

The Fort on the Firing Line
By Albert R. Lyman
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(Picture) This is supposed to be the last of the old fort at Bluff

Beginning a dramatic new serial

CHAPTER I

IN that silent and sunburned solitude two men appeared from the mouth of the canyon, one of them on a horse, the other afoot. Astonished eyes followed them through the mist of heat and distance while they prospected far out across the valley, to return and disappear in the mountain when the sun hung low in the west. Next day a little company of men emerged from that same canyon, made their way through the sagebrush along the tracks made by the two the day before, and when they reached a stream, they stopped and fell to work at once as if with premeditated plan to make that their permanent abiding place.

Nothing like that had ever happened there in all the known ages of the past—white men coming without invitation or permission to inhabit Salt Lake Valley. The Indians gazed in astonishment, dragging their half-filled net of crickets and grasshoppers idly behind them. They must go over there; they must see these white invaders with their animals and wagons and other strange gear.

In three days a long stream of wagons came pouring out of that canyon — fifty — seventy-five — maybe a hundred! And a hundred and fifty — a hundred and seventy-five — maybe two hundred white men. They drove their teams of oxen and horses and mules to where the little company had stopped, and spread out there like an ant-hill in a big camp, buzzing with work and strange preparations.

That company of white men from the canyon knew that as invaders they would be resisted and possibly attacked by the people of the land. They began therefore at once to build a fort, a hollow square of adobe houses to serve as a place of defense while they established themselves firmly in the area around it.

(Picture) Navajo twins towering above Bluff

IN the autumn of that year, while the colony worked early and late with an aggressiveness to arouse surprise if not fear in the minds of the staring natives, more people began stringing out of that canyon from which the first had come. Along the

twin-wheel tracks worn in the sagebrush the long procession kept coming, coming — a hundred wagons, maybe more. A thousand people — maybe, two thousand!

To the Shoshone and his brothertribes this was a most serious matter, a grave threat to their further possession of the precious hunting grounds which their fathers had given them. But, alas, they lacked the essential strength of union; they had always preyed one on another and still cherished deep hurts and bitter differences. Also they lived like wolves in poverty, never having reserve supplies, but devouring what they found from day to day. To form an effective union and resist the wondrous organization which these intruders operated, was far beyond anything they had learned to do.

Through the long cold winter the Indians drew their scanty rabbitskin robes around them and nursed the little fires in their wickiups while they talked of the adobe fort and its determined builders. From some of their people who begged and spied at the fort, they learned that the strangers wanted to be friendly; but friendly or not, they had come to take the country; and if more of them came, they would no doubt build another fort and a town around it.

(Picture) A typical hillside in the desert regions of San Juan County, Utah.

When the summer came again, the summer of 1848, other companies did come stringing out of that canyon, startling numbers of them and coming to stay. Scouts from the fort went spying out the country north and south for hundreds of miles, and a good-sized company of them made their way down into Sanpete Valley, built a fort, and made there another beginning a hundred and fifty miles southeast of Salt Lake. Very soon after that another strong company came out from the city springing up around the adobe walls, put up a stockade for defense near Utah Lake, and began there another center to spread in the regions around it.

Something had to be done or the Indians would lose their inheritance. With their poor understanding of how weak and disorganized they were, and how potent the arm of law and government among the settlers, they came in the nighttime and drove away a herd of horses and cattle from the new stockade at Fort Utah (Provo). With the coming of daylight, they saw the men of the fort hot on their trail. They hurried into Rock Canyon and made the best defense their weapons and their understanding afforded, killing two or three white men, but losing so many of their own men that they scurried as best they could for the shelter of the brush and willows towards the lake.

(Picture) Looking north up Comb Wash

(Picture) Indian Hogan

How sternly they were undeceived by the fight which followed; twenty or more of their braves fell; and the few remaining sneaked terrified away. The families of the dead, facing winter with nothing to eat, saw no better way to survive than to throw themselves on the mercy of their victorious enemies, and when they had been fed and treated with kindness in Salt Lake till spring, the report of it tended to hush the rising call for war.

THE year 1851 the Mormon chief, Brigham Young, sent a colony to build a fort and establish a place called Parowan, three hundred miles south of Salt Lake. These long and aggressive strides to the south, matched by other aggressive movements to the north, caused Chief Walker of the Utes to consider with alarm what was happening to his country, but he considered, too, the warm friendship of these strange white people, and their eagerness to help the Indians, and instead of reacting with hostile gesture, he made a friendly call on the Mormon chief, telling him where other towns could be made, and encouraging the Mormons to spread out and build up the country.

The sprawling frontier, extending now in a ragged line for hundreds of miles through wild valleys, rockribbed canyons, and over-timbered mountaintops, was reinforced at its most important vantage points with forts, stockades, and other structures of defense. Trusting eyes of children, of the old and the defenseless, peered trustingly from the portholes of sheltering walls at the silent wilderness around them from which unfriendly Indians might appear at any time. It was only the brave or the venturesome who went alone or unprotected beyond the barriers, for whether or not there was open declaration of war, there was always danger. Chief Walker had made wordy professions of friendship, but he was not supreme even with his own tribe, and he might at any time change his mind.

(Picture) PRESIDENT BRIGHAM YOUNG

The fort was the indispensable protection to each new step farther into the big wilderness, and the extending zone of these protections radiated out from that first adobe fort at Salt Lake City, like the ringwaves in a pool of water from a falling stone. This fort-zone and its firing line was destined to mature in the north and the west, but in the south and east it was to focus at last in one faraway corner, there to build the last fort in Utah.

THIS age and its way of fighting had a tremendous lure, not only captivating mature men, but also infusing into its own children an undying love for the thrills of its peculiar warfare. One of its enthusiastic devotees was Peter Shirts, the Daniel Boone of the Rocky Mountains. In the remoteness of the upper Pahreah, east of what is now

Kanab, he with his wife and three children turned their house into a fort and fought Indians there all winter instead of moving away for safety as their few neighbors had done. With a love like that for the firing line, it is only to be expected that Shirts would follow it on and on, and that he will be found again trying to find it in the faraway.

Chief Walker of the Ute tribe, did change his mind about that peace policy. When he considered the wholeheartedness with which the Mormons accepted his invitation to spread and build new towns, he raised a howl of protest against them, and incited his people to attack the new settlements.

(Picture) JACOB HAMBLIN

In 1853-54, he and his people carried on the war with such fury that some of the new forts had to be abandoned. Yet, however dark they made the picture for the struggling settlers, it was more dark still for the Indians, and they began soon to realize that they were not prepared for war. It was not only unprofitable, but also disastrous, more so to them than to the settlers whom they robbed, and Walker was glad to meet President Young at Chicken Creek and agree to a treaty of peace.

That was the official end of the war, though outlaw bands of Indians continued to make raids on livestock and attack unprotected travelers, especially in the southeast. Yet even before the Walker War, and right soon after the settlement was begun at Parowan in 1851, and a little start made on the Santa Clara much farther south, these hardy frontiersmen began gradually to be aware that off to the southeast of them lived a tribe of Indians who were natural robbers, considering it folly to make peace with any people having valuable substance of which they could be despoiled.

THE sturdy explorers and settlers of what came to be called the Dixie Country, found themselves looking away with apprehension at the blue profile of Buckskin Mountain in Arizona. From the dark shadows hovering above it ten thousand inveterate robbers seemed to gaze in eager anticipation at the precious teams and milch cows the settlers had brought with them.

These robbers, the Navajos, struck always where they were least expected, and they had made such careful preparation for retreat, they got far away in the rocks before their raid was discovered. Elusive and wary as coyotes by ages of training in their vocation as robbers, they were not striking in reprisal for any wrong they had suffered nor because their country was being invaded, but in long and wellplanned expeditions from their homeland they were intent on getting horses, sheep, cattle, anything they could use or sell for gain. They proved to be a more crafty and a more implacable

enemy than any the Mormons had encountered in all the mountains and valleys from Salt Lake City to the Santa Clara.

(Picture) Walker (Wakara) Chief of Utah Indians (from a painting by Carvalho in 1854

While this tribe from the southeast wore their plundering trails deeper every month, the suffering settlers along the border appealed to their leaders for wisdom and a way to survive. Walker and his braves had been pacified, and comparative peace restored to the settlements, but this Navajo menace seemed ever to be getting into better gear for greater activity. The Mormons had offered peace to the Utes, and sued for peace before taking up arms against them. The logical and only consistent thing now was to send messengers into the distant Navajo country, inviting them to be good neighbors and to have good neighbors, to come over and trade and to live in peace. These messengers were also to visit the Hopis, a very friendly and industrious people whom the Navajos had hated and plundered.

(Picture) THALES HASKELL

But behold, to the Navajo, his most profitable neighbor was the one on whom he could prey to the best advantage. Jacob Hamblin, a great lover of the Indians and an ardent advocate of peace, made the long, hard journey over desert and mountain and river into the Navajo country with his offering of good will to this nation who had been despoiling his people. He was accompanied by Thales Haskell, George A Smith, Ira Hatch, and others, and they toiled from place to place, seeking in vain to get a hearing. This kind of plea to the Navajos meant nothing but weakness and fear.

And when the Navajos observed that these peace envoys consorted with the weak, despised Hopis who were always cringing and pleading for peace, they concluded that the Mormons and the Hopis were no doubt alike, timorous and fearful. The Navajos saw no need to be friendly with any people of whom they were not afraid. Especially should they refuse any obligation of friendship to any tribe or nation on whom they could enrich themselves by plunder.

Haughty and vain in their declaration that they had no fear of white men who had failed miserably for generations to conquer them, they spurned and rejected these offers of peace. Hamblin and his companions toiled on from camp to camp till they knew by the sullenness and frowns of the Navajos that their lives were in danger if they went on. They looked for a protected place to stop for the night, resolved if they could to get back to the river and return home.

(Picture) PETER SHIRTS

The dry unrelenting breath of desert beat against their tanned faces, and the smell of sheep came to them from hills that had been grazed bare. Distantly to the south the gray monotony of desert was relieved by a blue dome of the San Francisco Mountains, but in all other directions they saw the heat legions dancing above the dull stretch, and mocking images of mirage where the skyline melted away. Writing of it in later years Jacob Hamblin said, "The very heavens seemed to be brass above us."

With dark visages and never a word to indicate their intention, the Navajos hemmed the company up against a bluff, compelling them to climb to a little tableland above, where they kept vigil till morning. While they prepared in the morning to move, a young Navajo approached George A. Smith, and in a gesture of friendship asked to take his gun. It had become an aphorism that the Indian who is trusted will not betray the trust, and with this in mind young Smith, trusting and generous, handed over the gun. With the weapon in his hand, and without a word of warning, the Navajo turned the gun on its owner and shot him near the heart.

CHAPTER II

IN the year 1851, President Brigham Young sent a colony to build a fort and establish a place called Parowan, thus extending the great Mormon expansion to the south, encouraged by the Ute Chief Walker. Since Chief Walker was not supreme even among his own tribe, it was imperative that forts be built in every settlement. As the thin line of forts began to reach farther and farther into Chief Walker's territory, he viewed this influx with alarm and incited his people to attack. Among the Mormons were those who genuinely loved the Indians and made constant appeals to them. Foremost in this number were Jacob Hamblin and Thales Haskell. Added to the hostility of the Utes were three other adversaries: the Navajos the renegade whites, and nature, which seemed at times the greatest adversary of all.

IT WAS imperative that Hamblin and his company move on at once or they would all be massacred, yet what should they do with their comrade wounded to death? He was in too much agony to mount a horse; he could not last long; yet they had no minute wait. Lifting him hurriedly but tenderly to the saddle, they rode one on each side to keep him from falling, and rushed away while he begged them to lay him down to die by the trail.

When the life had gone out of him, they lowered him to the sand, put his hat over his face and left him for the savages coming on their trail. They would take his scalp, mutilate, and insult his body, and leave it to the ravages of birds and animals. His bones were to be scattered and bleach a long time on the sand of this enemy country before they could be gathered by loving hands and given reverent burial in the homeland.

That was the contemptuous answer of the Navajos to the peace offer of a neighbor who wanted to be their friend instead of their prey. They had never been humbled; they felt perfectly secure in their remote deserts and mountains while they devoured weaker or more peaceable people on every side. Now they lifted their haughty heads in exultation of triumph over these peace messengers whom they had thrust violently from their borders. But disaster hung darkly, though unseen, over their heads, and it was in the destiny of the years that they would hail these Mormons as truer friends than they had ever expected to find among the despised race of white men.

Hamblin and his company crossed back over the river, followed the long trail over the timbered Buckskins and over the desert to report the Navajo answer to their petition, and what was to be expected from that quarter in the future.

(Picture) Typical Navajo of Monument Valley

O the austere Navajo—relentless and unbending! How and when would he be persuaded to accept ways of peace!

The plunderers followed Hamblin's trail homeward and descended again from the forest of the big mountain to raid the herds of the weary settlers. Like creatures that live and work in the night, they skulked under cover and in the darker shadows by day. Woe to the herder who had slackened his vigilance or who suffered himself to be found helpless and alone! And these robbers planned death to all who dared to pursue them with their spoil.

But calamity, fearsome and tremendous, struck suddenly in their homeland, terrifying and scattering them as a pack of rats are scattered from their disrupted den. Their robbing bands came fewer in number now, but they came with the persistency of desperation as if their very lives depended on the nature and quantity of what they could steal. That was exactly what their lives did depend on, and the lives of their wives and children as well.

(Picture) Navajo woman weaving blanket

Most of their thousands in homerefuge had been rounded up and driven away like cattle into captivity. Those who came plundering now were those only who, by their desperate flight, had escaped, stripped and destitute, to the ragged breaks of the badlands where they must survive as thieves or die as outcasts.

(Picture) A section of the road on top of San Juan Hill.

And now, from that ominous mist over the distant Buckskins, pinched faces seemed to peer from the tall timber in mortal fear of the white soldiers behind them, and in equal fear of the angry sentinels in front of them keeping vigil along the Mormon frontier. Yet somehow, whether by day or by night, they seemed to come riding, riding; and when the darkness and hush of the night had passed, pony tracks on the trail showed that they had come—and gone.

Never till now in all the ages past had the Navajos been defeated by their enemies. With vain exultation they related fabulous legends of victory and freedom through long and glorious ages with a God who loved them above all other people. Like birds with hooked beaks who devour weaker creatures, they were despoiling the Mexicans and Pueblos to their southeast and the Hopis to their west when they were first taken account of by authentic history. The influence of Hernando Cortez and his Spanish government reached feebly after them, to find them defiant and unyielding. By 1630, they had become known as inveterate robbers with impregnable retreats.

IN 1705, the Spaniards in Mexico had to drop all other business and carry on a series of punitive expeditions against them, which amounted to nothing at all. The Navajos mocked at them and continued their plundering operations with all the persistence and deliberation with which they planted their little patches of corn or cared for their flocks of sheep. Workers though they were from the distant past, their philosophy was to eat at least part of their bread by the sweat of other men's brows, and no one in the world seemed able to change that ingrown philosophy.

Yet to the north of them across the San Juan River lived a people who believed in eating all their bread by the sweat of other men. These people were not workers like the Navajos, but inveterate idlers, no possessions for which the navajos would be lured over among them. Thus with never anything worth the hazard, nothing to lose and everything to gain, they stole from the stealers.

Native to the most impregnable region of barriers which nature had made in the precipitous southwest, they could sally safely out from their defenses to rob or torment the Navajos, and if pursued too closely, they could disappear completely. Once among their defenses, it was death to follow them.

