signalled to us with a red blanket according to agreement. We then spread out forming nearly a half circle. The elk struck to the windward as usual, but before they had gone far were confronted by Heenan and Jack. Turning back along the side hill they soon ran up against one wing of our mob. Here they commenced milling, trotting around in a circle perfectly bewildered. For the next fifteen or twenty minutes, it was like going into a corral and shooting down cattle. I know that the five shots I fired knocked down five elk at a distance of from thirty to fifty yards. Knowing by this time we had as much meat as we could care for, I clambered up on a big boulder and after exhausting a good deal of lung power, succeeded in stopping the further useless slaughter. A count showed we had thirty-four down, the wounded leaving a trail of blood when they were allowed to pass out. It being too late to get the meat to camp that evening, we took out the entrails and propping the carcasses open, filled them with snow.

The next day Lavatte with some of the Indians and nearly all of the women went back with all the pack horses we could muster, between forty and fifty, and brought the meat to camp that evening. The next morning most of it was again loaded and sent over to the Agency. But it seems that the trader had changed his mind, for he positively refused to make the exchange. As we had plenty of meat in camp, the men with the pack train took their load back down to the river and chucked it all through an air hole in the ice, sending it down the Yellowstone to feed the fishes. I think what knocked the deal was the fact that I was at the time paying the trader from twenty to thirty dollars a week in hard cash for groceries for myself and numerous friends. He saw that by making the exchange it would cut off this little revenue. Flour was ten cents a pound, sugar twenty-five, and coffee fifty.

o
oOo
o

ARRESTED FOR TRADING WITH THE INDIANS

A day or two later, I was somewhat surprised when an Agency employee came over to our camp and informed me that Bill Hamilton, Deputy U. S. Marshall, had a warrant for my arrest for illegal trading with the Indians. But the more annoying news he brought was that Buck Buchanan and some of the other hangers-on around the Agency had, with smooth lies, made Bill believe I was a full grown bold, bad man; a "holy terror from over the divide and a gun fighter from hell". He further said the deputy, being a little "gun shy" was afraid to come over to my camp with his warrant. Being thus placed in rather an undesirable position, I thought it best to go over and interview "Wild Cat Bill", as he called himself, and refute the very bad reputation given me by the boys. I found Bill, but as he failed to pull his gun or warrant on me, I began to suspect that the whole thing had been cooked up by the boys as a huge joke on myself. Noticing, however, that he was watching me closely, I finally sauntered up and in a meek voice told him I understood he had papers for my arrest; that if such was the case to produce them; that I was a meek and lowly law-abiding citizen. In fact I assured him that having been thoroughly halter broke at a tender age, I was so gentle and tame that the smallest child could approach me with safety. With

this assurance he fished out his papers, but being embarrassed either by my extreme gentleness, or harboring a faint suspicion that I was making a play to catch him off his guard, he attempted to read the warrant with one eye while the other was focussed on the butts of my mature guns which rested conveniently on my hips. This unnecessary precaution on his part was relieved when I asked him to allow me to read the document, which he at once handed to me. After careful reading, I handed it back and cooly informed him that it was not properly executed unless it was intended to try and prove that I had been trading with the Indians on the Crow Reserve. This, he informed me, was not the case, as they were all aware that I had spent one night only with my goods on the Reserve, the one night at the Agency while on my way from Bozeman to join the Indians at the Musselshell, and that it was further known that I had not opened any of my goods that night. I showed him my license to trade in Gallatin and Bighorn Counties, but informed him as I intended to remain some time in my present camp, he would have ample time to return the document to headquarters where they could make the necessary alterations if they chose to do so. This, he said, he would do, and we parted good friends. Hamilton was quite deaf, but his defective hearing was in a measure overcome by his being an excellent sign talker.

