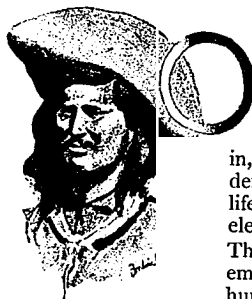


## IN COWBOY-LAND.

WITH PICTURES BY FREDERIC REMINGTON.



UT on the frontier, and generally among those who spend their lives in, or on the borders of, the wilderness, life is reduced to its elemental conditions. The passions and emotions of these grim hunters of the moun-

tains and these wild rough-riders of the plains are simpler and stronger than those of people dwelling in more complicated states of society. As soon as communities become settled and begin to grow with any rapidity, the American instinct for law asserts itself; but in the earlier stages each individual is obliged to be a law to himself, and to guard his rights with a strong hand. Of course the transition stages are full of incongruities. Men have not yet adjusted their relations to morality and law with any niceness. They hold strongly by certain rude virtues, and, on the other hand, they quite fail to recognize even as shortcomings not a few traits that obtain scant mercy in older communities.

Many of the desperados, the man-killers, and road-agents have good sides to their characters. Even they are people who in certain stages of civilization do, or have done, good work, but who, when these stages have passed, find themselves surrounded by conditions which accentuate their worst qualities, and make their best qualities useless. The average desperado, for instance, has, after all, much the same standard of morals that the Norman nobles had in the days of the battle of Hastings, and ethically and morally he is decidedly in advance of the vikings, who were the ancestors of these same nobles, and to whom, by the way, he himself could doubtless trace a portion of his blood. If the transition from the wild lawlessness of life in the wilderness or on the border to a higher civilization were stretched out over a term of centuries, he and his descendants would doubtless accommodate themselves by degrees to the changing circumstances. But, unfortunately, in the far West the transition takes place with marvelous abruptness, and at an altogether unheard-of speed, and many a man's nature is unable to change with sufficient rapidity to allow him to harmonize with his environment.

In consequence, unless he leaves for still wilder lands, he ends by getting hung, instead of founding a family which would revere his name as that of a very capable, although not in all respects a conventionally moral, ancestor.

Most of the men with whom I was intimately thrown during my life on the frontier and in the wilderness were good fellows, hard-working, brave, resolute, and truthful. At times, of course, they were forced of necessity to do deeds which would seem startling to dwellers in cities and in old settled places; and though they waged a very stern and relentless warfare upon evil-doers whose misdeeds had immediate and tangible bad results, they showed a wide toleration of all save the most extreme classes of wrong, and were not given to inquiring too curiously into a strong man's past, or to criticizing him too harshly for a failure to discriminate in finer ethical questions. Moreover, not a few of the men with whom I came in contact—with some of whom my relations were very close and friendly—had at different times led rather tough careers. This fact was accepted by them and by their companions as a fact, and nothing more. There were certain offenses, such as rape, the robbery of a friend, or murder under circumstances of cowardice and treachery, which were never forgiven; but the fact that when the country was wild a young fellow had gone on the road,—that is, become a highwayman,—or had been chief of a gang of desperados, horse-thieves, and cattle-killers, was scarcely held to weigh against him, it being treated as a regrettable, but certainly not shameful, trait of youth. He was regarded by his neighbors with the same kindly tolerance which respectable medieval Scotch borderers doubtless extended to their wilder young men, who would persist in raiding English cattle even in time of peace.

Of course, if these men were asked outright as to their stories, they would have refused to tell them, or else would have lied about them; but when they had grown to regard a man as a friend and companion, they would often recount various incidents of their past lives with perfect frankness; and as they combined in a very curious degree both a decided sense of humor, and a failure to appreciate that there was anything especially remarkable in what they related, their tales were always entertaining.

