

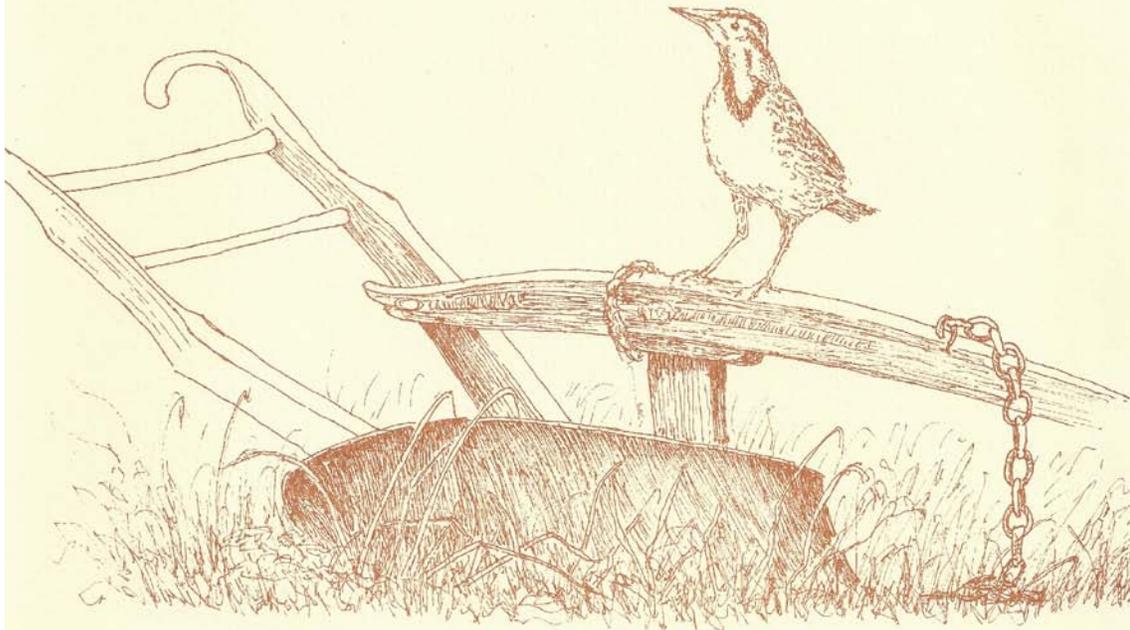
# ***FIRST DAKOTANS***

## ***The Lyons Experience***

*Essays By:*

**Thomas D. Lyons**

**Robert F. Lyons, *Editor***



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**Cambridge, Massachusetts**

**1991**

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## Preface

The discovery of gold in the Black Hills could have generated no greater interest than that provoked by the recent discovery of the rich legacy of Thomas Daniel Lyons' essays about life in South Dakota. From 1940 to 1947, thirty articles appeared in *Commonweal*, a magazine published in New York on public affairs, religion, literature and the arts. The twenty two essays presented here for private circulation, describe the Lyons' family experiences from the time when Tom's father, Richard, led a wagon train of settlers from Iowa to Dakota Territory in the 1870s.

The narrative descriptions of the grandeur and severity of life on the Plains possess the clarity and beauty of the rich flute-like melody of the meadowlark Tom so loved. The reader will smell the sweet scents of the harvest, be chilled in the blizzard of '88 and experience the homesickness of a Dakota boy at Notre Dame. The "quitting time" assessment by Tom's father in 1934, as to whether or not the buffalo grass on the Plains should have been plowed by the homesteaders raises some of the same environmental issues discussed in agricultural circles today. The challenge of surviving yet another assault from the forces of nature and the early success in assuming leadership in a minority political party provide compelling drama a hundred years later.