These near neighbors north of the San Juan were Piutes, more implacable as fighters, more persistent as thieves, more cunning, more cruel than the Navajos. From the remote past they had been a sharp thorn in the flesh of these desert pirates. The story of their wars, of how the Piutes stole Navajo women, of how the old San Juan was sometimes their defense and sometimes their betrayal, is a history in itself. It was in the unfolding of events for this saucy little gang of Piutes to prolong, for more than thirty-five years, the fight of the fort on the firing line.

IN 1805, the Navajos aggravated the Spanish-controlled Mexican government to the breaking point, and with an army it invaded their country from the south. Finding them in Canyon de Chelly, it slaughtered twelve or fifteen hundred men, women, and children. Even this terrifying blood-bath gave them but a temporary chill, for the Spanish power in Mexico had already begun to decline, and by 1815, these bandits of the wilderness found no one to challenge their supremacy unless indeed it was that nest of Piutes across the San Juan. No strong power called them again into question for thirty years.

Without restraint from any quarter in all that time, the Navajos brought forth a generation of men with hot contempt for any government but their own. They had been a law to themselves for at least three hundred years, perhaps much longer, and they considered themselves free from and superior to all other peoples on earth. They made their raids east and south according to long-established custom, bringing back their spoils and their captives.

When their country became United States territory, they challenged at once the authority of the new government, and went on spoiling the Mexicans and Pueblos as before. Who was Uncle Sam to foist his authority and his laws on them? Had they not been mocking at the governments of white men for three hundred years? And the white men had wearied of their defiance and gone away, leaving them supreme on their native sand.

Even before the treaty was signed with Mexico in 1848, General Alexander Doniphan had led a division of United States troops into the Navajo country, and had them agree to terms with the new government. Accepting the general's terms was the quickest and easiest way to get rid of him and his troops, but these men of the desert had been free too long to subordinate themselves to any outside power without meeting some convincing display of force. As soon as the general and his army disappeared, the treaty became a despised scrap of paper.

They followed their age-old habit of spoiling the people around them, and in September 1849, General John M. Washington arrived with a force to check them,

and to arrange what he thought was a clearer understanding. Trustful and patient as Doniphan had been, he effected an agreement without harsh measures.

Again when the uniformed fighters disappeared, the Navajos turned with a sneer to their old vocation. The Mormons had recently arrived in Salt Lake Valley, and in the two years or more while they were extending their frontier towards the Navajo border, these men of the desert gathered strength and insolence to offer them a more alarming challenge than they were ever to receive from any other tribe of Indians.

The Navajos agreed to no fewer than six treaties with the United States, disregarding every one of them with premeditated resolution. After mocking successfully all that time at the new government, and mistaking its patience to mean its weakness, they had evolved a pitifully exaggerated notion of their own power and importance as a people.

When it was told in this country, that Mormon towns, with herds of horses, cattle, and sheep, were filling the hitherto-desolate country north of the Buckskin Mountains, it tickled their avaricious hope of more gain. Easy spoil from a new quarter — they planned the raids which in due time were to endanger all the settlements of southern Utah.

Now besides their old plunder-trails to the southeast, they would have other profitable trails to the northwest. In the deep and obscure windings of the Colorado they would find secret crossings to be used in perfect safety, and from the deep solitudes of the big timber they would descend with surprise on the prey. Ten thousand places of security would await them as they came loaded homeward. The new field offered more than the old field had ever yielded.

It was at this dangerously proud day of their history that they murdered George A. Smith and thrust the peace envoys rudely from their borders.

CHAPTER III

HOWEVER profitable the Utah field was proving to be, the beaten trails of the Navajo to the southeast were still too inviting and too rich in yield to forsake because of the undeveloped prospects on the northwest. From these trails to the southeast they brought home crops, livestock, children, women. All the promises they had made to refrain from this practice meant nothing to them. It was a rich industry; nothing but force could ever pry them out of it.

But from that plundered southeast arose a bitter cry from bereaved parents, outraged husbands, desolated homes. The call of agony reached to the nation's capital demanding the return of their loved ones, even though the nation was in great distress with the Civil War at the height of its fury.

Urged and petitioned, the president of the United States ordered a detachment of troops to the distant Navajo reservation. This time, unlike half a dozen former times, it did not come simply to talk about a scrap of paper. Desperate with its own dangers, the government ordered the situation to be handled with firmness.

The command of this force fell to Kit Carson who started with it as guide. The particulars of his arrival on the reservation form a long story, but it is worth while to observe that Carson began with generous moderation and would have made peaceful settlement if he had found it possible. It was not possible. Nothing but a very heavy jolt would jar the false and dangerous notions out of the Navajo philosophy.

Carson began rounding up the people of the reservation as if they were cattle, and driving them away in herds to Fort Sumner, known also as Bosque Redondo, in New Mexico. With light cannon mounted on the backs of mules, he compelled them to go or die. He chopped down their orchards, burned their houses, killed or appropriated their livestock, and spoiled their fields. Consternation and terror spread before him as in a flock set upon by wolves. In death races over the sand they spread word of his approach, and all who could get away fled headlong. They crawled into dens or deep gulches, they climbed mountains and crossed streams, anywhere to dodge Carson's grapeshot and keep out of his roundup. Destitute of food, destitute of blankets, they rushed away with their women and children, preferring starvation to capture.

Carson took twelve thousand of their people away, leaving the country stripped and silent. The Piutes came in from their hideouts north of the San Juan and gobbled up all they could find. The few thousand Navajos who escaped "The Big Walk" as they called it, dared not so much as look southeast over their beaten trails where the terrible men in blue uniform guarded their fellow tribesmen as captives. Neither dared they go north among the chesty Piutes, nor south into central Arizona where they had made a host of deadly enemies.

For these desperate refugees there remained but one possible escape from starvation — that was to follow the long trail across the Buckskins and brave the exasperated guards and herders who stood armed to fight for the flocks and herds of the Mormon settlements. Hence the desperation with which they descended from the tall timber in 1863, to skulk and await opportunity with the lives of themselves and their loved ones hanging in the balance.

The raids of these hunger-crazed people in 1864, became worse in '65. They captured a band of horses from near Kanab, and there was no herd too well guarded to discourage their efforts. In one place they fired a stack of grain in the night to attract the guard while they emptied a corral of its horses. Sixteen of the Indians raided Pipe Springs in broad daylight, and the herders barely escaped with their lives.

WHILE the famishing Navajos made existence more difficult every month along the southern border, the Utes and kindred tribes with Black Hawk at their head went on the warpath against the scattered settlements. In 1865-67 his cruel braves compelled the Mormons to abandon twenty or more of their fortified beginnings and draw back from the firing line for safety.

Fields which had been cleared and planted with great care, ditches completed by hard toil, dearly-loved homes, orchards, and gardens were left for Black Hawk and his braves to loot or destroy. The true colors of death and terror in the remote settlements will never be painted in their fulness of agony. Nor will it ever be told about the braves who fell fighting for what they thought to be their rights, and the sorrow of those who waited in vain for their return.

But Black Hawk and his people had to discover again, as in the Walker War, that they were not prepared to fight. When they had battled the steady and growing resistance of an organized people for two years, the chief was ready to put his thumbprint to a treaty of peace, that he and his people might turn their attention to the more profitable problem of gaining by what the Mormons could and would do to help them.

The Walker War and the Black Hawk War, with all the other Indian troubles north and south, had been fought out to a victorious finish, and were matters of history. But the Navajo War, begun before the first one of the other two, and now in its seventeenth year, was far from any visible end, and was growing worse every day.

They massacred the Berry family in Short Creek, they ventured north among the settlements beyond where anyone had imagined they would dare to go, and they fought to the death for the bands of horses, the herds of cattle, and the flocks of sheep with which they started back towards their homeland.

And now something happened again in the Navajo country, some tremendous thing which echoed all the way over the big river and the high mountain into Utah, as positively and giving as much alarm as that other echo in 1863, when Carson made his big roundup. For now, the thousands who had been held in humiliating captivity at Bosque Redondo, were released to return to their desolated country. With a very limited stock of provisions and half a dozen sheep to the family, they came sadly back

to prey on each other or on their neighbors or to perish of starvation. Hemmed off on the north, on the east, and on the south as the refugees had been, there was but one direction in which they could look with any degree of safety and that was towards southern Utah where the settlers were already in a death-fight to survive. With no alternative but to brave the dangers in that direction or sit meekly down to hunger, hoards of them set forth with stealthy step to find horses, cattle, sheep, anything that would help to keep their bodies and spirits together. It was for them to steal or die, and some of them were to die for stealing, and then the survivors sought revenge for those who fell in the fight.

(Picture) Piute Indians

IN the early winter they came again to Pipe Springs where Dr. Whitmore and his herder, Mackentire, tended a flock of sheep. When the Springs were next visited by men from the settlements, wading out there through the deep snow, they found the cabin empty, its supplies gone, its furniture and utensils scattered or missing, Whitmore, his herder, and the sheep gone. They hunted a long time for some trace, wading back and forth in the snow, and then by the feathered end of an arrow, reaching up like a little flag from the wind-swept surface, they uncovered Dr. Whitmore, bristling with Navajo arrows. Mackentire was found under a drift, but the flock of sheep was gone and all tracks hidden under the snow.

Others of these raiding gangs were not fortunate in having their tracks covered with snow, and knowing they would be followed, and goaded to desperation with thoughts of the hungry loved ones waiting at home, they fled with their haul in all possible haste. The men who followed them also had loved ones to be kept from impending want, and when the pursuers overtook the pursued, they fought, fought with the abandon of men who see no other way to live. Being under the necessity of defending themselves and holding their stolen stock at the same time, the robbers were at a distinct disadvantage in the fight, even more so when they were outnumbered, and it frequently happened, that the survivors had to fly empty-handed, leaving their dead scattered about where they fell.

However, their big, successful hauls of livestock came so nearly being the rule, and the tragic ending so often the exception, that the Navajos took heart to apply themselves with vigor along what appeared to be their highway to financial recovery. In 1867, impelled by want, they hid in all the passes leading northward from their impoverished country. They got away with twelve hundred animals in one herd, crossing them over the river at El Vado de Los Padres, while Jacob Hamblin and forty men followed other Navajos to Lee's Ferry, forty miles below.

According to Ammon Tenny, a contemporary writer, the Navajos stole a million dollars worth of livestock from southern Utah in one year — a million dollars worth of horses, cattle, and sheep from the impoverished frontier! It was becoming unbearable, yet this exasperated enemy had not yet made its most alarming threat. Tenny declared they were the only tribe of Indians who fought the Mormons persistently and implacably, scorning all offers of peace for twenty years.

Like wolves sniffing for their prey they waited eagerly to pounce on anything they could devour. Not in the summertime only, but driven by necessity, they came in the dead of winter, toiling through or contriving to walk on the snow in hopes of finding something which had been entrusted for safekeeping to the barriers of frost and storm. The Mormon sentinels had to counter all these movements, maintaining their vigil whatever the weather, whatever the cost, mounting in desperation to meet the desperation of the enemy, for they too had loved ones waiting and praying for their success.

After some of these bloody clashes on the wild border the Navajos sickened at sight of their dead, and to bolster their courage they brought with them some of their invincible Piute neighbors from the uncharted region north of the San Juan. Seven of these Piutes lay dead on the trail after one of the fights, and their entrance into the conflict marked a most serious angle to its future development.

TIME was to prove that this deeply-straited corner of Utah, with its impassable gulches and reefs and rims was sheltering a breed of Indians destined to defy the orders of the United States forty-three years, when all other tribes had accepted its standards.

In a severe winter of the latter "sixties," with the people of the southern border fighting to hold their own against the Navajos, and both Mormons and Navajos taxing their wits to hold their own against the frost, Hamblin and his men wallowed through snow up to their stirrups in no man's land, suffering hardships untold. He matched the Navajo use of Piutes from San Juan with friendly Utes from nearer home, and along the wide front they fought battles to the death even when he was not with them. Some of these fights were never reported, for the men to report them fell in the conflict, and when Hamblin saw crows and buzzards circling over some distant place, he went there to count the dead.

These scenes cut deeply into Hamblin's generous sympathies. He loved the Indians; he could see the situation from their angle. No matter that the Navajos had mocked at his offer of peace, murdered his beloved companion, and driven him from their country, his big heart swelled with sorrow when he looked at their dead faces there on

the hills. He longed to win their confidence as he had won the confidence of the Utes, and established peace between them and the settlers.

But hunger never sleeps—the war went on. In spite of the vigil of Hamblin and his scouts, including his faithful Ute recruits, the Navajos made a big haul of livestock from Utah in '68. These men of the desert had spent centuries mastering the art of stripping wary Mexicans and Pueblos of their possessions, and they were not to be balked by such improvised defenses as the Mormons, so lately from the eastern states, had learned to employ against them.

The winter of 1869-70 brought hardships on a big scale to the southern frontier, with Hamblin and his invincibles battling bravely to save their much-needed livestock. In the wretched days and nights of his vigil in desert and mountain he contemplated the extreme suffering of his men, the losses his people had endured and must yet endure. He considered also the privations and injustice heaped upon the Navajos for, robbers though they were, they had rights, and their rights had not been respected. Most of all he dreaded to find those circles of crows and the bodies of men who died while hunting food for themselves and their children.

Hamblin discerned that conditions were growing steadily worse, that if something were not done to turn the tide, the frontier would be laid waste, towns would be burned, and the enemy would entrench themselves in all the gulches and mountains. Hoping to forestall these probabilities he appealed to President Brigham Young for permission to go again as peace envoy to the Navajos, trusting that now, after they had been so greatly humiliated, they would deign to consider his message.

The President approved heartily, told Hamblin to go, and pronounced his blessing on him in this effort for peace. Again Hamblin took with him Ira Hatch, Thales Haskell, and other stalwart frontiersmen and missionaries of unfaltering intrepidity, and they went pleading for peace where they had been received with contempt before. They found the Navajos smarting with the memory of what Carson and his troops had done to them, and the years of their anguish at Bosques Redondo. That of itself might have tended to soften their hearts towards the men from the north, but they had other memories, memories of sons or brothers or fathers who became food for crows somewhere north of the Buckskins.

Besides the difficult matter of forgiving, as this peace plan required, it would bar them from the chief field of their very profitable industry as robbers. To make things worse, the government agents, thinking thereby to curry the favor of the natives, treated the peace messengers as intruders and swindlers. It began to look as if the sanest and safest thing for Hamblin and his company would be to get back to the river while they could, and return home in safety or hazard a repetition of the tragedy they

had suffered there twelve years before. The feeling everywhere present was so bitter against them it seemed unthinkable that they could overcome it, even if they could remain on the reservation.

IT would have taken a very bold prophet to predict that within eighteen years these Mormons would have found a place in the Navajo confidence which no white men as a group had ever found before. The Navajos had spit their venom for centuries at the conquering forces of Spain, and they had bowed to the United States only to save their lives when they were outgeneraled and outnumbered, not at all because they had been won as men have to be won before they surrender with their hearts.

Hamblin and his brethren had something most potent to offer, and they wanted only a hearing. They knew that love and kindness are the most potent, the most enduring of all forces which change the lives of men for the better; that the methods of conquest which had reduced or exterminated Indian tribes from the Atlantic seaboard to the Rocky Mountains, is the very kind against which the human heart will revolt with its very last failing pulsation. In their travels from one camp to another, the missionaries met only with individuals or with families, finding no representative gathering to hear their plea, or to make any official answer for the nation. Even though they made a friend here and another there, it would still be the work of years to get the Navajos as a people committed to the offer of good will, and in those years the conflict would go on and perhaps develop dreadful proportions.

They heard that a great national council had been appointed for a certain day at Fort Defiance, and taking some of his companions with him, Hamblin headed for the fort, resolved by all means to be heard. He arrived to learn that the program had already been arranged, no place left for him to worm his way in, and the combined sentiment of the eight thousand Navajos assembled was just eight thousand times more against him than he had encountered from individuals on the trails and in the hogans.