Early one spring, now nearly ten years ago, I was out hunting some lost horses. They had

strayed from the ranch three months before, and we had in a roundabout way heard that they were ranging near some broken country where a man named Brophy had a ranch, nearly fifty miles from my own. When I started to go thither the weather was warm, but the second day out it grew colder, and a heavy snow-storm came on. Fortunately, I was able to reach the ranch all right, to find there one of the sons of a Little Beaver ranchman, and a young cow-puncher belonging to a Texas outfit, whom I knew very well. After putting my horse into the corral, and throwing him down some hay, I strode into the low hut, made partly of turf and partly of cottonwood logs, and speedily warmed myself before the fire. We had a good warm supper of bread, potatoes, fried venison, and tea. My two companions grew very sociable, and began to talk freely over their pipes. There were two bunks, one above the other. I climbed into the upper, leaving my friends, who were to occupy the lower, sitting together on a bench recounting different incidents in the careers of themselves and their cronies during the winter that had just passed. Soon one of them asked the other what had become of a certain horse, a noted cutting pony, which I myself had noticed the preceding fall. The question roused the other to the memory of a wrong which still rankled, and he began (I alter one or two of the proper names):

"Why, that was the pony that got stole. I had been workin' him on rough ground when I was out with the Three Bar outfit, and he went tender forward, so I turned him loose by the Lazy B ranch, and when I come back to get him there was n't anybody at the ranch, and I could n't find him. The sheep-man who lives about two miles west, under Red Clay Butte, told me he seen a fellow in a wolf-skin coat, ridin' a pinto bronc' with white eyes, leadin' that pony of mine just two days before; and I hunted round till I hit his trail, and then I followed to where I 'd reckoned he was headin' for — the Short Pine Hills. When I got there a rancher told me he had seen the man pass on toward Cedartown; and, sure enough, when I struck Cedartown I found he lived there in a 'dobe house just outside the town. There was a boom on the town, and it looked pretty slick.

"There was two hotels, and I went into the first, and I says, 'Where 's the justice of the peace?' says I to the bartender.

"There ain't no justice of the peace,' says he; 'ther justice of the peace got shot.'

"Well, where 's the constable?' says I.

"Why, it was him that shot the justice of the peace,' says he; 'he's skipped the country with a bunch of horses.'

"Well, ain't there no officer of the law left in this town?' says I.

"Why, of course,' says he; 'there 's a probate judge; he is over tendin' bar at the Last Chance Hotel.'

"So I went over to the Last Chance Hotel, and I walked in there.

"Mornin',' says I.

"Mornin',' says he.

"You 're the probate judge?' says I.

"That 's what I am,' says he. 'What do you want?' says he.

"I want justice,' says I.

"What kind of justice do you want?' says he. 'What 's it for?'

"It 's for stealin' a horse,' says I.

"Then, by —, you 'll get it,' says he. 'Who stole the horse?'

"It is a man that lives in a 'dobe house just outside the town there,' says I.

"Well, where do you come from yourself?' says he.

"From Medory,' says I.

"With that he lost interest, and settled kind o' back; and says he, 'There won't no Cedartown jury hang a Cedartown man for stealin' a Medory man's horse,' says he.

"Well, what am I to do about my horse?' says I.

"Do?' says he. 'Well, you know where the man lives, don't you?' says he. 'Then sit up outside his house to-night, and shoot him when he comes in,' says he, 'and skip out with the horse.'

"All right,' says I; 'that is what I 'll do; ' and I walked off. So I went off to his house, and I laid down behind some sage-brushes to wait for him. He was not at home, but I could see his wife movin' about inside now and then, and I waited and waited, and it growed darker, and I begun to say to myself, 'Now here you are lyin' out to shoot this man when he comes home; and it 's gettin' dark, and you don't know him, and if you *do* shoot the next man that comes into that house, like as not it won't be the fellow you 're after at all, but some perfectly innocent man a-comin' there after the other man's wife.'

"So I up and saddled the bronc', and lit out for home," concluded the narrator, with the air of one justly proud of his own self-abnegating virtue.

One of my valued friends in the mountains, and one of the best hunters with whom I ever traveled, was a man who had a peculiarly light-hearted way of looking at conventionally moral obligations. Though in some ways a true backwoods Donatello, he was a man of much shrewdness and of great courage and resolution. Moreover, he possessed what only a few men do possess, the capacity to tell the truth.