Returning to camp, Frank, Heenan, and I put in our leisure time for a week or more shooting Crow Indian dogs. These dogs, apparently full cousins to the buffalo wolves, would come over on our side of the river in small packs for the express purpose of running down antelope. They hunted in relays. As the antelope were quite poor and weak, owing to the hard winter, they were easily run down and killed. By secreting ourselves at various points best suited for the purpose we were able to make some respectable killings.

The Crow Indians did not bother us much, as they entertained no love for our crowd. It was quite evident had our whole outfit suddenly passed to the "silent beyond", not a single finger joint would have been sacrificed in mourning for our loss by our neighbors across the river. It may not be generally known, but it is a fact nevertheless, that upon the death of a near relative or great and good friend, a Crow Indian will cut off the end of a finger at the first joint. I have seen some of the old pirates minus the first joint of every finger on both hands, showing he had "mourned" the loss of eight beloved kinsmen or bosom friends.

On going to the Agency one day after grub, I met friend Bill, who shook my hand warmly and without hesitation this time showed me the remodeled warrant and asked me when it would best suit my convenience to go over to

Bozeman to appear before the U. S. Commissioner.

A few days later the deputy and I rode over to Bozeman. Through sheer modesty I carried only one pistol, but I put up at a different hotel from the one patronized by my captor. The next day I called on Colonel Black, the "Boss Tweed" of that whole section of country. He was principal owner of the trading post at the Crow Agency and full owner of the Indian Agent; also U. S. Commissioner and various other minor officials. Black denied point blank of being in any way instrumental in my arrest.

After being in town two or three days without anything being said about my going before the Commissioner, I dropped onto the fact that it had never been intended to prosecute the case; that the whole scheme had simply been a bluff to frighten me out of the country, by interested parties. Knowing that I was in the right, and having a sprinkling of the mule in my makeup, on meeting Bill on the street one day, I demanded a hearing at once. Seeing that I was in dead earnest and a little out of humor, he kindly accompanied me to that worthy's office, introduced me to his Honor and then straightway withdrew. I was not sworn, but was simply asked if I had been trading with the Indians.

Admitting that such was the case, I handed him

my license. This, he glanced over, but said that as it lacked Colonel Black's signature, it was no good. Well, if I had held my temper under better control during the brief but spirited argument that followed, my bonds at least would have been named at a more reasonable figure. As it was, $2,000. was required as a safeguard for my appearance at the Court House in Virginia City some two months later. His Honor also took exceptions to my light battery which he had accidentally seen. He wanted to know how I had dared to appear at his court armed like a highwayman. In answer I stated it was probably due to the force of habit; besides I had not been informed that His Honor objected to any particular part of a gentleman's raiment. If the old ignoramus thought that the amount named in the bond would lock me up, he was disappointed. It only required a few minutes to secure the signatures of "Wilson and Rich", as my bondsmen. They were owners of the largest mercantile establishment in the town and the bond could not be rejected. I was quite well acquainted with these two men as they had often put up at my place at Ross Fork, Idaho, while on their way to and from Corinne, Utah, which was their nearest railroad point.

After storing the balance of plunder, furs and robes, with my bondsmen, I knocked around the County waiting for my trial. Before leaving Bozeman, the Crow trader outfit sent over their head clerk Farris, I think was his name, to try to make a compromise with me. He said he was

authorized to pay my bond of $2,000. and to give me $1,000. but I must allow it to appear in the papers that I had forfeited my bond and fled the country. I naturally told him that there was not enough money at the Crow Agency or in Bozeman to induce me to allow it to appear in a newspaper that I had jumped my bondsmen. This same man followed me to Virginia City later with instructions to not allow the case to come to trial if money could prevent it. I told him there were only two ways to head off the trial. To do it I must either die or skip the country, and I declined to do either. I employed two good lawyers to defend me, Judge Blake and Sam Word. The trial lasted about thirty minutes. Judge Blake hunted out the necessary points of law in the case and big, handsome Sam Word shot them at the Judge. Well, I left the court room a few thousand dollars loser on the whole deal, but somewhat wiser. There was, however, one lasting satisfaction. Within sixty days the Crow Reservation was surrounded with "one horse" traders. Every old bum that owned a sore-backed cayuse and could rustle up goods enough to load it, struck out for the Yellowstone with his little old merchant's license in his pocket. I should have followed their example, but was so thoroughly disgusted with the country in general and Crow Indians in particular, that after disposing of what loose plunder I had left, Frank and I pulled out on our back tracks