A certain Major Powell was there, a man of great influence and superior authority, and to him Hamblin poured forth his story with all his splendid power of appeal. Powell was charmed. He called to the big gathering for attention, gave Hamblin a most favorable introduction, and ordered the Navajos to hear his message.

Hamblin appreciated that now, after twenty years of futile endeavor and conflict, the great moment of opportunity had come, and with it came the assurance and the composure of the "love which casteth out all fear." Slowly and very impressively he began to speak while the great copper-colored audience gave him the reluctant, momentary attention which the major's order compelled. But the moment was prolonged into a great silence of awe while Hamblin brought all his powers of soul to bear on his plea for peace.

He told them the Mormon men and boys wanted to fight, but their leader, Brigham Young, wanted peace. He related the Mormon belief that the Indians are destined to become a great people, that the Mormon scriptures say wonderful things about them, and he invited them to come over into Utah without fear, to work for and trade with the people there and be their friends.

His soulful appeal reached their hearts. At least it reached the hearts of the leading men of the nation, and the big chief, Barbecenta, put his arms around Hamblin, declaring that what he had said was good, very good. Then the chief made a strong and impassioned speech to his people, declaring uncompromisingly in favor of the plan which had been offered them. Turning to the Mormons he said he could not speak for all his people, but he would see the missionaries later and tell them more.

At the Hopi villages on their way home, the peace messengers were overtaken by Barbecenta and other chiefs, their hearts overflowing with kindness. "We want to eat with your people at one table," declared the chief. "We want to warm with them at one fire, and to be friends."

The great danger seemed suddenly to be past, the whole perilous situation transformed in an hour. But wait — the sweet lure of peace and brotherhood had moved some of the big souls of the nation, and they in their zeal had pacified some of the ignorant masses; that was all — their dominant passion of the bloody ages had by no means been purged from the tribe.

The hearts of the big chiefs had been moved as never before, and in due time three of these twelve national leaders, with others appointed to go along, journeyed all the way over mountain and desert to Salt Lake City and visited with the Mormon leaders. They ate as special guests at banquets, enjoyed other demonstrations of welcome, and heard assurances of good will from Brigham Young and his immediate associates, to which they responded in pledges of hearty appreciation. Returning home they spread the glad tidings of good will, and told their people to go without fear to work and trade among the settlements.

It was really too good to be true, too good to last — a great prevailing tide of ages reversed in a few short weeks. All the same, the people on both sides of the long conflict, weary and disgusted, had the simple faith to accept it for what it seemed to be: the long-sought day of peace.

Up over the trails where they had sneaked in caution before, the Navajos came now in glad companies to trade, to work, to engage in any legitimate enterprise for the things of which they stood in need. They peddled their blankets and their silverware without fear in strange towns faraway to the north, giving and receiving friendly

greetings, and everything just seemed supremely wonderful. What a glorious and unexpected transformation for these enemies of twenty years from each side of the big river who had been hating and dreading and fighting each other to the death!

Among the thousands who rejoiced, no one suspected that the new accord was resting on a slippery foundation from which it might fall headlong in an hour. Without a word of warning the whole hard-earned arrangement, in an evil moment, was to be upset and go tumbling to the earth; the report of it to send a shudder into every Mormon home from Kanab northward.

LATE in the fall of 1874, four Navajo brothers, returning from a long trading trip into the northern settlements, followed the east fork of the Sevier River back towards their reservation. When they camped for the night in Grass Valley, winter seemed suddenly to set in, and snow fell heavily, piling up to alarming depths. Feeling secure in the thought that they were in a land of good will for their people, the boys entertained no alarm at the prospect of their trail homeward becoming impassable.

They had stopped in a cow-cabin, affording them ample shelter from the storm which, according to appearances, might continue for days. When it did continue with indications that they might be compelled to spend at least part of the winter right there, they had to meet the problems of getting food or going hungry. Doting still on the belief that they need have no fear of people in the nearby towns and ranches, they planned to butcher a fat calf from the cattle under the trees around them. They would hang it from a limb in plain sight, and when the owners came, which would no doubt be soon, to drift to the winter range, they would understand, and would accept pay for their emergency trespass.

Trustful and easy by their warm fire as the storm raged, they ate the juicy beef, and watched for someone with whom to make settlement, for they had the cash ready after their long trading trip in the north.

But, alas, their nearest neighbors were deadly enemies. That cabin and the cattle around it belonged to some brothers, who afterwards became notorious as highwaymen and had to be shot on sight. They had no sympathy for the Mormons, no love for the Navajos, and no regard for the long toil and sacrifice by which this blessed peace had been brought about.

When these men rode out in the storm to get their cattle and found the boys in their cabin and the beef hanging in a tree, they waited for no explanation but began to shoot. They killed three of the brothers, and the other one crawled away, badly wounded in the snow.

O how extreme necessity does drive men over the formidable barrier which they thought was impossible to climb! When that Navajo boy afoot, wounded and without food or bedding, had to be killed by these murderers, or face the long journey in this condition, the journey he had hesitated about undertaking with a horse and in good health, he simply did the impossible. He would report to his anxious father and mother; his resolution would allow him to stop at nothing short of it. He would warn his people away from this land of treachery, even though he had to crawl the last end of the journey and whisper it to them with his last breath.

How he ever fought his way through trackless wilderness and winter, mountains, gulches, and deserts more than a hundred miles and got to the Colorado River alive is difficult for anyone to imagine who knows the country he had to cover. And how, wounded, half frozen, and famishing with hunger, he ever struggled through the strong icy current to the east side of the river is quite beyond comprehension. It is said that he crossed somewhere near the mouth of the Trachyte, and he toiled through a more terrible region still, before he reached the San Juan. The Navajos declared he was thirteen days without food or blankets, thirteen days nursing desperate wounds, fighting frost, and making record hikes while he chose his own way mile after mile and broke his path through the snow.

When he dragged himself out on the south side of the San Juan, the land of his people, his story and his appearance were like a blaze in dry shavings. The Navajos repeated his words with foam on their lips, and they gathered heat with each relay. The frenzied impulse all over the reservation was to mount in haste, cross the big river and the Buckskin Mountains in a resistless horde, and make Mormondom a blotch of blood and ashes from Kanab to the lakes. It was the hot passion for revenge which, once started on its mad course, demanded a thousand prices for its loss.

Furious echoes from the reservation reached into Utah. Even through the winter and over the deep snow came the sound of grim war gathering power to strike. It came to the ears of Brigham Young, but instead of ordering his people to arm for the conflict, he relied on the greater force which had done more for them than arms could do. He called for Jacob Hamblin. He wanted Hamblin, by the use of his superior power, to go at once and turn the surging tide back from its mistaken course — one man to meet and overcome singlehanded and without arms, a furious nation of fifteen thousand or more hot for revenge.

CHAPTER IV

THE call found Hamblin sick and in no condition to travel. Also, among all the multitudes of men who heard it, there was not one with the courage or the inclination to go with him. To go among that frenzied horde of savages looked like walking into the open jaws of death by ignominious torture. The wild cry of the Navajos for vengeance, as repeated by the Utes, declared that the Mormons by their treachery had brought their blood on their own heads.

Sick or well, with company or alone, and though it was early in January with the main grip of winter still ahead, Hamblin staggered out of bed, saddled his horse, and started across the desert, a solitary ambassador of peace to a nation howling for war. When it became known he had gone—gone in spite of his sickness, in spite of a chorus of protesting friends, the ward bishop, actuated by deep love and concern, sent Hamblin's son to follow him fifteen miles and beg him to return.

"No, Son," Hamblin answered, the charm of his benevolent purpose like a robe of glory around him, "I have been appointed by the highest authority on earth to this mission. My life is of small consequence compared to the lives of the Saints and the well-being of the Lord's kingdom. I shall trust in him and go on."

He went on. His son returned. Thirty miles farther on another messenger came toiling after him, imploring him by all means to come back. He refused flatly and proceeded again, a lone horseman across the desert stretch towards Lees Ferry on the Colorado. In sickness and exhaustion, with limbs chilled and numb, he prayed heaven to spare his life that he might meet the misguided Indians and dissuade them from their rash purpose.

When he came dragging into Lees Ferry, his appearance and the perilous nature of his undertaking enlisted the warm sympathy of the Smith brothers who kept the crossing. Although not of his faith, and having no interest in the orders of Brigham Young, they insisted on going with him. At Moencopi Wash the three men were found by a company of Navajos, austere and silent, who took them prisoner and sent word in every direction of the important capture they had made.

A Mormon had been seized for the murder of the three Kacheene-begay brothers! He was the one Mormon most guilty of all, the very one who by his false representations had lured them into the deathtrap at Grass Valley. Their disposition of this one man would be deliberate and intensified in a way to compensate for his being the only one they had to punish for the many who should suffer torture.

(Picture) The walls of the Colorado River, nature's great barrier forming the northwestern boundary of San Juan County, Utah

IT WAS winter now: these hills which had reeked with the smell of sheep sixteen years before, when Hamblin left his dead companion on the sand by the trail, were no more hospitable in appearance than on that November day in 1860. The somber faces of these men who talked only among themselves, ignoring all other questions, intensified distressing memories of that awful day.

It was necessary for Hamblin to communicate through a Piute interpreter, since he spoke the Piute but not the Navajo language, and he could get no idea of what his captors intended to do. Taking no notice of his queries, other than to make contemptuous comment among themselves, they took him away to a spacious hogan, twelve by twenty feet inside. The Smith brothers stayed faithfully with him, though they were given to understand it was Hamblin the Navajos wanted and not they.

(Picture) JOHN TAYLOR

Men of the reservation gathered in that hogan till it became stifling with human breath. Great tension prevailed in the stuffy atmosphere—throaty words half spoken, whispers, signs, a general and unmistakable boding of anything but kindness. They made Hamblin know that they held him personally responsible for the murder of the Kacheenebegay brothers in Grass Valley, and demanded to know what he proposed to do about it.

They brought in the surviving brother, showed his wounds, called attention to his emaciated condition, and worked themselves into a fury so terrible that the Piute interpreter had no courage to repeat what they said. It became necessary to get another interpreter before they could proceed with the trial, or whatever this inquisition might be called.

(Picture) Map showing Four Corners

When Hamblin affirmed that his people had nothing to do with the murder of the boys, they told him he would be willing to admit the truth when they began roasting him over the fire before them. Not allowing a muscle of his face or his body to betray the least disturbance, he clung firmly to his faith in what true love would do, and the potency of its appeal to the better side of men.

Even that second interpreter became petrified with terror and dared not repeat what the Navajos told him. When they drafted a third interpreter into the service, he kneeled near Hamblin and asked in a trembling whisper, "Aren't you afraid?"

"Afraid of what?" Jacob answered coolly.

"Of these terrible men around you," and the Piute's reference to them showed his mortal terror of giving them the least offense, "can't you see what they are going to do?"

"I am not afraid of my friends," Hamblin declared, calmly.

"You haven't one friend in all this reservation," the kneeling figure half whispered. "Aren't you afraid?"

"I don't know what fear is," breathed Jacob deliberately, clinging to the solid substance of his unruffled soul, for he felt sure that what had never failed him before would be to his salvation in this crisis.

"We must be ready to shoot it out," suggested one of the Smith brothers in an undertone, clinging to his pistol and resolved that Hamblin should not suffer while he sat idly by.

"No," Jacob answered, appearing to be talking about some commonplace matter, "if we make no start they'll never find a place to begin."

PLAINLY Hamblin had some unaccountable lead in the game — some power of soul on which they could not make their intended assault. An intangible breastwork of his love-armor protected him from their wrath, even in their own hogan while the young hot-bloods resolved not to back an inch from their demands. They wanted sweet revenge and intended to have it. More than that they wanted to preserve their field of profitable plunder from the trivial and unimportant benefits of friendship.

The Navajos nursed their fury to keep it from losing pitch, and they maintained themselves at the extreme point of violent action as long as it was humanly possible to do so without acting, and then they had to weaken. Hamblin had endured it longer than they could. He had worn them out. Forced to recede from their terrible threats of torture and death, they demanded a hundred head of cattle for each one of the boys who had been killed, and fifty head for the one who had survived.

"Tell them I'll promise absolutely nothing for what my people did not do," Jacob ordered, aware that he was getting the whole gang of them under his knee. "Tell them to come over into Grass Valley and be convinced for themselves that the Mormons have not broken faith with them."

Slowly, slowly, by the most persistent concentration and resolution he backed them down from the extreme stand they had taken. They would not promise to go over into Utah and prove how much they had been misled, but after they had held him there twelve long, tense hours, from noon till midnight, their frenzy had spent itself to a point where they permitted him to step out into the midnight air.

He tried to relax from the tortuous strain and stood gazing in a confused reverie at the faraway stars, while a friendly squaw offered him some boiled meat and goat's milk. He knew he had won them — the thought of it was almost overwhelming. In an ecstasy of wonder and gratitude for the potency of this unique power of human conquest, he poured out his heart in gratitude to the Source of that power. Also he thanked the courageous Smith brothers for their constancy, and he heaved a great sigh of relief when he saw the big river between him and the people whose vengeance he had so narrowly escaped.

FROM that gaping river gorge he traveled the two hundred miles or more over mountain and desert, and told the people at home to look for the Navajos with the coming of spring. They had refused to promise they would come, but he had foreseen their intention as he told them good-bye.

When spring came, some of the leading men of the southern nation appeared at Kanab — Tom Holiday, Husteele, and others, to be conducted to Grass Valley and convinced beyond question that Hamblin's people were in no way responsible for the murder.

The blessed monument of friendship was raised again, and its blocks cemented with new confidence. The people of the reservation came again in glad groups to trade as before. In August 1876, a sizable company of them visited Salt Lake City, and a year later a delegation of fifteen of them made another official call on the Mormon leaders, seemingly fearful they were yet to be victims of some hidden cause for misunderstanding. They met enthusiastic welcome and friends who were glad to see them wherever they went. How refreshing! Sweet peace again, peace made the more sweet by the peril so hardly averted.

Yet dark shapes stood nearly visible behind the wings of that pleasant stage, shapes not to be overlooked as they had been before. These few Navajos making the long journey into Utah were the peace-loving, the progressive. Beyond the inhospitable stretch of no-man's-land over which they had come, still lived the persistent spirit of raid and plunder which had defied all outside governments for centuries. This cherished passion of an ancient family of robbers had been intensified as it was transmitted down through succeeding generations, and it was not to be set at once

aside by this treaty with the Mormons, any more than it had been set aside by six successive treaties with the United States.

Moreover, beyond that hazy stretch of desert and mountain and yawning river gorge, roamed that other fierce people, the Piutes, more to be dreaded than the Navajos, always in poverty from indolence, with nothing to lose, as free and ready always as a wildcat to fight; the tribe who had tormented the Navajos for generations, the implacable warriors who loved the game so well they helped in the raids of the Mormons when Navajo courage faltered.

Besides these Piutes, with their impregnable walls and gulches behind them, their country was becoming known as the surest and safest retreat from the arm of the law in all the United States. Desperate fugitives fled to it from many states and territories. Its precipitous terrain bade fair to fill up with the kind of men who shot away the foundation of peace in Grass Valley. If these fugitives from justice should establish themselves in the rocks by these irritable tribes, they would foment trouble more sure and more deadly than the killing of the Kacheenebegay brothers. They might start it at any time, possibly right away, and its red flame would quickly be fanned beyond all control.