Our essayist, T. D. Lyons, was born in Iowa (1883-1948), the oldest son of Richard F. Lyons (1848-1934) and Sarah A. Donlan (d. 1936). He graduated from Notre Dame University and the University of South Dakota Law School. Tom practiced law and became a Judge of the Supreme Court in Oklahoma. Tom's grandparents, Jeremiah Lyons (1819-1894) and Ellen Whelan (1821-1889), sailed to the United States in 1846 from Dungarvan, a seaport in County Waterford, Ireland. After a rough winter voyage, the ship landed in Boston where Jeremiah, who was seriously ill, was removed to a pest house. Three months later, Ellen found him in New York City, minus the \$1,500 that had been sown in his clothes. Jeremiah and Ellen made their way across New York State, he as a worker on farms and the railroads and she as a seamstress and cook. During this time Tom's father, Richard, was born in Poughkeepsie. In 1849 the growing family went to Chicago where they bought a farm. They moved to Winneshick County, Iowa in 1867. There they farmed until moving to Madison, South Dakota in 1884 to spend the autumn of their lives with their pioneer sons and daughters.

A supplement to the essays contains remembrances of Jeremiah and Ellen by two of their granddaughters: Ellen Lyons Smith and Florence Finley Kolbach. Their narrative and poetry provide a feminine perspective to the Lyons' story in America and complement Tom's articles. These essays and remembrances afford today's Lyons' descendants the opportunity to enter into a transcennial conversation with their pioneer ancestors. May the reader's dialogue be as rewarding as that of the editor.

## **Acknowledgments**

This book presents essays by Thomas D. Lyons. I discovered the articles through his nephew, Mark Lyons Peisch of Tenafly, New Jersey to whom I am indebted. Tom's father, Richard, and my grandfather, Will, were brothers. I acknowledge with gratitude my great grandparents, Jeremiah Lyons and Ellen Whelan, those radical and tenacious voyagers without whom there would have been no Lyons' experience in Dakota, and my pioneering grandparents, Will Lyons and Katherine Crosgrove. I thank my father and mother, William F. Lyons and Mary C. Donohoe who with my five brothers and twin sister provided me a solidly nourished Plains childhood in Yankton, South Dakota. For completion of this publication I note the encouragement of my wife, Nona Plessner Lyons whose Eastern delight in the beauty of the Plains and rolling fields around Lake Badus rekindled appreciation for my Dakota origins. I thank her brother, Richard Plessner of New York, for the cover design and illustrations. And for this rich chronicle of our heritage, I thank most appreciatively Thomas Daniel Lyons, plainsman and kinsman.

**Robert F. Lyons, Editor**  
**Cambridge, Massachusetts**

**Spring, 1991**

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## **Dakota Blizzard**

**To the West, to the West, to the land of the free  
Where the mighty Missouri rolls down to the sea,  
Where a man is a man if he's willing to toil,  
And the humblest may gather the fruits of the soil.**

**WE HAD** a new brand of excitement at my father's Big Place southwest of De Smet in the fall of 1887. My two older sisters were members of the confirmation class of Father Ahern's Montrose parish, and Bishop Marty had announced that he would administer Confirmation early in November. My mother had great plannings for attendance at Mass on All Souls and All Saints. My mother and the girls, of course, needed outfitting. And one day there came out from the Redstone Mercantile Company one of the triumphs of modern science--a new sewing machine. With it came bales of material from Marshall Field's at Chicago, and Mrs. Pooley, an English dressmaker, took charge of the entire proceedings amid much enjoyable din and bustle.

But, as the poet aptly says, "Man was made to mourn" and the last week in October, a regular January snowstorm struck the Big Place making all thought of the trip to Montrose impracticable. The disappointment of my mother and the girls was so intense that my father sensed the need of an immediate remedy. He rented the Walker house in Redstone and brought the news that Bishop Marty would administer Confirmation to the class of the Huron district early in January. There were so many heavy, unusual snowstorms that we had difficulty in making even the short move into Redstone. But finally on the last hay rack load of household goods, kittens, bird dogs and carpets, I perched myself behind George Davidson and slept the entire five-mile ride into town. The Walker house was a comfortable, two-story structure, differing from the rambling, one-story rooms of the patch-work residence at the Big Place. The greatest surprise of all, though, was the magnificent anthracite (or, as we called it, "hard-coal") base-burner through the isinglass doors of which the red glow of the hard-coal fire lighted up the room after the big kerosene lamp was extinguished.