for the Snake River country. Before leaving, I bought Heenan a good horse and gave him money enough to pay his necessary expenses for six months, with the understanding that he was to remain in that country and watch for Muggins. I have never seen either since, but learned a couple of years later that Heenan had died on a cattle ranch in Wyoming and that he was foreman of the ranch at the time of his death.

o
oOo
o

STORIES OF BEN JOHNSON, "FIGHTER"

With the hope of recovering a little of my lost wealth, I bought a string of traps as we had noticed plenty of beaver and other signs on our way in, the fall before. Just before starting out we met a trapper, of some experience, that we had formerly known on Snake River. This we regarded as a streak of luck, as neither Frank nor I was posted in that line of business. This man's name was Johnson, but was called "Lousy Johnson", perhaps to distinguish him from the various other men of like name. Lousy was busted, of course, and quite anxious to return to the scenes of his earlier exploits which, taking his word for it, were many. He was from a New England state, I believe, fairly well educated, and was an excellent, impromptu, off-hand liar.

He readily agreed to teach us the secrets of his calling, besides he was to assume the duties of squaw, that is, he was to do the cooking, skin and properly care for the furs, tan skins, make and repair our moccasins. In fact to attend to all the little duties assigned to the gentler sex by the aborigines of North America. All to share and share alike in the division of spoils. While the venture was not a great success financially, Frank and I, at least, enjoyed the trip. Johnson had an original interesting and entertaining lie on tap for us nearly every

evening. He would invariably preface his yarns by saying, "Now, boys, what I am going to tell you is God's truth." The story I best remember concerned his exploits while in the service of Uncle Sam.

It appears that during the civil war, Johnson had served under the late General Benjaman F. Butler at New Orleans. But for some cause, probably due to the fact that Lousy had filled the humble position of private, he had for some time been unable to form an acquaintance with the commanding general, notwithstanding his great love and admiration of that worthy. But his lucky star rose high in the zenith at last. The little incident that brought him to the notice of "Old Ben", as he affectionately called him, and later caused them to drink "moonshine whisky" together out of a six gallon jug, was, as near as I can remember, as follows: While being instructed in the art of fencing by a young officer, who proved to be greatly inferior to Lousy in the scientific use of a sword, some misunderstanding arose between them, when in a moment of temporary passion Johnson smote his instructor on the cheek with the flat of his sword. Doubtless there would have been a large quantity of gore slopped around the vicinity had not bystanding officers rushed between the now thoroughly aroused combatants. "You know, boys," said Johnson, "that by this rash act I could have been tried by court martial and shot." Striking a superior

officer is a very grave offense. I have forgotten all of the minor happenings that followed, but suffice it to say that Lousy and the smitten instructor were, in due time, brought before the commanding general. It seems that Butler was so favorably impressed with Lousy's manly bearing that he instructed the two men to face each other in his presence at once, not in deadly combat you understand, but merely to give an exhibition of their respective skill and for this occasion loaned Johnson his magnificent, diamond-mounted Toledo blade. This great encouragement put double strength in our cook's right arm, and I presume added materially to the size of his heart.

The encounter was rather brief, during which time, however, Johnson not only gracefully and skillfully parried his opponent's every thrust, but repeatedly slapped the fellow's face, during his leisure time, with the flat of Ben's beautiful sword. After fully realizing that he had given ample proof of his greatly superior skill, he as a final climax, with a simple but dexterous turn of the wrist, disarmed his opponent by casting his sword clear across the Mississippi, or maybe it was across the canal then in the course of construction. I rather think the sword was never recovered, and doubtless had to be expended by a board of survey convened for that purpose. Drawing himself up to his full height (Lousy always drew himself to his full five feet four when a commanding mein was required to carry an important point), gracefully saluted

Ben, handing back the elegant sword, and through extreme modesty was about to take his leave, when Ben called him back and ordered his private secretary to at once execute and deliver a captain's commission to Lousy, intimating at the same time that this was only a starter of what he might expect later on.