It formed a most grave situation calling for wise diplomacy. The problem was of sufficient proportions to engage the attention of the general government, yet it concerned no one so much as the impoverished Mormons; no one else was under such great necessity of framing immediate measures against it. Others had not suffered from it enough to appreciate its danger. However straitened their circumstances, and however much the Mormons were occupied already, it was up to them to keep this dangerous element from going on the rampage with greater disaster than ever before.

THE Church leaders met in solemn council to consider, and the thing they decided to do to head off the impending disaster seemed altogether weak and out of proportion to the magnitude of the problem. Their announcement was surprising; it was in keeping with nothing but the ethics of that peculiar conquest which is accomplished by the appeal of soul to soul. It took little account of the conventional notion of danger, the strength of arms, the defense made possible by superior numbers. The plan they proposed could hope for success only through the faithful use of the policy which saved Jacob Hamblin from the flames and made him victor over a nation crazy for war.

The decision of the Church leaders was to plant a little colony of Mormons in the very heart of all this incipient danger; right on the turbulent border between the Navajos and Piutes, and squarely on the trail of the fugitive-desperado wolfpack from all over the west. It was a perilous venture, as the years were to prove, its objective to

be achieved through great sacrifice, hardship, and danger. With few in numbers and nothing in the way of military defense on which to depend, the little colony would be compelled to hang its hopes of survival on the hand of Providence, and the faithfulness with which it could wield the agencies of peace.

Besides the precarious problem of saving itself with its women and helpless children from the wrath and rapacity of these three breeds of savages, its principal purpose was to save the rest of Utah from further Indian troubles by constituting itself a buffer state between the old settlements and the mischief which might be incubating against them. It was to be a shock-absorber to neutralize what otherwise might develop into another war.

If any man had been shown the country, and a true picture of the prevailing elements where this peace-mission was to be filled, he would have declared it utterly impossible, even in the forty-three years which the task was actually to take.

THE leaders of the Mormon people considered their new plan with great caution from every angle, its difficulties, the dangers it involved. They made no undue haste. Remembering how many of their people had been massacred by Indians in border towns, they resolved to forestall every unnecessary hazard in selecting the place for this important venture, and in the selection of the families whom they would call to do the job.

In the spring of 1879, President John Taylor, successor to Brigham Young, called twenty-five special scouts to explore the region from which the trouble might at any time blaze into life again, and to select there, in the lair of these three evils, the place for the important colony. It was to be a strategic location where the right kind of community could serve as a lightning rod to absorb or neutralize such deadly bolts as had been reaching for years with disastrous results to the peaceful Mormon towns in the southern valleys.

They called Silas S. Smith, a hardy frontiersman and natural leader, to head the company, and they left Cedar City about the middle of April, crossed the Colorado at Lees Ferry the first of May, and followed a dim road to Tuba City, Arizona, near to the Hopi village of Moencopi where a few Mormon families had settled. The scouts carried much of their provisions and equipment on horses, and most of them rode in the saddle, but they had at least three wagons, and two of the men, Harrison H. Harriman and James Davis had their families with them. According to James Davis there were twenty-six men, two women, and eight children in the company. Besides their string of pack horses and mules they had twenty-five head of loose cattle.

Tuba City was the end of every dim road leading in the direction they wanted to go, and very little was definitely known about the region north and northeast where the uncharted course of the winding San Juan River marked the southern boundary of the obscure Piute region. Let no one imagine the Piutes confined themselves to the north side of the river; when Carson and his troops had swept the country, they came over to plunder whatever remained. They stayed there around Navajo Mountain, and joined the Navajos, when they returned from Bosque Redondo, in their raids on the Mormons.

Prudence suggested that the two women and their children should be left with the wagons for safety in Tuba City till it could be known what kind of country and what sort of reception was awaiting off to the northeast, where the scouts hoped to find a way into the southeast corner of Utah.

CHAPTER V

MOVING OFF over the sand and rocks with their pack train towards Black Mountain, the first concern of Captain Smith and his men was to find enough water in the desert stretch for themselves and their animals. The matter next in consequence was to get through the country without leaving any unfavorable sentiment in the hearts of the natives who watched them with distrust from the nearby hills, and came to their camps to look and listen for anything which might bode evil. A third problem was that of calling for their wagons, for which they would send back from their first permanent stopping place.

Sometimes the Navajos forbade them to water their animals at the small and infrequent water holes, and the wandering Piutes (fn) contrived to capitalize on their helplessness by demanding extortionate figures for permission to pass through the country. The Navajos had not forgotten Carson and his terrible men and the years of anguish at Bosque Redondo, but it was a bitter memory always echoing with resentment, and not a safe thing for a stranger to mention. They were back now in their native sand hills, reverting exultantly to their former selves, and white men were by no means welcome among them.

One day when the Mormons toiled wearily up a sand wash and were about to water their horses at a little seep, the giant Navajo, Peokon, ordered them to keep all their animals away from the water. He boasted of being the one who had killed George A. Smith, and he stood over the water, gun in hand, while the scouts dug a well in the sand below. When the little well was completed and had served the scouts that night and the next morning, they presented it to Peokon with their good wishes, telling him

to use it freely as his own but asking him to let travelers water there when they came through the country.

This little affair was typical of the many diplomatic strokes which were to characterize the policy and determine the outcome of the mission. It reached so nearly to old Peokon's hard heart that he bade them a pleasant good-bye when they left. Harder hearts and darker days of the future were yet to be relieved by this kind of "soft answer which turns away wrath."

At another place the petty Piute chief, Peogament, with a dozen or more ragged followers, demanded a hundred dollars for permission to proceed with their outfit. Captain Smith told his men to take no notice of it, and before they left camp in the morning, they contrived to make some kind of present to every Piute but the old chief himself, who watched the company in silence as they moved away, while his own men grinned at him for his stupidity. This foreshadowed the way of the lightning rod in neutralizing every threatening bolt.

AS the scouts approached the famous faraway Four Corners, where Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, and Colorado corner on a pile of stones in the desert, they turned northward from the mountain and toiled down a sandy slope to the San Juan River. One account says it was latter May, another, the first of June, when they stopped on the south bank under a giant cottonwood to ascertain, if possible, just where they were. In their hundred and seventy-five miles of wandering from Tuba City, they had entered a region which on the maps was marked with a blank yellow, and they knew only that the river marked the boundary between the Piutes and Navajos, and beyond that river they could see a big country which they knew was unexplored.

From the tribe on the north side they expected to receive a more slim and doubtful welcome than they had enjoyed since leaving Tuba City, yet they resolved to cross, for the place of the settlement was not to be on the reservation, although it could be, and would have to be in the country from which the Piutes had defiantly refused to be moved.

Since the San Juan was notorious for its quicksand, the captain sent a man to find a safe ford, and when that man rode out on the north side, behold a lone tent, or wickiup, and in it, not an Indian, but a white man! It was the same man who had in his blood such a passion for the firing line that he and his family had converted their house into a fort and fought Indians all winter on the distant Pahreah. When he discerned that his beloved frontier was slipping away into some distant unknown, he went with a pack outfit to hunt for it in western Colorado, but he answered the lure of unexplored southeastern Utah, and had found his way down to the San Juan and had built himself a canoe. This was the Daniel Boone of Utah, Peter Shirts. He had

explored and named Montezuma Valley in Colorado, and thinking this canyon came from the valley where he had been, he named it Montezuma Creek.

Borrowing old Peter's canoe to help in the crossing, the scouts moved over and listened eagerly to all that he had to tell them about the country. He had been down the river ten miles to a creek which he called Recapture, and he had intended to do more exploring in his splendid solitude, where he had really outrun the illusive frontier, but now the frontier had come crawling upon him from an unexpected direction, so he piled his tent and outfit in his canoe and, pushing out from the bank, rode away down the current of the winding river into regions unknown.

Old Peter was never heard of for sure again. From the vast maze of deep canyons and high mesas into which his frail bark floated, tormenting echoes have come drifting back at infrequent intervals for more than sixty years. One of them relates that an old man, sick and speechless, was found by two prospectors in Henry Mountains. They could not make out his name nor whence he came, but they cared for him tenderly till he died, and then carried him to Salina for burial.

THE scouts made their headquarters where old Peter had been camping, and sent five of their number back to Tuba City for the women and children, the wagons and the cattle. The Navajos disliked the thought of these wagons going through and leaving their ominous tracks across the country. To the Navajos a wagon was tsin-apaz, the wooden thing that rolls. They could remember seeing wagons among other hateful things around them in Bosque Redondo, and it was not a welcome sight in their homeland.

Old Peokon came to the little wagon company and was pleased to discern how terrible he appeared to the women and children. They relate that he hatefully kicked dirt into their food by the fire, and he took their knives and rubbed their edges on stones.

The families had with them a devoted Newfoundland dog of generous size, and when she comprehended that Peokon was offering indignities to her friends, she sprang with a fierce growl and held him in her great jaws. And now old Strong-back, for that is what his name meant, was furious and loud in his demands that he be indemnified in cash for the outrage, and that the dog be killed. It is a rather long and thrilling story, but suffice it to say, it levied a heavy tax on their cash and their diplomacy to get started peacefully forward again.

And still they feared that more trouble might come of it and watched in suspense through the following night. In the morning an old Navajo came to them, telling them to harness their horses at once and travel fast, that angry men were gathering behind

them. He kept urging them to hurry, and was impatient when they allowed their reeking teams to stop. He stayed along by them with a solicitous devotion, looking back often or scanning the nearby hills. But at length he relaxed, told them they could stop, that they were safe. Then he told them he had been in the Davis home in Cedar City, that they had fed him and treated him kindly, and it was because he remembered and loved them that he had come to keep them from harm.

It was after the middle of July that the little wagon-company reached the mouth of Montezuma. The scouts built two log cabins in which the two families were to live near together, and here in this faraway land, on the second of August, Mrs. Davis gave birth to a daughter, the first white child born in this corner of Utah.

CAPTAIN SMITH and his scouts prospected the country in every direction. Up the river they found a Mr. Mitchel running a little trading post, and eighty miles to the east, beyond Montezuma Valley in Colorado, they found a few scattered ranches on Mancos Creek. Fifty miles to the north, in the center of what was to become San Juan County, they saw the big grass, the tall timber, the streams, and beaver dams of Blue Mountain. They looked longingly at a level, timbered mountain to the southwest but had no time to go there.

From the mouth of Montezuma they explored the country westward down the river twenty-five miles, and stopped short at a place where nature had stood the petrified strata on edge in a fantastic barrier north and south fifty or more miles long. It was John Butler who approached nearest to this rim, and the canyon where he stopped is still known as Butler Wash. But neither he nor any one of the outfit took so much as a peep over the higher barrier at the hidden country beyond. The impassable miles and miles of this mighty reef presented no problem to the scouts; they simply turned back and worried about it no more. But later on, when a weary band of pilgrims came toiling from the west to the base of this wall, they had to meet the ponderous task of getting over.

The big problem of Silas S. Smith and his men was to select a place on the Navajo-Piute boundary for the unusual peace-mission which the Mormon leaders had decided to establish. They considered with care but with disappointment the wide stretches of unusual territory. It presented a hard prospect, rough and wild, as if not intended for civilized man. There were of course no roads, but also no good place nor suitable material with which to make roads, and few streams which did not go dry in the early summer. It was the howling center of remoteness, devoid of all law for ages past, and claimed by men who wanted it to be without law for all time to come.

THE Piutes gaped in wonder at the newcomers, the wagons, the cattle, the women and children, but they ate the food offered them and smacked their lips in loud relish.

These chesty Piutes were the men who had never in all their history been made to bend for anything nor for anybody. The thought of settling here in their midst, of bringing timid women and helpless children where they would have to be much of the time at the mercy of these savages — the thought of it was alarming.

These were the men who knew their native rocks as rats know the holes of an old quarry, and into a thousand of these holes they could dart from sight where it would be suicidal to follow them. They had tormented the Navajos with their cruel tricks, sneaking beyond the river to steal horses, sheep, children, and women, whom they held for ransom or sold as slaves. The river had long since been the place of perilous contact from which the more peace-loving of each tribe learned to keep away, or to approach it with overtures of peace. What unthinkable tragedy would await the Mormons in the midst of these border Indians!

It simply didn't do to dwell too seriously on the darker phases of the picture; they had come to find the most suitable place for the difficult work to begin, and after much deliberation they decided in favor of the little bottom where they had found old Peter and his wickiup. The mouth of Montezuma had the advantage of being fifteen miles east of the turbulent point of the main crossing of the river, where men of the two tribes most often clashed, and where the stream of white fugitives flowed northward and southward in a fitful, dangerous current.

Having decided on the most tolerable place in the whole intolerable region, and having officially named it Montezuma, they appointed the Harriman and Davis families to become at once the permanent nucleus for the proposed colony. Harvey Dunton was assigned to stay with them for the present, and the rest of the outfit was to get back to Cedar City where the main company for the colony was awaiting the word to start.

Holding the fort in that border wilderness was a fearsome prospect, and the women and children looked longingly after Captain Smith and his men as they moved slowly from view over the sandhills up Montezuma Wash. They braced themselves with the thought and the hope that it would be but four or five weeks at most till the people of the colony would arrive and build all around them. Alas, these fond hopes were to be long and bitterly deferred; in fact they were never, never to be realized, and their eyes were to grow weary watching the hills for the welcome appearance of wagons or horsemen. They were to lie sleeplessly on their pillows listening in an anguish of suspense through many dreadful nights to the weird chant of Piutes around them, wondering in fear if it meant that some ugly plot was forming against them. And winter was to come creeping upon them while they waited, finding them short of the food and short of the clothing which they had expected the people of the colony to bring.

A FRIENDLY INDIAN came one day to warn them of warlike preparations among his people on the river above them, of angry natives who intended to make a raid on the little cabins. For the Davis and Harriman people and their little folk, with the wee little girl born in August, there was no retreat; no road over which they could hurry away, even if they had fat horses and a conveyance in which to travel. They were to stay right there and hold the fort, for Utah's safety from Indian depredations had been transferred to and hung upon this new lightning rod by the old San Juan.

The two log cabins were no longer forts in a figurative sense only, for the windows were quickly barred, and portholes made in the walls through which to fire when the enemy appeared. And then they waited in awful suspense with hearts throbbing, and prayers to the Prince of Peace for the preservation of the peace they had come to establish.

When the enemy came, stealthily in the night, and their soft footfalls were detected by alert ears, true to the lofty standards of peacemakers, the Harriman and Davis people opened their doors, inviting the braves, warpaint, weapons, and all, into the light of their open fireplace. Astonished at this show of splendid courage, the Indians found themselves disarmed while their bows and arrows were still in their own hands. The great Prince who had declared, "Blessed are the peacemakers," moved the hearts of the savages with love for these defenseless Mormons, and they breathed forth a warmth of love very different from the intention with which they had come.

No matter that the keepers of the peace-fort were short of food, they let no one go hungry from their doors. From their little bag of wheat they ground enough in a handmill for their bread each day, and their hearts melted within them when they discerned that the little sack, like the widow's bin of meal, did not diminish though they took from it every day.

Harvey Dunton, considering the threat of famine which hung over them, volunteered to go away with his gun, and live by what he could kill or bring back something for them to eat.

CHAPTER VI

NO MAIL—no tidings from the world beyond their silent wilderness. What had become of Brother Smith and his horsemen? What could have happened in the faraway settlements of southwestern Utah that no one came as promised? They could only guess with uncomfortable misgivings. They knew only that they had been left to hold the important fort on the new firing line, that they were enlisted in the great

cause of preventing war from being carried into the settlements, and they trusted that the great Providence which had preserved their people from many perils through the last fifty years would not fail to care for them.

AFTER a long time a rumor reached Tuba City that the two families had been massacred. It came to the ears of Thales Haskell, and his great heart leaped with anguish. Taking up their dim wagon tracks across the reservation, he determined to know whether the report were true, and to see if there remained anything he could do. When he saw the smoke curling from their chimneys, he sighed in relief, "Thank God, they are still alive!"