"WHAT KIND OF JUSTICE DO YOU WANT?"

ENGRAVED BY J. W. EVANS.

He saw facts as they were, and could tell them as they were, and he never told an untruth unless for very weighty reasons. He was preëminently a philosopher, of a happy, skeptical turn of mind. He had no prejudices. He never looked down, as so many hard characters do, upon a person possessing a different code of ethics. His attitude was one of broad, genial tolerance. He saw nothing out of the way in the fact that he himself had been a road-agent, a professional gambler, and a desperado at different stages of his career. On the other hand, he did not in the least hold it against any one that he had always acted within the law. At the time that I knew him he had become a man of some substance, and naturally a staunch upholder of the existing order of things. But while he never boasted of his past deeds, he never apologized for them, and evidently would have been quite as incapable of understanding

that they needed an apology as he would have been incapable of being guilty of mere vulgar boastfulness. He did not often refer to his past career at all. When he did, he recited its incidents perfectly naturally and simply as events, without any reference to, or regard for, their ethical significance. It was this quality which made him at times a specially pleasant companion, and always an agreeable narrator. The point of his story, or what seemed to him the point, was rarely that which struck me. It was the incidental side-lights the story threw upon his own nature, and the somewhat lurid surroundings in which he had moved.

On one occasion when we were out together we killed a bear, and, after skinning it, took a bath in a lake. I noticed that he had a scar on one side of his foot, and asked him how he got it. To my question he responded, with indifference:

"Oh, that? Why, a man shoot' at me to make me dance, that was all."

I expressed some curiosity in the matter, and he went on:

"Well, the way of it was this. It was when I was keepin' a saloon in New Mexico, and there was a man there by the name of Fowler, and there was a reward on him of three thousand dollars—"

"Put on him by the State?" I interrupted.

"No; put on by his wife," said my friend; "and there was this—"

"Hold on," I interrupted; "put on by his wife, did you say?"

"Yes; by his wife. Him and her had been keepin' a faro bank, you see, and they quarreled about it, so she just put a reward on him, and so—"

"Excuse me," I said, "but do you mean to say that this reward was put on publicly?" To which my friend answered, with an air of gentlemanly irritation at being interrupted to gratify my thirst for irrelevant detail:

"Oh, no; not publicly. She had just mentioned it to six or eight intimate personal friends."

"Go on," I responded, somewhat overcome by this instance of the primitive simplicity with which New Mexican matrimonial disputes were managed; and he continued:

"Well, two men come ridin' in to see me, to borrow my guns. My guns was Colt's self-cockers. It was a new thing then, and they was the only ones in town. They come to me, and, 'Simpson,' says they, 'we want to borrow your guns; we are goin' to kill Fowler.'"

"'Hold on for a moment,' said I; 'I am willin' to lend you them guns, but I ain't goin' to know what you 're goin' to do with them. No, sir; but of course you can have them guns.'" Here my friend's face brightened pleasantly, and he continued:

"Well, you may easily believe I felt surprised next day when Fowler come ridin' in, and, says he, 'Simpson, here 's your guns.' He had shot them two men! 'Well, Fowler,' says I, 'if I had known them men was after you, I'd never have let them have them guns nohow,' says I. 'That was n't true, for I did know it, but there was no cause to tell him that.'" I murmured my approval of such prudence, and Simpson continued, his eyes gradually brightening with the light of agreeable reminiscence:

"Well, they up and they took Fowler before the justice of the peace. The justice of the peace was a Turk."

"Now, Simpson, what do you mean by that?" I interrupted.

"Well, he come from Turkey," said Simpson; and I again sank back, wondering briefly

what particular variety of Mediterranean out-cast had drifted down to New Mexico to be made a justice of the peace. Simpson laughed, and continued:

"That Fowler was a funny fellow. The Turk he committed Fowler, and Fowler he riz up and knocked him down, and tromped all over him, and made him let him go."