### **Father Ahern**

Sure enough, in January Father Ahern drove up in front of the Redstone

Mercantile establishment and turned his ponies over to one of the clerks. He was giving the final catechism lessons to the Confirmation class, and came with my father for supper and to spend the evening. Father Ahern was a cultured, traveled gentleman. He always contributed his share to the entertainment. He could discuss Latin and Greek roots with Judge Baldwin; moose hunting in the Adirondacks with Frank Ward, a Watertown, New York banker; statesmanship with Judge Edgerton (later the president of the constitutional convention); and philosophy and theology with John Ireland, Archbishop of St. Paul. Father Ahern was a graduate of Louvain, and had enjoyed the acquaintance in Paris of the witty "Father Prout," the author of the "Bells of Shandon." He customarily conversed with Bishop Marty in French. The Sioux Falls politicians were amazed at his knowledge of the forces back of the Democratic National Convention at Charleston which prevented the nomination of Stephen A. Douglas and brought Abraham Lincoln into the presidency. Judge Edgerton had been a delegate to that convention from Minnesota, under instructions to vote for Douglas. But with the aid of Caleb Cushing, the presiding officer, he managed to switch his vote to Andrew Johnson of Tennessee.

The Confirmation had been set for the first week in January, but the weather was so cold that Bishop Marty sent word that it was postponed until some day in the second week, and that he would arrive by sled when he could. As Father Ahern's visits to our home were of nightly occurrence, my father was prevailed upon to tell the company the story of his experiences in the South, immediately following the War, when as a boy of nineteen he was foreman for Ross & Kilbourn in their lumber camps on the White and St. Francis Rivers. Their business took him to New Orleans, where he contracted the "yellow jack." His great problem was to get on a steamboat going back to Memphis. The doctor told him that the quarantine regulation was that anyone able to walk across the gangplank, unaided, was accepted as a passenger, but that if he needed assistance he would not be allowed to come on board. The doctor mixed him a powerful quart potion of whisky and quinine, of which he drank liberally, and succeeded in walking on board, keeping the quart bottle conspicuously sticking out of his pocket. The steamboat authorities thought him slightly intoxicated and did not wonder at his going immediately to his berth, where he remained until Major Ross met him in Memphis.

### **Reminiscences**

Finally, of course, my father was induced to tell the story of his bringing the wagon train from Burr Oak, Iowa, to Prairie Queen, Dakota Territory, in the early '70's. The company was amused by the handbill which my father had saved. This had been distributed among the pioneers of the wagon train at Laverne, Minnesota, by representatives of a Nebraska Improvement Society in an effort to bring the settlers into Nebraska. It bore a rather startling title: *"GET YOUR HEAD SHAVED TIGHT IF YOU ARE GOING TO DAKOTA,"* and continued, in a monitory tone, *"WARNING: DAKOTA TERRITORY is not safe for settlers. At least 100 settlers have been murdered by the Indians, the cruel and vindictive Sioux, within the last twelve months.*

*If you escape the Indian's tomahawk, the hot winds of summer and the blizzards of winter will just as surely lay you low. Dakota was made for the Indian and the buffalo. Unless you are a buffalo hunter, or a gold prospector keep out of it.*" My father told, laughingly, of some of the faint-hearted who wanted to change the course, but he followed the example of Columbus and gave the word to "sail on" to the west.