When the scouts left Cedar City in April, they traveled southeast and east and then northeast in a great half circle four hundred fifty or more miles long, taking them into Arizona and back again into Utah. When they returned, they traveled north, northwest, southwest, and south, completing a great circle nine hundred or more miles in circumference.

From Montezuma they wrangled their wagon and four-horse team over gulches and canyons and rocks for a full hundred miles northward across what was to become San Juan County, a region as extensive as the state of New Jersey. At Blue Mountain they found two big cattle outfits, each with a formidable gang of cowpunchers, and every man carried a six-shooter on both hips besides a long gun under his saddle fender. The cattle owners found it good policy to employ these fellows whenever possible, even though they paid them no more than their board.

It was never safe to ask these cowpunchers whence they came and why, whether their names were really Shorty or Red as they were known. They had fled to this remote corner to lie low till the echoes of their depredations should die away, and they were glad to find any activity to relieve the monotony and keep them from starving. Many of them made their initial appearance in the morning, having arrived from nowhere in the darkness of the previous night. Also, many of them who appeared calm and contented in the evening were nowhere to be found next day. This was the devilinspired breed to torment the men and women who built San Juan. The scouts regarded them narrowly, trying still to hope for the best, but feeling sure these white men fleeing redhanded from justice, were more to be dreaded than both the native tribes.

The captain and his men snaked their wagon down over jungle and boulders on what is now Peter's Hill. They passed the old fort at what was to become Moab and forded the Colorado at the mouth of Courthouse Wash. They forded Green River, and heading south through Castle Valley arrived at Cedar City in October.

THE Church with great care had selected sixty or more families to carry out the hazardous mission, and called them to be ready to start as soon as the returning scouts should tell them where to go. When they heard that Montezuma was directly eastward across the big circle around which the scouts had traveled, they resolved to approach it by way of the diameter of the circle, which could not be more than three hundred miles, instead of going by the circumference. It could not take more than three or four weeks, and they would be at their destination and housed before the worst of the winter.

No one knew of a white man or anybody else who had ever traveled across that circle nor very deeply into it, but what the difference? The Mormons had found their way across the continent, and never yet a part of the earth's surface through which resolute men could not discover or make a passage. They took it for granted that no such place would ever be found.

This select company, poised on the brink of unsuspected distance and difficulty, was about to assume without realizing it, a great part of the evils which had vexed the territory of Utah for thirty years. In whatever refuge these people might build in the distant wilderness, Utah's most annoying Indian troubles were to be focused on them. Some of them had fought in the Walker War and the Black Hawk War, while their helpless ones were safely in shelter behind them, but now they were asked to take their wives and their children and sit down with pleading at the doors of the unconquered Navajos, to placate the incorrigible Piutes, and to convert or to subdue a stream of desperate fugitives from all over the wild west.

They started in November with about eighty wagons drawn by horses and oxen, a sprawling company strung along the road seventyfive or a hundred miles, with little herds of loose stock at infrequent intervals. O how trusting their notion of the country through which they were to fight their way! Nobody imagined a place where the ancient Cyclops had ripped up the earth's massive crust and stood the ponderous slabs on edge, forming a region of extravagant contour to baffle human fancy and challenge any kind of travel but that of an airplane. No white man had ever inspected its heights and depths, its bald domes, its vertical surfaces reaching to the sky. The few adventurers who had touched on its ragged edges had failed to read on a thousand towering walls. "Wagons strictly prohibited."

All the same they moved off in a long string like migrating ants, holding to their eastward direction as nearly as cliffs and mountains would permit. From Escalante, the last point to which wagons had traveled, their slow-moving wheels rumbled off down Potato Valley, as they called it, away over Escalante Mountain and down into the desert east of Kaiparowitz Plateau.

THE six weeks' provisions which had been expected to last them till they reached Montezuma, were getting woefully low by Christmas, so they began parching and eating the corn they had brought along for their oxen and horses. They took these animals away to some distant benches and shelves of dry sand grass, and thus relieved of a lot of daily drudgery, each group of camps set up its social center.

"It's a good thing for Utah we had all that unexpected experience and delay in getting into San Juan," said Kumen Jones, one of the scouts and later one of the company. "If we hadn't had that special introduction and been made tired enough to stop at the first possible chance, we never would have stopped in San Juan at all. I'm sure the Church never could have rounded up another company like it, and there would have been no San Juan Mission."

Three hundred miles in six months amounts to somewhat less than two miles a day, and this snail's pace accomplished only by tremendous exertion was but one phase of the essential preliminary.

Bumping and grinding slowly off over the naked sandstone on the east side of the Colorado River they followed the trail of the four scouts down over Slick Rock, across the gulch by the lake, out through the high pass at Clay Hill, and into the forest of pinions and cedars through the mud and slush of early spring.

(Picture) Hole-in-the-Rock

Where were they in this no man's land? It seemed like a weird dream. One day in a narrow opening of the trees near Elk Mountain, an old Piute rode out of the forest and drew up in utter amazement—his wrinkled old face sagged absently as he contemplated the long string of wagons grinding along through the sagebrush. He wanted to know where they came from, and where in the name of reason they had crossed the Colorado River. Platte Lyman marked out a map on the ground, and indicated the place of Hole-in-the-Rock.

The old brave shook his head in disgust. "You lie!" he grunted in his native tongue, "You did not come that way—you could not come that way. No place there for a wagon to come."

"I think the old brave knew more about it than we knew," commented Platte Lyman. "There is no place there for a wagon."

THE junction of the reef and the river formed a corner, an almost impassable corner, still known as Rincone. The tribulations with which they got out of it are still to be read in a long rude scar up the steep face of the rock. It was all that "Uncle Ben" and

his road crew could do at this impoverished stage of the game to cut a jagged groove in the rock for the upper wheel, and prop up enough rocks for the lower wheel to keep the wagons from turning over sidewise. As they bumped slowly and fitfully up this which is still known as San Juan Hill the hard rock was stained with blood from the feet and knees of many a horse and ox.

The parched corn which saved the people from starving, had left their teams thin and staggering. It was weeks before the last wagons struggled painfully to the top of San Juan Hill. The fact is, some of them have not got there yet, and that dim road behind them is still punctuated for more than a hundred miles by crumbling skeletons and broken wagons. On Slick Rock and in solitary places northeast of there, weather-beaten wheels half-buried in the sand, bear mute evidence of that pilgrim company more than three score years ago.

Ten miles east of San Juan Hill on the sixth of April, 1880, the lead outfits of the procession found a little grass on a river bottom and stopped, pulled the harnesses from their starving teams, and sat down to rest and think. It was still fifteen miles to the appointed place where Davis and Harriman waited eagerly for their arrival, but weariness had become a determining factor.

Some strange working of destiny by simple means, was making a permanent and far-reaching change in the nature of the mission. Exhausted teams, broken-down wagons, empty grub boxes, the intensified longing in the human heart to stop and build the dear shelter called home; all these combined to make a change in the original program. Whether, but for this confirmed weariness and unfitness to go on, they would have traveled right on up the river past Montezuma and off to places more inviting, is still a question. As it was, fully half the company dragged on again as soon as they could move, but they passed Montezuma with hardly a look and went hunting for some more pleasant location in New Mexico and Colorado. Most of them made no permanent stops till they got back to their old homes in western Utah.

In this Gideon's army, melting away before the fight began, a few remembered still the great trust reposed in them, and cherished the hope of relieving Utah of the troubles which had been coming from this dreaded corner. Having stopped at this first grassy bottom by the mouth of what they called Cottonwood, and being unfit to go on, they caught the gripping notion of staying right there to hoist there the essential lighting rod and begin the fight. Two or three families joined Davis and Harriman; twentyfive families stopped by the mouth of Cottonwood and called it Bluff. It is Bluff still after these many years.

Yet Bluff was not at all to one side of the turbulent crossing as Captain Smith and his men had intended. It was exactly where the two tribes clashed most often. It was right

at the crossroads for the string of fugitives from east and west, from north and south. Like an unsheltered pine on a mountain peak, it stood where it could not miss the fury of the storm. The general contour of the country deflected the stream of all but those with characters of steel from this very point.

Yet the years were to prove this the place best suited to the peculiar warfare they had been sent to wage on the three major evils. The years were to see the old San Juan reach out in its wrath and cut away every other bottom along its banks for thirty miles up and down the river. Just why it should spare the limited area at the mouth of Cottonwood where the wayworn travelers stopped is one of the singular phases of this singular enterprise. Sometime in the previous century the river had had its bed where Bluff stood, but it refrained now from that old bed with unaccountable self-denial.

Out of the sixty families called, the few who stopped at Bluff were somehow like the strong essence of a solution boiled down, and they faced the formidable business of entrenching themselves between the comfortable towns they had left behind, and the sources from which those towns had long been threatened.

Now that the long-talked-of place for the big project had been selected, dignified with a name, and accepted by the faithful few as the strategic point in which to make their heroic stand, Bluff tried to meet at once a formidable swarm of pressing necessities. Their long wanderings had brought them into quite a new world, pretty much "without form and void," being so nearly detached from all other bases and sources of supply, of information, and possible help whatever the emergency. Their nearest known distributing point, for small quantities, would take a month or six weeks for the round trip. They had no sawmill, no gristmill, no doctor, no merchant, no specialist of any kind. They were surrounded by creation in the raw and must set their own precedents, provide for all their needs.

Valuing a man's time at a dollar and a half a day, they had spent \$4,800 in labor on their road into the country, and in answer to Silas S. Smith's plea for an appropriation, it was reported that the Territorial Legislature would recognize forty percent of that amount. That much-hoped-for cash recognition seems to have been indefinitely delayed or entirely forgotten, and as Charles E. Walton expressed it, money was a strictly cash article in Bluff.

Death had not entered their camps in all the long months of winter and hardship on the road; no one had been seriously sick, though two babies had been born near the river, both of them to live and thrive as real children of the desert. Yet the company had no more than stopped at what was to become Bluff when death claimed old Roswell Stevens, a veteran of the Mormon Battalion. There was no lumber within a

hundred miles, so from his old wagonbox, scarred and worn, they made a coffin and selected a place for a cemetery.

This ready resourcefulness of theirs to meet perplexing situations was taxed by the need of many things. Where should they begin? The task lay shapeless and endless all around them.

The Indians from all around, many of the Navajos clad in nothing but a G string, came with fawning smiles and curious eyes to carry away everything on which they could lay their sly hands.

The Navajo or Piute not skilled in the essential art of theft, was regarded by his people as slow and stupid. The loss of shoes, knives and forks, dishes, clothing, ropes, axes, or any of the limited supplies and utensils carried away from the camps, amounted to little as compared with the disappearance of teams, cattle, and the dear old cow on which the children depended for their most precious item of food.

THE people met under a giant cottonwood known and loved for thirty years as "The Old Swing Tree." They organized a Sunday School; they divided the land; they took stock of their most urgent obligations and assigned to each man the part he was to take.

One of the first indispensables was flour; it would have to be brought at once from Escalante, the point to which they had ordered it delivered the previous fall, the flour of which they were so sorely in need at Hole-in-the-Rock. It was dismally more than two hundred miles to Escalante, but over that unparalleled country, and over that insufferable road, the difficulty and the time involved in covering the two hundred miles with a pony team and an old-time wagon, made Escalante more distant from Bluff than London is distant today from Salt Lake City. Persuading four horses to scramble in any kind of order up through that chute at Hole-in-the-Rock and at the same time to drag an empty wagon behind them, was a feat of fine engineering for the crack teamsters of 1880.

Just how far these new San Juaners had moved away from all the rest of creation was to be impressed upon them by a weary string of unforgettable experience. It was to become clear to them that Bluff was one of the most remote communities of civilized men in the United States. A few ranchers on Mancos Creek in Colorado were their nearest white neighbors.

Somewhere in the mountains distantly beyond Mancos was a military post, the nearest of its kind from which help could be called in case of trouble. Yet within rifle range across the river from Bluff was the Navajo reservation with its fifteen thousand

or more impoverished savages, eking a scanty living from the sterile sandhills, or stealing it from the outside. To the east and north and west of Bluff roamed the surly Piutes with crisp contempt for white man's law, and for all other law.

And then there were those ubiquitous evil birds of passage flying singly or in pairs from the reach of the law in their own country to hide in and make this wilderness a perilous place for life and property. San Juan, one of the most faraway, and for that reason the safest place in all the west for fugitives from justice, was the popular paradise for bad men from everywhere.

THE little colony, like a lamb in a pack of wolves, struggled to get on its feet and look these evils in the face. It knew that in an hour it could become a blotch of blood and ashes, and that its murderers could be far away in their most secure retreat for weeks or months before the report of their massacre crawled on slow and uncertain feet to some responsible point on the outside, for the outside then, in point of time as we reckon time today, was thousands of miles distant.

The colony had to build homes and make fences; it had to plow at once if it was to raise any garden or produce any feed for livestock that year; and it had to survey and make a ditch to take water from the river. That ditch had to be dug in the sand, the San Juan sand which was to astonish the people with its treachery. But they suspected nothing then, and fell to work as men who have trusted the earth and found it true.

From their regular meetings under the old swing tree, they moved to a roomy bowery made of leafy cottonwood limbs, keeping always carefully organized to make the most of their time. Improvising houses from the crooked, twisted cottonwood logs would have been puzzling enough, even with a few boards for the windows and doors, but with no lumber at all it was a conundrum. So they got out an old whipsaw, dug a pit, and began making green cottonwood lumber. That lumber had to be nailed down solid the minute it came from the saw or it would writhe itself into the shape of a ram's horn.

While some of them toiled on that ditch in the sand like so many ants, others hauled fencing and house-logs, as necessity for many things increased its heavy weight upon them. Some of the already dilapidated wagons sent to Escalante for flour went to pieces in their merciless jolting over the solid rock, and one of them keeled end over end down one of those "slantindictlar" surfaces, scattering its precious cargo in a sickening cloud of white dust in the depths below. It was imperative that some of the men leave the work at Bluff to others and hunt jobs of freighting or delivering railroad ties in the distant mountains of Colorado.

And how should they send or receive mail in Bluff? What address should they give, for the luxury of a post office was but a distant possibility? They sent letters with the teams to Escalante, and six weeks later they received mail which had been waiting there since the fall before. When stark need forced some of them to go hunting work in Colorado, they sent letters to be posted at Mancos, and ordered their mail there from the outside, hoping to have it brought in by chance freight teams at irregular intervals.

CHAPTER VII

NO trees shaded Bluff in 1880. The sun beat down on the white sand with terrific force, dazzling the eyes of all who looked from their improvised shelters, and the winds came loaded with clouds of dust and sand from the dry desert of the reservation. It buried things up as in snowdrifts. Food was always gritty.

The settlers had started from southwestern Utah with foundation stock for herds of cattle, and they had brought with them as many good horses as they could afford. It was but a remnant of this foundation stock that had survived the hard winter in the rocks, and these few were indispensable to the life and growth of the colony. Yet all these animals, even the work teams and the milk cows had to hunt for forage away among the unprotected hills, and the range cattle had to be driven to very distant places, some of them beyond Clay Hill.

O what a bonanza for these avaricious tribes who had been devouring each other on this borderland for generations! Horses to ride! Cattle to butcher! And the owners of these animals too few in numbers to dare anything but plead and preach — nothing like it ever before around this desolated crossing!

Platte D. Lyman wrote in his diary, "We are about to be crucified between two thieves."

With dark prospects of being left afoot, they spared one of their number to guard the horses twenty-four hours a day, but no thief appeared while the guard was watching. The hills took on an innocent expression, for the prowlers, peeping from gulches or summits, knew that the best way to beat this game was to keep out of sight.