"That was an appeal to a higher law," I observed. Simpson assented cheerily, and continued:

"Well, that Turk he got nervous for fear Fowler he was goin' to kill him, and so he comes to me and offers me twenty-five dollars a day to protect him from Fowler; and I went to Fowler, and, 'Fowler,' says I, 'that Turk 's offered me twenty-five dollars a day to protect him from you. Now, I ain't goin' to get shot for no twenty-five dollars a day, and if you are goin' to kill the Turk, just say so, and go and do it; but if you *ain't* goin' to kill the Turk, there 's no reason why I should n't earn that twenty-five dollars a day.' And Fowler, says he, 'I ain't goin' to touch the Turk; you just go right ahead and protect him.'"

So Simpson "protected" the Turk from the imaginary danger of Fowler for about a week, at twenty-five dollars a day. Then one evening he happened to go out, and met Fowler. "And," said he, "the moment I saw him I knowed he felt mean, for he begun to shoot at my feet"; which certainly did seem to offer presumptive evidence of meanness. Simpson continued:

"I did n't have no gun, so I just had to stand there and take it until something distracted his attention, and I went off home to get my gun and kill him; but I wanted to do it perfectly lawful, so I went up to the mayor (he was playin' poker with one of the judges), and says I to him, 'Mr. Mayor,' says I, 'I am goin' to shoot Fowler.' And the mayor he riz out of his chair, and he took me by the hand, and says he, 'Mr. Simpson, if you do, I will stand by you.' And the judge he says, 'I 'll go on your bond.'"

Fortified by this cordial approval of the executive and judicial branches of the government, Mr. Simpson started on his quest. Meanwhile, however, Fowler had cut up another prominent citizen, and they already had him in jail. The friends of law and order, feeling some little distrust as to the permanency of their own zeal for righteousness, thought it best to settle the matter before there was time for cooling, and accordingly, headed by Simpson, the mayor, the judge, the Turk, and other prominent citizens of the town, they broke into the jail and hanged Fowler. The point in the hanging which especially tickled my friend's fancy as he lingered over the reminiscence was one

that was rather too ghastly to appeal to our sense of humor. In the Turk's mind there still rankled the memory of Fowler's very unprofessional conduct while figuring before him as a criminal. Said Simpson, with a merry twinkle of the eye: "Do you know, that Turk he was a right funny fellow, too, after all. Just as the boys were going to string up Fowler, says he, 'Boys, stop; one moment, gentlemen — Mr. Fowler, good-by,' and he blew a kiss to him!"

often dislike to be reminded of their kinship with the natives of their parents' country. On one occasion I was out with a very good hunter whose father had come from Germany, though his mother was a New England woman. He got into an altercation with a traveling party of Germans, and after peace was patched up one of them turned to him, with an idea of making himself agreeable, and said, "By your name, sir, you must be of German origin." To which my friend promptly answered, "Y-e-s;



"CLOSING IN ON THEM." (SEE PAGE 282.)

ENGRAVED BY C. W. CHADWICK.

On the frontier there is not much attention paid to the nicer distinctions of ethnology and foreign geography. On one occasion, late in the fall, on returning from the last beef round-up, I found a little hunter staying at the ranch, a clean, honest, handy fellow, evidently a foreigner. After he had stayed two or three days, and it was evident that he regarded himself as domiciled with us for the winter, I asked one of my cowboys who he was, and received for an answer: "Well, he 's a kind of a Dutchman, but he hates the other Dutch mortal. He comes from an island Germany took from France in the last war." This seemed puzzling, and my curiosity was sufficiently aroused to prompt me to make inquiries of the hunter himself, although in the cow-country, as in the wilderness, one is not apt to cross-examine a stray guest too closely as to his antecedents. In this case, however, my inquiry developed nothing more startling than the fact that the "island" in question was Alsace.

Native Americans take the lead in every way in the far West, and give to the life its peculiar stamp. The sons of immigrants always lay especial stress upon their Americanism, and

my father was a Dutchman, but my mother was a white woman. I 'm white myself." Whereat the Germans glowered gloomily at him.