It was a matter of comment by Father Ahern and the other guests that the season had been a unprecedentedly "hard winter" and that the high winds and the heavy snows and the twenty-below-zero weather were causing suffering to the settlers more remote from the towns. The question of Bishop Marty's arrival was still uncertain. Finally, January 12, 1888, forever after famed in Dakota annals, dawned. No one could have suspected that such an awful night could succeed such a balmy, pleasant dawn. There was a mild south wind blowing, and it was thawing on the south sides of buildings. The exact hour at which the blizzard struck has always been a matter of debate. My father remembered that between 12:30 and 1:00 o'clock in the afternoon, Olaf Norstrom called him out onto the sidewalk in front of the store to see the big herd of cattle which the Ochsner brothers were driving from their pasture north of town to the railroad stockyards--a distance of about a half mile. While they were looking at the cattle, the wind changed suddenly to the north, and a heavy snowfall commenced. The herd of cattle never reached the stockyards, but were dispersed by the blizzard, and more than half of them perished by freezing. It was agreed by all that the blizzard was on full force by 3:00 P.M., and the problem of getting the children home from school was taken up by a council of citizens in the Redstone Mercantile establishment. My father and Olaf rolled out several coils of clothesline rope. These ropes were spliced end to end by George Cooling and Charlie Ochsner, who had served in the navy; and then the committee of ten or twelve men made a rope line from the mercantile establishment to the school house, about three blocks distant. The storm consisted of a high, violent gale, blowing about 60 miles an hour, and the air was so entirely full of small, icy pellets that not only was the sun obscured, and it was as dark as at midnight, but it was impossible for a man to see his hand before his face. The sense of direction was almost useless, out in the storm the wind seemed to whip in eddying circles. The citizen committee, by keeping hold of the clothesline and guiding on it, brought the children, five at a time from the school house. But out in the country districts there was grim tragedy. Many of the schoolteachers were Eastern girls, unaccustomed to the ways of the blizzard. They discounted as nothing more than "tall talk" the pioneer stories of earlier storms. In a spirit of heroic, but mistaken, judgment they took their little flocks with them out of the school house in an effort to take them home. The next day when the blizzard abated, more than a hundred tiny forms of frozen school children were found, in most cases the teacher perished with them. My father stayed up the entire night--going out into the yard frequently and hallooing to attract the attention of anyone who might be lost and wandering in the storm. There were several cases of men frozen to death going from house to the barn to feed the stock. Nearly everyone lost in the storm walked in a circle, unable to retain any sense of direction. Finally a feeling of delicious warmth and drowsiness would overtake the unfortunate one, and he would topple over to a death by freezing.

## Exceptions

Tim Lenihan, the famed buffalo hunter and Indian scout, was an exception. He was walking from his ranch, three miles from St. Mary's, to get his mail at that hamlet when the storm struck. Realizing the danger, since he had been in some of the earlier blizzards, he kept cool, and by effort of the will kept from walking in a circle. He kept himself moving in order to keep from freezing to death, and when the storm abated, 24 hours later, he found himself on a 65-foot snow-drift, in the principal street of Madison. He seemed none the worse for the exposure and the severe physical effort.

Lige Green, another buffalo hunter, did not fare so well. He was caught in the storm too, and had the same gift of retaining his sense of direction. He was an older man than Tim, and about 6:00 A.M. on the morning of the next day, as he judged, he became badly fatigued. He dug out a snow cave in the side of a tremendous drift, crawled into it and laid down and was, as he said, "as warm and snug as a bug in a rug." But the next afternoon, when the blizzard ceased and the wind went down, the temperature was 40 degrees below zero. The warmth of Lige's body had melted the snow, and his clothing was wet through. He felt he could not stay in the snow-cave longer and set forth. A company of settlers, looking for frozen school children, saw a strange sight at some distance in the white glare of the sunlight on the snowdrifts. Something that looked like a post seemed to be standing on a snowdrift. Lige's wet clothes had frozen solid and he was imprisoned by icy garments as if in a suit of steel armor. When the rescue party found him, he was badly frozen but his vitality was so great that he lived six weeks, and might have survived longer except for the pneumonia which carried him away.

January 13, 1888, was a day of desolation for Dakota Territory, and the families of the settlers mourned as Rachel mourned for her children, and were not comforted. For many days, sad processions were seen, carrying tiny coffins out for burial in the frozen earth. The great blizzard of Dakota was imprinted on all hearts as an example of nature's violent ferocity.