That ditch in the sand, and the new fields with their uncertain old bullfences to protect them from starving stock called loudly for the strength and attention of every able man, and they left the horses for a little while and then for a longer while, telling

themselves they would be safe for a day — two days. Their horses were never safe for an hour, night or day, even though the ditch was empty and the fields burning up.

Navajo Frank, robust and self-sufficient as a well-fed boar, took up his abode near Bluff and set out to monopolize opportunity as it was opened to him by these strange Mormons. If a horse were left unguarded, he got it. If a milk cow wandered far into the willows, she became his beef.

HOWEVER, there was a brighter side to this picture, and some people saw in it a promise of better things in the future. Kumen Jones, one of the leading men, went among the Navajos to curry their favor and learn their language, and in his early contact with them he met Jim Joe, a man about his own age, twenty-two years, and they loved each other from the first. Changing scenes and vexatious conditions failed to estrange them. Like David and Jonathan they embraced when they met. Jim's people had been trained from birth to steal, and the passion of thieving ran in their blood, but Jim Joe scorned to take anything not his own, or to tell what was not true. The splendid love-tie between these two men constituted the beginning of an important link which was to develop between their white and red brethren.

By happy little incidents and by slow degrees it dawned on the toilers in Bluff that these Navajo people were not so bad as they had seemed to be. Among those who came to inspect this strange project on the San Juan Crossing, there appeared at intervals some very wonderful men and women who, without seeming to do so, pleaded the cause of their kinsmen and revealed a delightfully human and lovable side to the Navajo nature.

Corpulent old Pee-jon-kaley pleasant in form and face, came always with a smile or a refreshing joke. Even the children liked to see him. Pishleki, another pleasant and portly personality, made valuable contributions to the cause of good will by his cheerful words and fine sense of humor.

An old brave and his grown daughter came quietly through the doorway one day, and stood listening in silence to soft music from an adjoining room. Suddenly the young woman dropped into a chair by a table, and bending over with her head on her wrists, she cried and sobbed like a broken-hearted child. The old man stood regarding her tenderly, and when asked why she cried, he explained that she had recently lost a little boy, and she could hear him calling in the music.

An old Navajo mother came into a Bluff home where a weakly skeleton of a baby was fighting for its life with some problem of malnutrition. The Navajo woman bent tenderly over the child, breathing the love and solicitude which only a true mother can know. Next day she came from her distant hogan with a little bucket of goat's milk to

nourish the starving child. She continued to come from day to day with the bucket till the pinched little bones began to be hidden with healthy flesh.

FROM these unpremeditated pleas from the Navajos for good will, a sense of appreciation and sympathy like an awakening kinship began to grow like a little flower in a choking tangle of ugly weeds.

Yet the steady disappearance of horses and cattle was unbearable. The people viewed it with dismay. It would have to be checked or they could not survive. They had no defense but the charm of entreaty as it was supposed to be employed in the new warfare, and it was strangely difficult to employ. At all events, they had not learned how to make it protect their livestock wandering unguarded on the range.

With their wives and their children they had staked their fortunes and their lives on this unprecedented venture for the protection of the older settlements, and they hung suspended on their hopes of the Providence which had been promised as their deliverer. How long could it still be delayed before they would starve? Navajo Frank and his pack of greedy rivals gnawed at them every day like coyotes on a carcass, and the Piutes in general gobbled them up slick and clean with every opportunity.

Years of hair-raising experiences in this ancient trouble zone were to prove that these Piutes had been the melting-pot for Indian outlaws from all directions. They had discovered it as a criminal's paradise long before it was recognized as such by white men.

It is well the hopeful toilers on the ditches and fences and nondescript log houses did not see at first this inevitable phase of their monstrous task. Its fortunes good and bad were now all obscured in mists of uncertainty, and like a lamb between two snarling packs it wondered how long it was to survive.

The Saints appealed to the Church leaders who had called them, and wanted to know whether, in the midst of all these things, they would still be expected to stay. If they were to stay, how were they to do it? In answer to their petition, Erastus Snow, Brigham Young, Jr., and Francis M. Lyman, came all the long, long way from Salt Lake City to review the situation and to give advice.

They reminded the people that in the undisciplined hearts of these two native tribes rankled a savage something which had menaced the peace of Utah for thirty years. The colony had been planted in this important position to transform them by the magic of kindness. It was intended, and the intention had carried thus far, that there were to be no more Indian scares among the old settlements.

It would have been poor consolation to the people of Bluff to have it pointed out that no more Indian troubles in the rest of Utah, would almost certainly mean that the quelling of the inevitable passion for war would be at the cost of troublesome times and frequent bloodshed in San Juan with its solitary town a hundred miles from all other white men. Nothing but the kind of magic which saved Jacob Hamblin from the flames could save them from destruction.

(Picture) An early scene of Bluff, Utah

TO Erastus Snow and his companions the people poured out the story of their hardships: robbers, white and red, stripping them of their property till they hardly had a horse to ride or a cow to milk. Like great kind fathers the three leaders listened to them as they would to the children they loved, reminding them that a great trust had been reposed in them, and much depended on the success of the mission they had been called to fill.

"You are far from the more populous and more prosperous towns of the territory," they said, "and in your obscurity you may feel that you are forgotten by all the outside world. You may therefore conclude that your work is of no importance. But as the main fort on the front of the firing line, you are acting as sentinel for the rest of Utah. It is imperative that you stay and carry on. You are here to end the costly troubles which have been breaking out for a long time, and to forestall greater troubles which, but for you, will break out in the future."

The people believed and accepted what they said. Their strongest intuitions assured them that merit could not fail in due time to come into its own.

"If you are true men," declared Erastus Snow, "and if you do your part to uphold this mission, the Indians who are unfriendly to you will waste away."

The people believed it. Yet when the three leaders had gone and the inspiration of their personalities could no longer be felt, when the people went from the meeting in the old bowery to find the prowlers still among their cattle, they wondered how this "wasting away" would be accomplished, and how soon it would begin. If it didn't start promptly and with a vengeance, it might as well never start at all.

The three leaders had directed the people to build a meetinghouse, to stay together, and to make their homes in the form of a fort. The leaders had directed the people not to defy Providence by making places of residence remote from the little community; to be wise and patient in their afflictions and in all their dealings with the Indians; to refrain always from flying into a passion and doing some unwise thing; and to cherish

every suggestion of friendship and love which should spring from their more pleasant associations.

They built their houses joining in a hollow square covering about three acres, with all the doors and windows on the inside, peepholes or portholes in the backs of the houses to look from the fort in every direction. Four heavy gates wide enough to admit a wagon opened into each corner of the fort, and the log meetinghouse stood in the north center looking south.

IT WAS in that square with doors and windows on every side that the writer of this story first became aware that he was a living being in a most wonderful world with other living beings. The memory picture of that old fort is still vivid in his mind with the log walls, the dirt roofs and the quaint old-fashioned windows and doors all facing the big log meetinghouse as if in the attitude of worship.

When Silas S. Smith, returning from petitioning the Territorial Legislature, caught up with his company settled at Bluff, he brought with him an authorization and appointment for the organization of a county to be named from the river, San Juan. But the order to organize, maintain, and finance any kind of civil government with laws and standards in this rendezvous of thieves and murderers was about as easy to give and as difficult to execute as the fabled order of the rats to bell the cat.

All the same, the invincible spirit which had dared to ride on a rickety old wagon and yell orders to a four-head-team of clumsy oxen while they dragged that wagon along a perilous trail over a "slantindictlar" surface, was not going to turn pale and surrender at the thought of hoisting the banner of law in a den of thieves. They organized a county with Bluff as its county seat, the home of every one of its officials, and practically the only permanent community within its wide border. This, however, is not forgetting that Montezuma, fifteen miles up the river, still had half a dozen families and hopes of carrying on.

And now, with the little new organization hatched out in the doubtful shelter of the log fort, must they keep it hidden away there, and its existence a kind of secret lest the bullies and gunmen ride over it roughshod and rush it before it could get feathered out and develop its fighting spurs? To announce itself openly would be to flaunt the red rag in the bull's face, a challenge to the rule of anarchy where it had boasted of being supreme.

And where would it get revenue to power its projects, enforce its orders, and build up the country? The big cattle kings that had come into the county from Colorado and located at La Sal and Blue Mountain, the formidable outfits with their gangs of terrible gunmen, had yelled their exultant farewell to taxation when they crossed the

line, and they had surrounded themselves with fighting elements calculated to frighten any assessor from venturing into camp.

The new county appointed Lemuel H. Redd, Jr., assessor and collector, who taking with him Kumen Jones, went to the cattle barons to assess their livestock. They told him with a confidential sneer that no taxes would be paid.

"I'm going to assess every horse and cow in your outfit," Lem Redd declared, aggressively, "and when the time comes, I'm going to collect every cent of it."

He felt in his hands the splendid power of the big cause he represented, and when the time came, he collected in full. That was victory number one on the new firing line, but the enemy had been taken unaware, and would fortify more carefully for the future.

BESIDES the political organization which had been made for San Juan County, the visiting brethren from Salt Lake City had organized San Juan Stake, with Platte D. Lyman as president.

Thales Haskell, loved and trusted for his courage, his wisdom, and his unfaltering fidelity as an aid to Jacob Hamblin, was called by the Church to be interpreter, diplomat, and mediator between the people of the fort and the native tribes. Haskell was the soul of loyalty. He regarded his life and his ability as a trust reposed in him for the good of the needy wherever he could help them. He feared God too much to deal with any degree of unfairness, but if ever he feared the face of any man who walked the earth, nobody found it out.

With solemn words of firmness and love he went to Navajo Frank and other chronic thieves, his gray hair and white beard in fitting accord with the dignity of his message.

"Do you rob your friends?" he asked, in genial tones of familiar confidence, for Haskell knew the language of the natives as well as they knew it themselves. He knew them better than they knew each other.

"We are your friends," he went on. "We have come a long way to sit down by you and help you. Why do you reward us evil for good by stealing our horses and cattle?"

Some of them protested their innocence; some of them laughed mockingly.

"If you steal from us, you will die," Haskell declared, solemnly. "Remember what I tell you."

But those who had been stealing, stole again as industriously as before. Frank specialized in the business, in spite of Jim Joe, Tom Holiday, and other big souls who were in sympathy with Haskell and his people. They could remember the terrible corral at Bosque Redondo, half a generation before. Yet in these strange white people of the fort they had discovered something surprisingly different: the unusual lure of love, the winning of entreaty, the absence of threats to employ force.

But the oldest brave among the Piutes had never heard of his people being corralled or of being brought back from the rocks where they fled redhanded with scalps and plunder. They had never known a Bosque Redondo; they had never been punished in any way for their boldest outrage against human rights. They had always been supreme—they were still supreme. They mocked at Haskell and helped themselves with impudent banter.

YET there were exceptions, even among these insolent Piutes. They cannot all be named here, but it would be unfair to overlook a certain slender youth in his early teens, a boy known as Henry, who caught the charm of Haskell's fervent words and was a true friend to Haskell and his people then, and through all the changing scenes of the years.

Erastus Snow's counsel to stay together met with willing response; it was what the people wanted to do, what they had been doing, and yet a solitary deviation from that rule was destined in a few years to result disastrously and imperil the life of the mission. For the present, however, when they rode the range or followed the long, winding freight road, it was in numbers of two or more, and vigilance became a habit even while they slept. They had to unite on their ditch, their buildings, and all their enterprises, whether in and around the fort or distantly beyond it. They could not fence their fields separately but in a community enclosure. The passion for individual gain was lost in concern for the general good. When they planned a store, it had to be a cooperative institution: The San Juan Co-op, known as such with good credit for thirty years. Their molasses mill and all their machinery of any size were community property.

Difficulty and danger from all around compelled them to unite in one harmonious family, living in one circular house. Bishop Nielson, the head of the family, counseled them in all their affairs, helped them to make their decisions and adjust their difficulties. The sorrow of one was the sorrow of all, the success of one the joy of the community. They had gay parties and dramas and dances. Old Brother Cox and his fiddle helped to amplify the chivalry they had evolved at Hole-in-the-Rock, and it became more chivalrous with cultivation.

IT is not to be implied they indulged any foolish sense of security because of the log walls around them; that frail barrier of twisted logs and gaping chinks filled in with scraps and daubed over with mud was no more than a rabbit's frail hutch which could be easily crushed. However, they enjoyed a sweet security, and in ordinary times they slept in peace.

They believed they had been divinely guided to this strategic location for the sake of their important assignment. A wise Providence was delaying the day of their prosperity till they had established themselves in the hearts of most of their enemies. Their foundation stock of horses and cattle which should have increased and given them a the claim to the range, had been reduced to a sorry trickle, and the range had been claimed by the big herds from Colorado. They were crowded out from the most profitable areas of the country they had come to inherit.

But the most stubborn adversary with which they had to contend, it might even be classed as enemy number four, was the San Juan River, implacable, unconquerable, on whose sand they had built their fort. That restless, roaring, moaning, gnawing old river had raged back and forth from cliff to cliff in that valley from the dim ages of antiquity with never a challenge from any source. It had been undisputed proprietor of the sand along its banks; it had ground that sand fine in its own mill and laid it down on one side or the other of its right-of-way while it took an excursion to the other side. It would of course come back, and anyone found squatting on its property would be duly evicted.

That long ditch the people had made by their hard toil in what they trusted to be good old terra firma, the fields they had plowed and fenced and planted—in all this they were trespassers; that sand belonged to the river. The river made frequent demonstrations of how, in a few short hours, it could gather up its deposits and carry them away to occupy the place where they had been.

At any unexpected hour, morning, noon, or night, behold, the ditch was empty, and following up its bank they found the river rippling gaily where the ditch had been a little while before. After the first year they discarded as worthless all the stock they had worked up in the ditch, and began again exactly as if there had been no ditch at all. The loss was distressing to contemplate, yet they were destined to discard the stock in that ditch again, and still again after twenty years. They had saved seven hundred acres from the ravages of the river, and when the cost of their discarded ditch was divided by that number, it showed a tremendously high cost for water and little to show for it.

Disappointment, loss, humiliation, and poverty continued as the stern schoolmaster teaching ethics of the new warfare to the people of the fort. It was borne in upon them

that Bluff was not essentially an enterprise, but a mission; not a project for making gain, but for making sacrifice. It was generating in them the kind of gratitude which, when at length it saw their accounts crawling slowly up from destitution, would give special thanks and pay extra tithing.

CHAPTER VIII

WHEN the people of Bluff celebrated the first anniversary of their arrival, a practice which Bishop Nielson insisted on as long as he lived, their progress towards mastering the big objectives had served only to reveal the hugeness of the work before them. It meant the taming of fifteen thousand savages who saw themselves facing an invasion of white men and the prospect of losing their place and their liberty as a nation—fifteen thousand primitive souls as fickle and as imaginative as children, and as ready as a nest of hornets to get all worked up and swarm out to war.

How could a handful of impoverished people so much as begin on such a labor? This wild nation, hotheaded and superstitious, might rise up at any time in a frenzy of anger, obliterate the helpless fort, and race on with red hands to the unsuspecting outside.

Right at this time, although the celebrators in the fort knew nothing about it and were not to know for weeks to come just what had happened, the Piutes were staging a bloody massacre at Piute Springs, east of Blue Mountain. The fierce particulars of the murder could cause no surprise to the people of Bluff, but they had no inkling now of what was going on, and they celebrated the annual date of their arrival in peaceful ignorance of the black cloud soon to reach over them, cherishing still the fond hope that destiny would favor them on this forbidding front. While they danced and sang and related the good fortunes which had attended their efforts thus far, the Piutes robbed and murdered three men at the lonely Thurman horse ranch sixty miles away, and then headed with their plunder and the stolen band of blooded horses off in the direction of Bluff and the more inaccessible parts of the county.