In the cow-country there is nothing more refreshing than the light-hearted belief entertained by the average man that any animal which by main force has been saddled and ridden, or harnessed and driven, a couple of times is a "broke horse." My present foreman is firmly wedded to this idea, as well as to its complement, the belief that any animals with hoofs, before any vehicle with wheels, can be driven across any country. One summer, on reaching the ranch, I was entertained with the usual accounts of the adventures and misadventures which had befallen my own men and my neighbors since I had been out last. In the course of the conversation my foreman remarked: "We had a great time out here about six weeks ago. There was a professor from Ann Arbor came out with his wife to see the Bad Lands, and they asked if we could rig them up a team, and we said we guessed we could, and Foley's boy and I did; but it run away with him, and broke his

leg. He was here for a month. I guess he did n't mind it, though." Of this I was less certain,—forlorn little Medora being a "busted" cow-town concerning which I once heard another of my men remark in reply to an inquisitive commercial traveler: "How many people lives here? Eleven,—counting the chickens,—when they 're all in town."

My foreman continued: "By George, there was something that professor said afterward that made me feel hot. I sent word up to him by Foley's boy that sein' as how it had come out, we would n't charge him nothing for the rig; and that professor he answered that he was glad we were showin' him some sign of consideration, for he 'd begun to believe he 'd fallen into a den of sharks, and that we 'd gave him a runaway team a-purpose. That made me hot, callin' that a runaway team. Why, there was one of them horses never *could* have run away before—it had n't never been druv but twice; and the other horse, maybe, had run away a few times, but there was lots of times he *had n't* run away. I esteemed that team full as liable not to run away as it was to run away," concluded my foreman, evidently deeming this as good a warranty of gentleness as the most exacting could require.

The definition of good behavior in the cow-country is even more elastic for a saddle-horse than for a team. Last spring one of the Three-Seven riders, a magnificent horseman, was killed on the round-up near Belfield, his horse bucking and falling on him. "It was accounted a plumb gentle horse, too," said my informant; "only it sometimes sulked and acted a little mean when it was cinched up behind." The unfortunate rider did not know of this failing of the "plumb gentle horse," and as soon as he was in the saddle it threw itself over sideways with a great bound, and he fell on his head, and never spoke again.

Such accidents are too common in the wild country to attract much attention; the men accept them, with grim quiet, as inevitable in such lives as theirs—lives that are harsh and narrow, in their toil and their pleasure alike, and that are ever bounded by an iron horizon of hazard and hardship. During the last year and a half three other men from the ranches in my immediate neighborhood have met their death in the course of their work. One, a trail boss of the O X, was drowned while swimming his herd across a swollen river. Another, one of the fancy ropers of the W Bar, was killed while roping cattle in a corral: his saddle turned, the rope twisted round him, he was pulled off, and was trampled to death by his own horse.

The fourth man, a cow-puncher named Hamilton, lost his life during the last week of

October, 1891, in the first heavy snow-storm of the season. Yet he was a skilled plainsman, on ground he knew well, and, just before straying himself, had successfully instructed two men who did not know the country how to get to camp. All three were with the round-up, and were making a circle through the Bad Lands. The wagons had camped on the eastern edge of the Bad Lands, where they merge into the prairie, at the head of an old, disused road which led almost due east from the Little Missouri. It was a gray, lowering day, and as darkness came on Hamilton's horse played out, and he told his two companions not to wait, as it had begun to snow, but to keep on toward the north, skirting some particularly rough buttes, and as soon as they struck the road to turn to the right and to follow it out to the prairie, where they would find camp. He particularly warned them to keep a sharp lookout, so as not to pass over the dim trail unawares, in the dusk and the falling snow. They followed his advice, and reached camp safely; but after they had left him nobody ever again saw him alive. Evidently he himself, plodding northward, passed over the road without seeing it, in the storm and the gathering gloom; probably he struck it at some point where the ground was bad and the dim trail in consequence disappeared entirely, as is the way with these prairie roads—making them landmarks to be used with caution.