By this time it was getting quite late and we all retired, and Frank and I congratulated ourselves for being associated with this modest hero. As we fully expected that this interesting narrative would be "continued in our next", we were quite disappointed the next evening at Johnson's failure to continue. In order to get him started out again, Frank said he did not quite understand how he (Lousy) had managed to disarm his opponent of the evening before. "Well," said Johnson, "while the feat is easily accomplished by a good swordsman, it is rather a hard matter to explain it to a person not familiar with the use of that weapon." Frank acknowledged that he had never been instructed in its use, as the privates in his regiment were not armed with swords.

I noticed that Johnson winced a little at Frank's remarks, but he soon shook himself together; poked his foretop up out of his eyes and went on to explain that the feat in some respects was like the grapevine lock used in wrestling. "You simply kind of twisted your blade around the other fellow's and with a quick scientific turn of your wrist wrenched it from his grasp." This explanation

of course made the thing quite plain to us, besides it had the desired effect of bringing about the continuation of the narrative. It seems that his promotions followed each other in rapid succession, but when finally offered a place on Butler's staff, he explained to Ben that while he felt himself greatly honored by the offer, he would much prefer a more active position, and suggested that the command of a battalion would be better suited to a man of his caliber. Of course this was at once given him.

Some of the mad, desperate, nerve-racking charges that he led in person made my hair raise while I fairly shook in my moccasins. I was honestly afraid that if he kept them up another evening he would surely get himself killed and I shuddered at the thought of losing our cook, while yet on the short end of the long trip. But it luckily happened that B. F. was getting a little stale with the boys in Washington. Being anxious to hold down his job, he thought it advisable to dispatch Lousy at once to headquarters in his behalf. After a hurried consultation, Johnson packed his grip, or war-bag as he called it, and struck the first flier headed north, reaching the seat of government on schedule time. Not even stopping to change his travel-stained clothes (Lousy, I think, never acquired the habit of changing his clothes), he hurried at once to the White House.

I regret very much that I am unable to give the details of his interview with Lincoln. But, as he remarked, it was a military secret that he felt he had no right to divulge. This much he told us, however. That when the President asked him about the canal and spoons, he told him the spoon story which had gained such notoriety was all bosh; that while it was probably true that his old friend Ben had collected a few souvenir spoons it had not in the least interfered with, or in any manner retarded the work on the ditch which was fast nearing completion. This explanation he said seemed to satisfy Abe at the time, but shortly afterwards his old friend was called to Washington and retired from the service. This unkind and unwarranted act on the part of our national government so thoroughly disgusted Lousy with the service that he handed in his resignation at once and as he said "came west". He might have truthfully added that he had since been occupied either slinging hash for cow-punchers or trapping muskrats. This, leaving out details, was only one of his numerous "true stories", but it will suffice to show that our long evenings spent in the lodge were not altogether irksome.

As this was in the spring, about the middle of March I think, the Madison River was running banks full. The only fording places we could find were on wide rapids

where the current was so stiff we regarded it as dangerous to ford on horseback, as the water struck well up on our horses' shoulders. Imagine our surprise, then, one day, seeing a white man come down to the opposite bank, pick up and balance a 150 pound rock on his shoulder and wade across to our side, the water reaching to his armpits in places. The man's name was Sawtell, and he had spent the past winter in fishing at Henry's Lake, just over the divide, on the head of the North Fork of Snake River. The fish (large trout) caught through the ice in winter and early spring found a ready market in Virginia City and other mining camps at fifty cents a pound.