Five miles from the fort they appeared suddenly with their great drive of horses from a ravine, and seeing the herd of horses belonging to the Mormons, and guarded by a Mormon boy, they circled the herd into their roundup, and sent a bullet whistling over the head of the herder, as he, Joe Nielson, raced like the wind, dashing pellmell down the narrow trail in Cow Canyon, and through the gateway of the fort when the sun was dipping low on the horizon. His report spread consternation and alarm. Their herd was gone in a body, taken from their guard in broad daylight. Except for a few ponies and two teams they had been working, they were afoot.

LONG shadows from the setting sun stretched across the fort, carrying gloomy forebodings along with them. Even if they could mount all their men and go in pursuit, it would still be a dreadful hazard. Of their thirty men and boys, some were freighting between there and Durango, some away at work or hunting lost cattle, only a limited number at home. Suppose they could mount and arm twelve men—what could twelve men do to take their horses from that unscrupulous gang of robbers? The recovery of these horses would be a miracle, nothing short of it. Also, if twelve men were to be sent for the recovery of the horses, who would guard the fort with the women and children left in terror and suspense?

Notwithstanding all these terrible "ifs," they must have their horses. The women were no less resolute about that than the men, and no doubt equally capable of carrying on the warfare which was comprehended in the plan of the mission. Furthermore, and more important if possible than the horses, the Piutes must never see them show the white feather. Their prestige with these insolent Piutes must wave on high as their banner till such time as the Piutes could appreciate and respond to friendship.

IN the stillness of that April evening, eleven men rode out through the west gate of the fort, and the dull tread of their hoofs on the sand died away into the ominous silence of night. Wives and mothers and children laid their heads on sleepless pillows, listening in dread to the solemn and portending sounds of night—echoes in the towering cliffs—the moaning of the river, and the doleful barking of dogs in the Navajo camps beyond it. If they dozed in all those restless hours, it was to dream visions of torture, blood, their loved ones lying prone on the sand. When morning came at last, no tidings had come from the eleven who rode out through the west gate and away into the darkness.

(Picture) Cow Canyon Dugway, the narrow pass through the cliffs to Bluff

Joe Nielson had observed that the Piutes were headed westward, perhaps for Butler Wash, and that was the objective of the men who started from the fort. They rode quietly and in single file along the sandy trail up Cottonwood Wash: Lem Redd, Jr., Kumen Jones, Platte D. Lyman, Jess Smith, Amasa Barton, Orin Kelsey. The complete personnel of that party is not on record. After traveling four miles in the darkness and stillness between the high cliffs of Cottonwood, they crossed a sandy bench to the northwest and stopped on a hill overlooking a valley by Boiling Spring. Across from them on the long sloping rock above the spring, they saw a community of fires, like stars in the darkness.

Faintly on the night wind as they listened, they caught the weird chant of the Piute war song. It rose to their ears and died away on the wind, but they could mark the heavy beat, the lusty volume of many voices—the spirit of exultation, of defiance.

The big drive of horses was perhaps scattered between them and the fires, but it was too dark to hunt among them. They would have to wait there till morning, and to get along without fires since that would advertise their presence to their enemies. Shifting from side to side in their saddles or standing by while they gazed at the dread lights in the distance, they speculated on their chances of getting their horses without being shot to ribbons. Yet, they had firmly resolved to have those horses, for without them they would be stranded, afoot, helpless. No time now to change their minds about it; any lack of firm answer to this bold challenge would shatter their prestige and leave them helpless at the mercy of these murderers.

Every one of the eleven men was armed—a gun, a pistol, or both. Yet everyone knew, no matter how stoically he refrained from saying it in words, that his firearms, in the jeopardy which daylight would bring, were but a mock and a menace to any hope of victory with the shoot-it-out ethics of the old warfare. If, in the morning, the Piutes failed utterly to consider their helplessness, to remember that they wanted to be friends, and to make generous exception accordingly, then their doom was sealed, as was also the doom of the defenseless loved ones waiting in fear and anxiety at the fort. Furthermore, if there were not some benevolent Deity fighting their battles for them, then the whole scheme of the mission was folly and madness personified.

THE gray dawn showed the valley full of horses as they had expected. And with the dawn the campfires on the rock blazed into new life, voices could be heard and the barking of dogs. The Bluff men rode down from their place of long vigil and began gathering their horses out of the scattered herd.

Sharp eyes from the camps spied them in their first motion, and down from the sloping rock with angry yell, hair flying wildly behind, came twenty or more Piutes on their cayuses at top speed. With drawn guns they dashed up to the men of the fort, demanding that they get away from the horses and be gone. The men of the fort demanded their horses; they would have them; their resolution had been crystallizing all night; and they could make no compromise. They intended to get their stolen animals or fight to the last man. The possibilities, even the probabilities, looked perilous indeed, but the loss was already perilous. Their failure to meet this sharp issue would mean utter failure of their entire project in San Juan.

Guns flashed into position for use. Old Baldy shoved a triggerless fortyfive calibre six-shooter against Lem Redd's stomach and was ready to discharge it with a stone he carried for that purpose. Lem Redd held his pistol in position to kill the Indian if he

started to bring that stone into action. Jess Smith and Amasa Barton had countered other Piute guns with their own to make any killing a mutual affair.

Just a thin jiffy was all it lacked now — the weight of things infernal hung suspended on a hair. If the hair broke, it might rid the world of a dozen Piute braves, but it would surely stop at nothing less than the slaughter of every white man in the valley, and then it would turn with fury on the fort. Where was the magic now to save them from doom? This crisis had come like a whirlwind, leaving no chance for any interfering influence.

Suddenly a voice pierced the morning air, loud and long and shrill. Its urgency of tone, almost superhuman, and vibrant with command or appeal, arrested every motion, checked every breath. High on the rock above them they saw the slender figure of the youth, Henry, his arms extended, hands outstretched and head thrown back as he poured the strongest emotions of his young heart into the fresh morning air.

"These are our friends!" he shouted in his native tongue, "Don't hurt our friends! Give them their horses!"

It was that dignity of command to which men yield instinctively even though they may hate themselves for it when they lapse back to the vicious level from which it raised them.

The cocked guns lowered from their death-set aim — the spell was broken. Twenty braves stood by in silence while eleven Mormons selected their horses from the numerous band, even horses which the Piutes had stolen long before and had been using as their own.

In that band with which the Indians had come were many blooded American horses. The Mormons knew now that something was surely wrong! And those Piutes had harness-straps, work-horse bridles, clothing, and other things which they must have taken by a raid on some ranch or town. One of them had a watch. They also had money, great wads of it, and no more notion than a baby what it was worth.

One of them gave Jess Smith twentyfive dollars in greenbacks for a widerimmed hat. Another gave fifty for a similar hat without the least idea how much he was paying. They made lavish offers with worthless printed matter which they took to be money.

The fact of the matter was, a Mr. Smith, a horse-buyer, had come from somewhere in Colorado accompanied by a Mr. May, to buy Mr. Thurman's horses, and had brought with him money for the purpose, checks not being as acceptable in faraway San Juan

then as now. For some time the Piutes had contemplated Thurman's fine horses with the worst of intentions, but when they became aware of the money carried by Smith, they figured the plum was ripe for plucking, and they left no one alive to tell just how it was accomplished. After the killing they ransacked everything looking for money which they could not tell from other paper.

THE gentle spell of that youthful voice from the high rock was too fine a thing to linger long in the hearts of Henry's people, their hands reeking with blood. By the middle of the forenoon they had reverted to all the deep grooves of their savagery. As they moved on up the valley of the Butler, driving their stolen horses and loaded with their plunder, they found a few cattle belonging to the people of the fort, and some of these they shot to see them fall, and others they caught and tortured and mutilated with savage delight. They raced back and forth over the hills on Thurman's horses in a drunken fit of jubilation.

They went by their secret trail into the fastnesses of Elk Mountain, known at that time to them only, and they waited there a month hoping someone would be foolish enough to try to follow them. During all this time a gang of cowpunchers and soldiers hunted to find where they had gone, and in May they found them at LaSal. In the fight that followed the Indians made a big killing, fourteen to sixteen men, and lost but one of their own number. Besides that they got away with the horses, the saddles, the pack-outfits, and about everything the cowpunchers had brought with them.

Having spent the spring and summer with their raids and their fights and the prodigal disposition of their rich plunder, they returned in the fall to the fort with the glory and satisfaction of having killed more than seventeen white men since the first of April. They still had hats, clothing, saddles, guns, horses, and money they had gained in the fascinating game of murder. When the arm of the law failed to reach out and demand the stipulated price of the good time they had been having, they became more chesty than before, more insolent, more ugly, more dangerous as neighbors.

CHAPTER IX

THE second year of the fort, like all its early years, was a year of major calamities. Exasperated to the limit, Haskell sought out Frank, and warned him again in solemn words, "If you don't quit stealing our horses, you'll die."

Husky and rugged with never a pain nor symptom of decay, Frank laughed loud in contempt. The Mormons could never spring any such cheap scare as that on him. In bantering gusto he went right on with his thieflly enterprise.

Haskell went also to the camps of the Piutes—it was with bowed head, slow step, and stooping with age, his hoary hair in full keeping with one who pleads. He told them why his people had come: "We were sent all this long way to be your friends—to help you, to show you a better way of life."

He spoke their dialect as one born among them. He knew their customs, the meaning of certain tones and gestures which gave color and force to their speech. His words were few, and he drove them in like arrows by the courageous glance of his penetrating black eyes. He even knew how to be silent in the Piute language, which may seem like a contradiction, but his timely silence added double potency to what he said. He knew the resistless power exercised by Jacob Hamblin when their pathway was dark with danger and death.

"If you steal our horses or our cattle, you will die," he affirmed, nailing them with his unblinking gaze.

They flinched. They felt the thrust of his unusual power, the majesty of his prophetic appearance. Some of them declared they had never stolen from his people; some of them hung their heads in silence.

IN the midst of the growing season, that year, with crops of corn and cane giving bright promise of cow feed and molasses in the fall, the ditch broke in one of its bad elbows three miles up the river. The ditch, in this nearly-level valley, was five miles long, and even with that length it had very little fall. That was five miles of daring challenge to the age-old supremacy of the San Juan — more than the river had ever endured, more than it would endure then. So it spit out its thick blue sediment to fill the ditch up, and not content with that, it reached out through its sand to a big section of that ditch and licked it up clean.

The fields of precious crops began to wither. Much of Bluff's man power was in Colorado or elsewhere working for provisions or trying to save the remnant of their cattle, and the withering had to continue, no matter if they might wring their hands in anguish at sight of it. Flour sold in Durango that summer for sixteen dollars a hundred. If the trail over which they hauled it with their pony teams all the way to Bluff be taken into account, the journey required more time than it now takes to circumnavigate the globe.

Not only was that flour an indispensable item of food in Bluff, but the sacks in which it came were also a big item of clothing. It was a common joke that on the underwear of children you would find in red and blue letters in spite of the washings, "Pride of Durango."

A freight-team consisted then of never fewer than four horses, very often six, and seldom with one wagon only. The "trail-wagon" arrangement enabled the freighter to make the steep hills by taking one wagon at a time, where otherwise he would have to unload and carry the freight up the hill on his back, an extremity to which all freighters had to become inured. With their "three span and trail," they followed that devious old track to and from Durango as if their very lives depended on it. The fact is that as their San Juan Co-op became a paying institution through the purchase of wool and pelts and blankets from the Navajos, and the sale to them of merchandise from Durango, freighting was one of the very important factors on which the lives of the people did depend.

(Picture) Bluff in the late nineties, the Navajo Twins in the foreground

That break in the dangerous elbow of the ditch could not be repaired in time, and the fidgety old San Juan, chewing ever with unsatisfied cravings on its banks, ate away a merciless stretch of ditch and reached for more. It not only slicked up that segment of ditch, but it also took away all the land for a long way where a ditch could be made and boiled victoriously against the valley wall, a hundred rods of smooth, vertical rock.

Sickening prospect! No more water that year. Apparently no possible way of getting water along there again. And that would mean the end of Bluff. Yet the river was not one of the three evils they had been sent to overcome; they were compelled to fend themselves from it while they fought, but it is still a blustering outlaw while the other three have been licked to a whisper.

It mattered little that no one could break the contrary old San Juan of its mean tricks, but if a pirate's empire should take root on the river's banks, and if the two wild tribes should be left to spread their depredations beyond their homeland, that would matter much to all the surrounding states and territories. If the scum of the earth should be allowed to collect in the impregnable rocks of San Juan, it would be the most dreadful den ever known since the time of the old buccaneers.

ONE DAY in September two fellows came riding in through the gate of the fort on jaded horses. They wanted to trade horses, though they saw no horses in the fort. They contrived by sly and apparently indifferent questions to ascertain where the horses of the people were, and nobody realized till afterwards that it had been made altogether too clear that most of the Bluff horses were in Butler Wash, and that the wash was ten miles off to the northwest.

The strangers rode leisurely out through the gate and headed without concern for nowhere. Two weeks later some of the riders came in from Butler Wash to report that the horses for which they had been sent were not to be found.

By "cutting a sign" twenty miles wide, the hunters found at The Twist the dim tracks of horses going westward which they believed to be their own because of a solitary mule track among them. What should they do? Following these tracks into the maze of trees and rocks was dangerous business, but without these horses everything at Bluff would be brought to a standstill. They were needed at once to begin on the ditch, if ever they were to begin again at all, and if they made no start again at the ditch, they would need these horses to get them out of the country.

Hurrying home the hunters reported to Bishop Nielson, and he advised that they follow the tracks very slowly, keeping safely behind till the thieves reached the towns in western Utah where help would be available in making the arrest. Lem Redd, Jr., Hyrum Perkins, and Joseph (Jody) A. Lyman were to undertake this dangerous assignment.

Friends and loved ones watched the three men leave the fort and ride off over the sandhills to the west. All they could do was to watch with aching hearts, realizing that the three men might follow the tracks a month or six weeks and return in safety after all that time, or they might be waylaid in three or four days and lie wounded or dead a month or six weeks before a searching party would go to find them.

When Lem Redd and his party took up the trail at The Twist, they wondered that the tracks were so much more fresh on top than at the bottom of the hill. At Cane Gulch and other places beyond they were disturbed at the increasing newness of the trail, and they waited deliberately at different places to let the two fellows get well beyond the river before they appeared at the crossing.

(Picture) The breaks of Grand Gulch looking northwest, from Slick Rock to the buttes of Mossback Mesa, San Juan County, Utah.

The crossing now was not Hole-in-the-Rock; the rains had scooped the deep cleft clear of all its hard-shoveled sand, played havoc with "Uncle Ben's" peg-anchored dugway along that "slantindiclar" surface, and no wagon was ever to slide down nor to toil up through the chute at Hole-in-the-Rock again. A place had been found thirty or forty miles up the river near the mouth of Bull Frog at what came to be known as Hall's Creek, and the crossing that was improvised there by the two Hall brothers, was known as Hall's Crossing.

Approaching this Hall's Crossing after making what they thought was sufficient delay, when the men from Bluff reached the east brow of the cliff overlooking the Colorado River, they saw one of the horse thieves and his string of stolen horses leaving the west bank. That was a strong signal to the men from Bluff to go into the delaying business again, for there were still seventy-five miles of uninhabited wilderness between them and the first little frontier towns west of the river. So they deliberately killed time in getting their outfit across; they traded stories with the Hall brothers and learned all they could about the thieves, imagining all the time that those thieves were hurrying away, now that they had seen someone in pursuit.