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## Lake Badus Parish

**LAKE BADUS** was a beautiful small blue-water lake in Dakota Territory named by the Swiss immigrants who homesteaded there in the 70's and 80's. A Catholic church and priest's house were built in the vicinage, and, when a small boy, I often attended Mass there as summer visitor of my three uncles and cousin Pat. My first taste of beer was at a Swiss wedding feast in that parish; and the awe and mystery of death were first impressed on my childish imagination at a burial in Lake Badus burying ground when I saw cousin Pat and uncle John Rei (an uncle by marriage) take the "lines" from their teams and place them under the rough-box to lower it into the grave. When the pall-bearers had reclaimed the lines, clods were vigorously shoveled into the grave, rattling sharply on the wood. It was the custom and necessity of that time. Later three of my small cousins died of scarlet fever within two days and uncle Will and cousin Pat had to bury them privately after night-fall in the Badus burying ground. Deckardeem's store on the lake bank furnished them two full quart bottles of much needed barrel whisky--quite irrespective of local prohibitory regulations. The Badus parishioners were made up of Swiss (under the leadership of "King" Jake Mugli and suave Martin Berthier) and the families of about eighty-five Irishmen who had formed a wagon-train under the leadership of my father and had come to Sioux Falls from Iowa and Wisconsin in 1873 to file on land. Their post office was Prairie Queen, D. T.--it is now no more, but may be found on Dakota Territory maps.

### Swiss and Irish

These Swiss and Irish Catholics were successful, energetic farmers on a large scale. Uncle John Rei (of Alsace Lorraine lineage) had been a sergeant in "Pap" Thomas's army. He often told us the story of Zollicoffer's having been killed in single combat--I think at Mill Springs--by a Federal Colonel. The name Zollicoffer tickled the childish fancy. Uncle John was disappointed because our Barnes school history failed to chronicle this event or even the fight at Mill Springs, where he waded in icy water up to his arm-pits and was in the bayonet fighting. These farmers had fine stock; shorthorn cattle, Berkshire hogs, magnificent draft horses--Norman Percheron and Clydesdales. Uncle John imported King Humbert, a famed Percheron stallion that had an Arab strain, which gave his colts their "fire" and "clean bone."

My aunt Bridget was uncle John's wife and her garden was the pride of the

Sioux valley. It was not a flower garden--although it showed some gorgeous geraniums and pinks--but gave to the cellar and the table five varieties of cabbage. Also "pickalily," cauliflower, yellow tomatoes, citron, currants and gooseberries. Potatoes were raised in a separate "patch" of about one acre. Picking them (about 150 bushels in one day) was a back-breaker. Pumpkins, watermelon and muskmelon grew in the corn-rows.

I frequently walked from uncle Will's to uncle Jere's--about three miles distance. There were no small fields of grain. Here were 160 acres all in corn, next to it or across the section line 160 in waving barley or oats--a whole section, a square mile in glorious yellow wheat as high as a horse's shoulders, ripe and ready for cutting.

*"I love the gold of newly shaven stubble, rolled,  
a royal carpet toward the sun,  
fit to be the pathway of a Deity."*

### **Baseball priest**

Father Flynn appeared suddenly one night at uncle John's and aunt Bridget's home. Uncle Will had ridden fast on his great race-horse Silver King twelve miles to Madison and brought the priest in a hurry behind one of Coon Klotzpaugh's crack livery teams. Father Flynn was a famed baseball pitcher in the seminary and still umpired games between the Madison and Sioux Falls professional nines. He also decided ex cathedra on a famous occasion that it was no sin nor occasion of scandal to have a horse-race on Sunday between Black Hawk and Silver King. Bishop Marty, the apostle to the Sioux, did not overrule him. I had once sat in a buggy drawn by my father's prize Hambletonians and heard my father and Father Flynn talk of Parnell, Gladstone, Cleveland, Blaine, the two Harrisons--Carter and Benjamin--and of Henry George, Father McGlynn and the Pope, Leo III. The only disagreement seemed to come over the merits of Morgans and Hambletonians.