He must then have walked on and on, over rugged hills and across deep ravines, until his horse came to a standstill; he took off its saddle and picketed it to a dwarfed ash; its frozen carcass was found, with the saddle near by, two months later. He now evidently recognized some landmark, and realized that he had passed the road, and was far to the north of the round-up wagons; but he was a resolute, self-confident man, and he determined to strike out for a line camp which he knew lay almost due east of him, two or three miles out on the prairie, on one of the head branches of Knife River. Night must have fallen by this time, and he missed the camp. He swerved slightly from his line, probably passing it within less than a mile; but he did pass it, and with it all hope of life, and walked wearily on to his doom through the thick darkness and the driving snow. At last his strength failed, and he lay down in the tall grass of a little hollow. Five months later, in the early spring, the riders from the line camp found his body, resting face downward, with the forehead on the folded arms.

Accidents of less degree are common. Men break their collar-bones, arms, or legs by falling when riding at speed over dangerous ground, when cutting cattle, or when trying to

control a stamped herd, or by being thrown or rolled on by bucking or rearing horses; or their horses, and on rare occasions even they themselves, are gored by fighting steers. Death by storm or in flood, death in striving to master a wild and vicious horse, or in handling maddened cattle, and too often death in brutal conflict with one of his own fellows—any one of these is the not unnatural end of the life of any dweller on the plains or in the mountains.

Only a few years ago other risks had to be run, from savage beasts and from the Indians. Since I have been ranching on the Little Missouri, two men have been killed by bears in the neighborhood of my range; and in the early years of my residence there, several men living or traveling in the county were slain by small war-parties of young braves. All the old-time trappers and hunters could tell stirring tales of their encounters with Indians.

My friend Tazewell Woody was among the chief actors in one of the most noteworthy adventures of this kind. He was a very quiet man, and it was exceedingly difficult to get him to talk over any of his past experiences; but one day, when he was in high good humor with me for having made three consecutive straight shots at elk, he became quite communicative, and I was able to get him to tell me one story which I had long wished to hear from his lips, having already heard of it through one of the other participants of the fight. When he found that I already knew a good deal of it, old Woody told me the rest.

It was in the spring of 1875, and Woody and two friends were trapping on the Yellowstone. The Sioux were very bad at the time, and had killed many prospectors, hunters, cowboys, and settlers; the whites retaliated whenever they got a chance, but, as always in Indian warfare, the sly, lurking, bloodthirsty savages usually inflicted much more loss than they suffered. The three men, having a dozen horses with them, were camped by the river-side in a triangular patch of brush shaped a good deal like a common flat-iron. On reaching camp they started to put out their traps, and when he came back in the evening Woody informed his companions that he had seen a great deal of Indian sign, and that he believed there were Sioux in the neighborhood. His companions both laughed at him, assuring him that they were not Sioux at all, but friendly Crows, and that they would be in camp next morning. "And, sure enough," said Woody, meditatively, "they *were* in camp next morning." By dawn one of the men went down the river to look at some of the traps, while Woody started out to where the horses were, the third man remaining in camp to get breakfast. Suddenly two shots were heard down the

river, and in another moment a mounted Indian swept toward the horses. Woody fired, but missed him, and he drove off five horses, while Woody, running forward, succeeded in herding the other seven into camp. Hardly had this been accomplished before the man who had gone down the river appeared, out of breath from his desperate run, having been surprised by several Indians, and just succeeding in making his escape by dodging from bush to bush, threatening his pursuers with his rifle.

These proved to be the forerunners of a great war-party, for when the sun rose the hills around seemed black with Sioux. Had they chosen to dash right in on the camp, running the risk of losing several of their men in the charge, they could of course have eaten up the three hunters in a minute; but such a charge is rarely practised by Indians, who, although they are admirable in defensive warfare, and even in certain kinds of offensive movements, and although from their skill in hiding they usually inflict much more loss than they suffer when matched against white troops, are yet very reluctant to make any movement where the advantage gained must be offset by considerable loss of life. The three men thought they were surely doomed; but being veteran frontiersmen, and long inured to every kind of hardship and danger, they instantly set to work with cool resolution to make as effective a defense as possible, to beat off their antagonists if they might, and, if this proved impracticable, to sell their lives as dearly as they could. Having tethered the horses in a slight hollow, the only one which offered any protection, each man crept out to a point of the triangular brush-patch, and lay down to await events.