Sawtell was then on his way out to the settlements after his horses, which he had left there for the winter. He said he never wasted time by going around the bends, that he could carry a boulder heavy enough to hold him down in the swiftest currents if the water did not reach above his neck. He was a large man with uncommonly broad, heavy shoulders. This at the time was a new dodge to me, but I have had occasion to resort to it since.

o
oOo
o

SOME MONTANA GAME AND ITS HABITS

The next thing which I consider worthy of note was the strange action of a band of about one hundred elk. First we saw one lone bull elk following up the river. The next day on going over to a small side stream to look for beaver signs, we ran onto this band of elk. As we were getting tired of beaver meat and the antelope along the river were very poor, we selected one elk darker in color than the rest, and shot it. Instead of the band running off, they continued feeding, some of them lying down within two hundred hards of us on open ground while we were skinning and loading a portion of the meat for use in camp. The elk killed proved to be a barren cow and was in fair flesh. The others, however, had the appearance of being very poor. The third day, after going up the river, the old bull came back, passing within one hundred yards of our lodge, and on the following day the whole herd started up for the Fire-hole basin in what is now known as Yellowstone National Park.

Now the question is, did this old fellow volunteer, or was he selected by vote or casting lots known only to elk, to go up the river and see if the snow would admit of their reaching some known and desirable feeding ground? Even if this was the object of his lone trip,

and it certainly looks as though it must have been, how did he inform the others of what he had found. Or did they take it for granted that the time consumed in making his trip was of sufficient duration to allow the old scout to reach and return from a certain locality? Had he found the trail impassible and come back the same day he started or say, the following day, would they have waited a reasonable time before sending him or some other member of the band, to again look the trail over and make his report? Does it not look as though there were something more than mere animal instinct used? In what respect would they have acted differently had they been endowed with human reason? Elk are generally considered as being rather a stupid animal, and they are certainly so in many respects, as was shown by our experience with them on Shields River, but their action on the Madison raised them greatly in my estimation.

On this trip I failed to note any of the cunning and sagacity attributed to the beaver. Owing to inexperience and carelessness, we lost a few traps, they not having been securely fastened, and we had a good many traps sprung without making a catch.

The statements I have seen in print about beaver reaching under the jaws of a trap to spring it, or their using a stick for that purpose surely originated in the

brain of the author. Beaver seem to have fixed habitations, usually in swamp or marsh lands of their own making, by damming up small streams, which causes the water to spread out on surrounding flats. There are, however, what the trappers call "bank beaver", which live along the banks of large streams, having no dams or visible houses, but living in holes which enter the banks below the surface of the water. Otter, on the other hand, are great tramps. They may have some fixed headquarters, but they seem to be always on the move, traveling long distances up and down streams, and like Mr. Sawtell they usually cut off the bends, but in their case by passing over points of land. They seem to travel in quite large numbers. We caught five one night by getting in ahead of a band or family and stringing out our traps along their beaten trails where they passed over points of land.

One morning while going to our traps on foot, we saw a large black bear a short distance from the river on a little, flat-topped, bare knoll where the new grass was springing up. Frank had left his gun at the lodge, which was some half-mile down the stream. He wanted me to wait until he went for it, but being afraid the bear might pull out before he could get back, I told him to stay where he was and keep me posted on bruin's movements by flagging me with his hat. Owing to the nature of the ground, I could not see the brute again after

starting in its direction until I reached the crest of the hill, where I found him not more than thirty feet distant. I had the wind in my favor, and as he was headed in the opposite direction, nipping the short grass, he neither saw nor smelled me. Not caring to trust to a stern shot with the little carbine, I thought it best to attract his attention by whistling, hoping thus to make him change his position enough to give me a better shot, but somehow, my whistle failed to work. Possibly it was due to the fact that this was the first big bear I had ever tackled alone and the further fact that there was no tree nearby. However, with a couple of cartridges in my hand, and a rest on my knee, I sang out "hello". At this he raised his head and turned just far enough to give me a good chance for a quartering shot, and I turned loose. The ball struck him in front of the hip and lodged near the butt of his ear on the opposite side. At the crack of the gun he wheeled square around facing me and fell. Slipping in another cartridge, I took a step or two toward the big brute, but as he was lying with his hind feet and paws in a position apparently ready to pounce on me, I raised my gun, taking a quick shot that was intended to strike him between the bright, wide-open eyes, but the ball struck a little too high, passed under the skin, glanced along his skull over to the back of his neck. This second shot was unnecessary, how-