WHEN at length the three left the river, they decided to make still another delay for good measure, and coming to a little cutoff trail across a gravel bench, they dismounted and sat down to play jacks, a popular way at that time of disposing of unwanted minutes or hours. The thieves had not known of this cut-off, and had followed the wagon track out around the rocky point of the bench, which was at what could be called the toe of a kind of horseshoe bend in the road. The fact that the thieves had lost time in following that long crook in the wagon track, made it all the more necessary to give them extra opportunity to get a good head start.

The two wanted no head start, and refused to take it. When they saw the big rocks at the point of the bench, they decided that was their ideal place for an ambush. They took their horses and outfit on a safe distance farther, tied them all to some brush and trees, and went back afoot with their guns to the big rocks at the point to wait for the men whom they had seen as they left the river.

When that jack game had given the outfit ahead ample opportunity to a good distance in the lead, the Bluff men rode on across the gravel bench, and at the other heel of this horseshoe bend in the wagon track, they ran right into the whole outfit of the thieves—packs, horses, everything but the two fellows themselves and their guns. The Bluff men cocked their guns, rode into the outfit and loosed them all from the trees and brush, and started back with them in a rush for the river, while the horse thieves waited eagerly behind the big rocks at the point of the bench.

Down Hall's Creek in a thundering herd Lem Redd and his companions drove their horses to the west bank of the river, and prepared to get them across with all possible speed to the east side. But the roar of violent hoofs on the gravel drifted away to the ears of the thieves behind the rocks, and they crept cautiously out to investigate. Finding that cutoff trail and the deep-cut tracks leading back to the river, they knew they were afoot, no blanket in which to sleep, not a bite to eat. They ran frantically towards the crossing and sneaked into some thick willows to fire on the boat.

Lem Redd, cool and resourceful, had anticipated this very thing, and he lay hidden with his gun to protect his men while they worked. When he saw the willow moving, he sent a bullet in there, and the two sneaks got back. Then the five men worked in feverish haste to get everything, including the belongings of the Hall brothers, to the east side of the river, before the thieves could fire on them from some other quarter.

Leading a string of horses behind the boat, they shoved out into the river with the last load, the coast apparently clear. The towering wall of the river to the west of them reached up and up, sloping gradually near the top to a half-level brow from which the base of the cliff was not visible. The middle of the river was the nearest point to the bottom which could be seen from the top. When that last boatload of men and swimming horses reached the middle of the big stream, two shots rang out above them, and two bullets struck in the boat-seat, barely missing one of the Hall brothers where he sat pulling at one of the oars.

Lem Redd, wary and watchful, was ready to return the fire at once, but shooting with a pistol and from the unsteady boat he had little chance of hitting one of the two heads peeping from the top of the rock so far above. His shooting did, however, have the merit of keeping those two cowards from staying up in sight long enough after their first shots to take careful aim.

The two first bullets striking so near to that oarsman threw him into a panic of alarm, and springing from his place he ran to the other end of the boat, leaving the boat to begin turning aimlessly in midstream, and drifting towards a pass between vertical walls below, from which they could not return. A few minutes more and they could not possibly make it to the bar on the east side but would hit the smooth wall, and nothing could save them from the narrows and the rapids of the winding canyon below. As well be shot as to drift around that bend and capsize in a whirlpool! Lyman and Perkins had their hands full with the swimming horses, and an oar going on one side of the boat only. Lem Redd grasped the situation—something drastic had to be done at once. He had unusual power of rising to emergencies, and turning his gun on the oarsman he ordered him on pain of immediate death to get back to his oar.

They headed again for the bank with a fighting chance of working their way through the current to a landing, and they strained at the oars till the veins stood up big and blue on their temples. All this time the bullets came whistling down into the water or in the boat with such accuracy of aim as they dared to take in the face of Redd's vigilant fire.

The thieves fired thirty or more shots while the boat was on the water, although it was a big target as seen from above it was moving, and its return bullets prevented any careful aim. But the minute the boat struck the bank, it became still, and the return

fire stopped, for all five men were busy getting the horses out of the water and the boat anchored. With less fear now of getting hurt by the hot lead from Lem Redd's pistol, the two fellows above took more deadly aim, and one of their bullets shattered the bone in Jody Lyman's leg just above the knee. The four dragged him up a sand bank towards the willows, while bullets from the cliff whined into the sand around them as fast as the thieves could shoot.

When the men reached cover, panting and out of breath, they got safely out of sight and lay still till dark. As soon as the night was too thick for them to be seen, they gathered their horses and packed up, while the thieves called through the darkness from other side of the moaning stream, begging them to come over with the boat. They made no answer, no light, and no unnecessary noise. When they lifted Lyman on his horse, he fainted with pain, and they had to hold him in the saddle while they moved slowly off to climb the rugged east wall of the gorge and head slowly away into the dry shadscale desert towards Bluff a hundred miles distant.

CHAPTER X

EIGHT MILES out over the torturing up-hill-and-down, the wounded man in agony begged them to stop, and they camped on a bleak slope with no shelter from the wind that night nor from the blazing sun next day. They had nothing at all to relieve the torture of that ghastly wound—they hadn't so much as a drink of water to give him. They thought best not to go back with a bucket to the river, and the nearest water in any other direction which they knew, was seven to nine miles away.

The Hall brothers had come with them, and, in the early morning, one of them started with a bucket for Lake Gulch, the other one tended the horses, and Hyrum Perkins started for Bluff to bring help—a wagon—a doctor or a nurse and first-aid material, for the wounded man could not be moved again on a horse. Lem Redd gave all his time to his suffering companion, but there was little he could do to soothe the pain and no materials with which to dress the wound, full as it was of splintered bone.

In the afternoon of that first day on the shadscale slope, the shattered limb became swollen and discolored, and in spite of all they could do, it seethed with maggots. Their supply of rags possible for bandages were almost minus to begin with, and the prospect looked dark indeed. Even if the desperados did not find their way to the east side and follow them, it still looked impossible to keep Lyman alive till help could come.

(Picture) The Decker Home, one of the early homes in Bluff.

The fact of the matter is, the thieves did find an old boat, but instead of getting across and trying afoot to overtake the outfit that had left on horses, they went down the river, and one of them reached Lees Ferry, carrying the guns and the clothes of the other.

In that shadscale camp with nothing to look forward to but the arrival of a wagon from Bluff, or to the arrival of the dread shadow with his scythe, Jody Lyman seemed to have but few wretched days left. His leg, twice its natural size, and seeming to be already in the first stages of decay, looked like a death warrant without appeal. One man spent his whole time carrying water from Lake Gulch, faraway over the rocks and sand, and yet there was never enough in camp.

They pondered deeply for something on which to hand their hope; experience had taught them how Providence can intervene at the last minute; but there seemed to be only one way for him in this wilderness, and that was to send an angel from heaven. But he had angels in other places than heaven, and he sent one of them.

Up over the dreary profile of that shadscale ridge appeared a band of Navajos, old Pahlily in the lead. Riding straight to the distressed camp and swinging down from his cayuse, he took the situation in at a glance, his eyes bright with interest and sympathy.

"What are you doing for this man?" he asked in his native tongue, and Lem Redd gave him to understand he did not know what to do.

(Picture) Jim Joe and Kumen Jones, lifelong friends

"Where do you get your water?" he inquired in kind solicitude.

When he was told they carried it from Lake Gulch, he smiled pityingly, and calling for their bucket, he handed it with a word to one of his men who trotted off over the hill and returned in fifteen minutes with the bucket full of water. The Navajos knew from the smooth rock in that direction there should be water pockets still full from the last rain, and the hole they found is still called Jody's Tank.

Bending low over the wound, the brave examined it carefully, "Go, gather some leaves of the prickly pear," he ordered, "burn the needles off, and mash the leaves up into a pulp. Put a poultice of this on the wound."

It worked like magic; it kept the wound in healthy condition; and in due time a wagon came and ground slowly back over the long, long road to the fort.

A sorrowing company came out on the sandhills to meet the wagon, and as they heard the story of what had happened, the details of murder premeditated and carefully planned, they saw the hideous outlines of problem three as a thing more to be dreaded than they had supposed. These cutthroats would plan to take their scanty means of support and wait deliberately to murder them if they tried to recover it.

The people of the fort could not wait in ambush to kill. Lem Redd could have killed the fellows there in the willows, but he took care not to shoot near them. These killers, like snakes in the grass, had a frightful advantage, and were more to be feared than either one of the native tribes.

Yet in this latest tragedy there was one bright spot: They saw old Pahlily and his followers saving a man of the fort from certain death. The people liked to hear it, to tell it. Some of the more hopeful ones even foresaw a time the Navajos would help drive the outlaw element from the country. What a thrill it would have been then to know how nearly that dream was to come true.

But it was not true so far—the big cattle companies at the base of the mountain were still giving work and shelter to the fugitives, and they gathered like buzzards to an ill-smelling carcass. They stole from the companies, of course; they stole continuously such things as they could take out of the country, and in a small way it saved the people of Bluff. It was the policy of these cattle companies to curry the favor of these desperados in self-defense. The people of the fort could not afford to encourage them at all, and this withholding of encouragement tended to breed the hatefulness which is to be expected in the hearts of thieves.

JODY LYMAN lay helpless in Bluff a long time before he was able to limp out on crutches. His leg was always crooked, always a source of serious trouble, and agonizing operations were performed to remove some lingering splinter of bone. He was the first martyr in the war which was to end all Indian troubles in Utah by establishing law and order in San Juan County. True, he lived thirty years or more after that time, but it was a living death, and when the end came, it was the direct result of that bullet.

The thief had caused a long delay to the repairs on the ditch by running away with the Bluff horses, and it was some time in October before the citizens of Bluff could begin looking again at that hundred rods of river where the ditch had been, and plan either on making a ditch there or on moving out. The very life of the mission hung on that hundred rods of seeming impossibility. The bishop declared firmly they would entertain no proposition involving the abandonment of the mission. He said they must make the ditch, that they would make it, all difficulty and other trouble notwithstanding.

They began in the fall, building down the stream from the place where the river surged in against the cliff, and building up the stream from where it turned out from the cliff. With such cottonwood logs as they could find up and down the river, they would build in the water a kind of house twelve by sixteen feet, weighting it down a piece at a time with stones, and filling it in with brush and rock. With the one house filled in and covered with earth, they would move out on it and build another house in the water beyond. In this way they built houses from above and houses from below till their buildings met in the middle of the hundred rods of lost ditch. With this foundation standing five feet above the river, they scraped in sand and earth along it to make a bank, had the cliff for the other bank, and called it a ditch.

(Picture) PLATTE D. LYMAN

It took them all winter to get it ready for the water, and that section was known for years afterwards as The Cribs. Some parts of it cost fifty dollars a rod, valuing work at going wages. They figured that with the completion of The Cribs, they had overcome the most serious difficulty of their ditch in the sand. They were to find out that it was the beginning of a long program of worse things still.

UP the river twenty-five miles from the log fort, stood Mitchel's trading post. His son, Herndon, along with a Mr. Myric, had been killed on the reservation in the winter of 1879-80. The old man credited the Navajos with the murder, and down in his heart he cherished a pronounced bitterness towards them. The Piutes, ten times more insolent than the Navajos dared to be, had no better standing at the post than the tribe across the river, and relations between them and Mitchel were always badly strained. In the spring of 1882, they suddenly reached a breaking point when hot words led to a flourish of guns and then an exchange of shots.

Mitchel ordered a detachment of soldiers to come posthaste from Fort Lewis for the upholding of his dignity and the maintenance of his rights. The Piutes withdrew in ugly humor to register their fuming emotions in the indiscriminate slaughter of cattle belonging to the people of Bluff. Nothing could be more disturbing to the Navajos than the appearance of soldiers on their border, and when the uniformed fighting men came into view, they drew back with their livestock towards the interior of the reservation. But they found it a difficult matter to crowd with their herds onto the ranges of their self-assertive neighbors, and a comparatively easy matter to move over to the range of the peace-pleading Mormons, and their sheep began to strip the country around Bluff of every spear of grass.

The mission was always woefully vulnerable to the bad humor of all the unprincipled men and all the unstable elements around it, yet however discreet and diplomatic it had to be to keep in good favor with the savages, it had all the same, to

maintain an aggressive fight every day and night to hold its own and to outgeneral the surprise plots being framed against it. These flocks of Navajo sheep took a stranglehold on them which they knew they could not survive for many weeks. It would deprive them of horses to work or to ride, of cows to milk, and it would constitute a precedent which could not fail to starve them out of the country.

The Mormons met in council and decided to send a man at once to the nearest Indian agent on the reservation, begging that the sheep be called back to their own side of the river. In an hour of dark discouragement their representative returned, reporting that the agent had informed him in surly tones that the Navajos had as much right to graze the north side of the river as anyone else.

Were they whipped? Would they have to give up and go, leaving their hard-earned Cribs and fields and homes and hopes and move out? They would surely have to find a way to move the invading sheep or move themselves.

THEY met in council again. They prayed. Then the bishop and his co-workers seemed to rise to the occasion with wise suggestions, and with inspiring resolution. They would go boldly over the head of that Indian agent who had pronounced against them, but they would go humbly as on their knees in distress of pleading to higher authority, praying for deliverance from this unbearable imposition. Everybody in the fort prayed that their delegate would have charm to win favor. When word came that the higher authority had listened with sympathy and ordered the intruding sheep back to their own territory, deep gratitude prevailed in the fort.

The San Juan Co-op, with its slow-crawling freight outfits of six-horse pony teams and two wagons, traveled back and forth regularly over that long slim road to Durango, and it gradually became a substantial source of revenue. Their increasing trade with the Indians gave each stockholder a freighting job at regular intervals. They loaded out with pelts and wool and blankets, and loaded back with flour and merchandise for themselves and for the store. The business looked so promising that William Hyde put up a store on the river ten miles below Bluff, at what is known as Rincone, the corner where the pioneer company had to make a road up San Juan Hill.

This Rincone store, although it was begun with the best of intentions, was contrary to the advice of Erastus Snow for the people to stay together. However much justification there seemed to be for making the store at the time, it was destined to result in the greatest tragedy of the mission.

These stores with their tempting display of goods, and their indispensable custom of barter and pawning, became danger points of contact where unforeseen friction might develop explosive temperatures on short notice. The Indians would crowd the store

lobbies, looking for anything on which they could put their sly hands, and trouble would have started often with the Navajos but for the influence of men like Jim Joe.

Once when five dollars went mysteriously from sight, and every Navajo in the store swore he was innocent, Kumen Jones sent for Jim Joe who listened indignantly, and going with long strides to the store made Long John return the money. The face of Jim Joe, full-blooded Navajo, with light-brown eyes and eagle-beak nose, was always welcome in Bluff. Holding to standards of honor high above the masses of humanity whatever their shade, he was yet, like other reformers, able to make but little impression on his own degenerate people.

Both tribes made it an essential part of their business to steal whenever they could find or make an opportunity. They preyed on each other as they had done for ages along the river, especially around this crossing, but the Mormons had livestock and imported goods which were peculiarly attractive, somehow more worth taking, and they hadn't learned to keep watch on their possessions day and night. Also the Mormons did not go on the warpath because of their losses.

Old Nucki, the picture of guileless honesty, would inquire often how many days it was till Sunday, and being pleased with the old man's interest in matters so important to them, the people would always tell him. How foolish they felt when they discovered his reason for wanting to know, for they discovered that he was driving away their cattle and butchering their milk cows while they were worshipping unsuspectingly in the old log meetinghouse. Not only impious Frank, but the long-faced Nucki! It was still a vexed question whether the little flower of friendship could survive among such rank thistles as this.