In a very short while the Indians began closing in on them, taking every advantage of cover, and then, both from their side of the river and from the opposite bank, opened a perfect fusillade, wasting their cartridges with the recklessness which Indians are so apt to show when excited. The hunters could hear the hoarse commands of the chiefs, the war-whoops, and the taunts in broken English which some of the warriors hurled at them. Very soon all of their horses were killed, and the brush was fairly riddled by the incessant volleys; but the three men themselves, lying flat on the ground and well concealed, were not harmed. The more daring young warriors then began to creep toward the hunters, going stealthily from one piece of cover to the next; and now the whites in turn opened fire. They did not shoot recklessly, as did their foes, but coolly and quietly, endeavoring to make each shot tell. Said Woody, "I only fired seven times all day; I reckoned on getting meat

very time I pulled trigger." They had an immense advantage of their enemies in that they lay still and entirely concealed, whereas the Indians of course had to move from cover to cover in order to approach, and so had at times to expose themselves. When the whites fired at all, they fired at a man, whether moving or motionless, whom they could clearly see, while the Indians could shoot only at the smoke, which imperfectly marked the position of their unseen foes. In consequence, the assailants speedily found that it was a task of hopeless danger to try to close in such a manner with three plains veterans, men of iron nerves and skilled in the use of the rifle. Yet some of the more daring crept up very close to the patch of brush, and one actually got inside it, and was killed among the bedding that lay by the smoldering camp-fire. The wounded, and such of the dead as did not lie in too exposed positions, were promptly taken away by their comrades; but seven bodies fell into the hands of the three hunters. I asked Woody how many he himself had killed. He said he could be sure of only two that he got: one he shot in the head as he peeped over a bush, and the other as he attempted to rush in through the smoke. "My, how that Indian did yell!" said Woody, retrospectively. "He was no great of a stoic." After two or three hours of this deadly skirmishing, which resulted in nothing more serious to the whites than in two of them being slightly wounded, the Sioux became disheartened by the loss they were suffering, and withdrew, confining themselves thereafter to a long-range and harmless fusillade. When it was dark the three men crept out to the river-bed, and, taking advantage of the pitchy night, broke through the circle of their foes. They managed to reach the settlements without further molestation, having lost everything except their rifles.

For many years one of the most important dwellers of the wilderness was the West Point officer, and no man has played a greater part than he in the wild warfare which opened the regions beyond the Mississippi to white settlement. Since 1879 there has been but little regular Indian fighting in the North, though there have been one or two very tedious and wearisome campaigns waged against the Apaches in the South. Even in the North, however, there have been occasional difficulties which had to be quelled by the regular troops.

After an elk-hunt in September, 1891, I came out through the Yellowstone Park, riding in company with a surveyor of the Burlington and Quincy Railroad, who was just coming in from his summer's work. It was the first of October. There had been a heavy snow-storm, and the snow was still falling. Riding a stout pony each,

and leading another packed with our bedding, etc., we broke our way down from the upper to the middle geyser basin. Here we found a troop of the First Cavalry camped, under the command of old friends of mine, Captain Frank Edwards and Lieutenant (now Captain) John Pitcher. They gave us hay for our horses, and, with the ready hospitality always shown by army officers, insisted upon our stopping to lunch. After lunch we began exchanging stories. My traveling companion, the surveyor, had that spring performed a feat of note, going through the Black Cañon of the Big Horn for the first time. He went with an old mining inspector, the two dragging a cottonwood sledge over the ice. The walls of the cañon are so sheer and the water is so rough that it can be descended only when the stream is frozen. However, after six days' labor and hardship the descent was accomplished, and the surveyor, in concluding, described his experience in going through the Crow Reservation.