ever, as the first one had knocked the life out of him. This bear was very fat, as he had not been out of winter quarters long enough to get poor. It seems strange that a bear hibernating for several months in high altitudes will lose but little if any flesh or fat, but such is the case, some natural histories I have read, to the contrary notwithstanding.

The skin, a very large one, was of course in prime condition at that season of the year. We stripped the fat in great slabs from two to three inches in thickness along the back, and carried it to camp, but took only a few pounds of the meat at the time to see how it tasted. Lousy declined to eat it at first; said beaver meat was good enough for him. But I noticed after we had tried it, we threw away our other meat, which included elk, antelope, mountain sheep, and beaver, and packed down a horse-load of the bear meat, which tasted very much like fresh pork. The bear oil we used in cooking and to "sop" our hot bread in. Bacon grease would always knock me out, but I could drink this bear's oil like water without its producing any bad effect. In fact I believed at the time and have not quite got out of the notion since, that a liberal use of bear's oil will cure the worst case of dyspepsia. But as for the meat, I do not wish to have it understood that I claim all bear meat is good. The most vile, stinking meat

I ever saw dished up was that of an old bear that had been living on rotten salmon. I fully agreed with the Chinaman when he said, "That beef, he stinkee likee hellee". The boys said, that while cooking it, the Chinaman wore a clothes-pin on his nose. I thought him very wise for doing so. There is no better meat, however, to my notion, than that put on a bear's ribs by eating berries. On that trip, Frank and I killed seven grown bears and two cubs. Johnson never took any stock in the game; said he hadn't lost any bear. We thought it rather strange that when traveling and a bear was sighted, he never drew himself up to his full height, made a fiery little war speech ending with "Men, follow me", and led the charge in person. But then, come to think of it, it is much easier and somewhat safer to use one's mouth at long range than a gun at short range in fighting man or beast.

We hunted bear the same as we did other game. Got up as close as possible to them, and let them have it. In hunting together, the report of Frank's gun was my signal to fire. Only one of the bears killed on the trip showed any disposition to fight. It was a rather undersized, old, brown bear with two cubs, one of which was black, the other a brown. She was standing about sixty yards off with her left shoulder toward us. I told Frank to draw on the point of her shoulder. At the crack of the

two guns with but half a second between them, she came for us with a rush and a roar, but the second two shots, before she had made half the distance, put her "down and out". The first two bullets had landed within an inch of each other, and had smashed her shoulder. The groans of a dying bear sound exactly like the groans of a human being when in great pain, and a person will not listen to the former long if lead will stop it.

Early in the spring the bear lives principally on the tender, new grass, various kinds of roots, ant eggs, moles, etc. We crawled up within fifty feet of a bear one day and were about to cut loose on him when his singular actions caused us to withold our fire in order to see what the old fellow was doing. We soon knew that he was hunting moles. He would slowly follow along the little, crooked ridges of fresh earth left by the mole, and rest his big paw lightly on it, feeling no movement would raise his paw, placing it carefully a little further on, repeating this action with the utmost care until he finally felt the squirm of the little insect hunter, then a couple of quick, downward jabs of his paw and the game was up so far as the mole was concerned. The bear's long nails served as a rake to bring to the surface the choice, little morsel which lead deprived him of enjoying. Our examination of Bruin's stomach showed that several of the little long-nosed bug hunters, with eyes no larger than a pin's head, had fallen to his share that morning.