This turned the conversation upon Indians, and it appeared that both of our hosts had been actors in Indian scrapes which had attracted my attention at the time they occurred, both taking place among tribes that I knew and in a country which I had sometimes visited, either when hunting or when purchasing horses for the ranch. One which occurred to Captain Edwards took place late in 1886, at the time when the Crow chief Sword-Bearer announced himself as the Messiah of the Indian race, during one of the usual epidemics of ghost-dancing. Sword-Bearer derived his name from always wearing a medicine sword—that is, a saber painted red. He claimed to possess magic power, and, thanks to the performance of many dexterous feats of juggling, and the lucky outcome of certain prophecies, he deeply stirred the Indians, arousing the young warriors in particular to the highest pitch of excitement. They became sullen, and began to paint and arm themselves, the agent and the settlers near by growing so apprehensive that troops were ordered to the reservation. A body of cavalry, including Captain Edwards's troop, was accordingly marched thither, and found the Crow warriors, mounted on their war-ponies, and dressed in their striking battle-garb, waiting on a hill for them.

The position of troops at the beginning of such an affair is always peculiarly difficult. The settlers roundabout are sure bitterly to clamor against them, no matter what they do, on the ground that they are not thorough enough and are showing favor to the savages, while, on the other hand, even if they fight purely in self-defense, a large number of worthy but weak-minded sentimentalists in the East



are sure to shriek about their having brutally attacked the Indians. The war authorities always insist that they must not fire the first shot under any circumstances, and such were the orders at this time. The Crows on the hill-top showed a sullen and threatening front, and the troops advanced slowly toward them, and then halted for a parley. Meanwhile a mass of black thunder-clouds, gathering on the horizon, threatened one of those cloudbursts of extreme severity and suddenness so characteristic of the plains country. While still trying to make arrangements for a parley, a horseman started out of the Crow ranks and galloped headlong down toward the troops. It was the medicine chief Sword-Bearer. He was painted and in his battle-dress, wearing his war-bonnet of floating, trailing eagle-feathers, and with the plumes of the same bird braided in the mane and tail of his fiery little horse. On he came at a gallop almost up to the troops, and then began to circle around them, calling and singing, and throwing his red sword into the air, catching it by the hilt as it fell. Twice he rode completely around the troops, who stood in uncertainty, not knowing what to make of his performance, and expressly forbidden to shoot at him. Then, paying no further heed to them, he rode back toward the Crows. It appears that he had told the latter that he would ride twice around the hostile force, and by his incantations would call down rain from heaven, which would make the hearts of the white men like water, so that they would go back to their homes. Sure enough, while the arrangements for the parley were still going forward, down came the cloudburst, drenching the command, and making the ground on the hills in front nearly impassable; and before it dried a courier arrived with orders to the troops to go back to camp.

This fulfilment of Sword-Bearer's prophecy of course raised his reputation to the zenith, and the young men of the tribe prepared for war, while the older chiefs, who more fully realized the power of the whites, still hung back. When the troops next appeared they came upon the entire Crow force, the women and children with their tepees being off to one side, beyond a little stream, while almost all the warriors of the tribe were gathered in front. Sword-Bearer started to repeat his former ride, to the intense irritation of the soldiers. Luckily, however, this time some of his young men could not be restrained. They too began to ride near the troops, and one of them was unable to refrain from firing on Captain Edwards's troop, which was in the van. This gave the soldiers their chance. They instantly responded with a volley, and Edwards's troop charged. The fight lasted only a minute or two, for Sword-Bearer was struck by a bullet and fell; and as he had boasted himself invulnerable, and promised that his warriors should be invulnerable also if they would follow him, the hearts of the latter became as water, and they broke in every direction. One of the amusing, though irritating, incidents of the affair was to see the plumed and painted warriors race headlong for the camp, plunge into the stream, wash off their war-paint, and remove their feathers in an instant; in another moment they were stolidly sitting on the ground, with their blankets over their shoulders, rising to greet the pursuing cavalry with unmoved composure, and with calm assurances that they had always been friendly and had much disapproved the conduct of the young bucks who had just been scattered on the field outside. It was much to the credit of the discipline of the army that no bloodshed followed the fight proper. The loss to the whites was small.

*Theodore Roosevelt.*