But this time I did not hear any of Father Flynn's conversation. We children were quickly packed into a lumber wagon bedded down with hay and taken over to uncle Jere's. Father Flynn had come to give the last sacraments to my grandmother, Ellen Whalen, born at Dungarvan in the County Waterford.

The Lake Badus parish always comes to my mind when I read in the "Lady of Shallott":

*Long fields of barley and of rye,  
Clothe the world and meet the sky.*

Lake Badus has dried up; the lake bed, I understand, has been the subject of litigation involving questions of riparian ownership. It is forty years since I have seen

the churchyard--I do not know if the church is still there--the magnificent farms were all but destroyed by drought and grasshoppers. But Lake Badus parish is to me in memory the ideal country parish: and to the born farmer's eye, still "fair as the garden of the Lord."

*I love my prairies--they are mine from Zenith to  
Horizon line,  
Clipping the world of sky and sod like the bended  
arm and wrist of God.  
I love their grasses; my restless eyes fasten on  
more of earth and air  
Than seashores furnish anywhere.*

Hamlin Garland knew them; he too lived in Dakota Territory.

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## **Preparedness -- 1890**

### **The Governor of the Dakota Territory chose guns and ammunition instead of 100,000 rations, and the Sioux were lost.**

On December 3 and 4, 1890, the Congress of the United States debated the question of preparedness. It came up on joint resolution by the Committee on Military Affairs, authorizing the Secretary of War to issue arms and ammunition to the people of South Dakota for the purposes of self defense. Governor Mellette, of South Dakota, on November 26, had written to General Miles that the Messiah Craze, or Ghost Dance, had become dangerous to the settlers. Scotty Phillips, a cattleman with an Indian family who lived at the mouth of the Grand Stone Butte Creek, eighty miles up Bad River, had been a Scout in the Sioux troubles of 1875-76 (Custer Massacre). He told the Governor there was danger of an Indian uprising, and that it might come very quickly. He said the Pass Creek Dance had been running for a month and that there were 1,000 lodges and 1,500 warriors there. The Governor certified to his belief in Phillips' judgment and asked General Miles and the Secretary of War to send guns and ammunition to him at Huron. Senator Voorhees, of Indiana, the tall Sycamore of the Wabash, said he believed it would be far better to issue 100,000 rations of food to the starving Sioux Indians. The debate did not proceed very far before the names of Sitting Bull and Red Cloud became prominent.

Senator Dawes, of Massachusetts, a great Republican pillar of society, who afterwards gave his name to an older Dawes Commission (famous in the Indian Territory), said that Sitting Bull was the most pious hypocrite in the country, and that was saying a great deal. Senator Voorhees quoted General Miles as saying that Sitting Bull was the greatest Indian who had ever lived--abler even than the great Tecumseh. In the end, however, the arms and ammunition were voted and issued to the Governors of North and South Dakota. Sioux Indian policemen, under the command of Lieutenant Bull-head, arrested Sitting Bull in his cabin, in the presence of his two wives, children and grandchildren. They disarmed the old chief and led him out into the yard and ordered him to mount his horse and go with them. One of Sitting Bull's friends raised the war whoop. Someone (just who is a matter of controversy) fired a shot. The Indian policemen instantly killed their unarmed captive with rifle fire. A few days later, the Seventh Cavalry attempted to disarm Indian braves at the Wounded Knee. A half-crazed, fanatical medicine-man threw a handful of dust in the air with an incantation supposed, by his disciples, to ward off the bullets of the soldiers and to

bring a deadly hail upon them. Some of Sitting Bull's followers who were present fired on the soldiers, killing several privates and some of the officers. The Seventh Cavalry shouted, "Remember Custer," and returned the fire. The infuriated soldiers did their work too well, and with rifle fire and artillery salvos killed and wounded Indian bucks, Catholic priests and sisters, and shot Indian women and babies so that the corpses lay in rows for days on the frozen prairie.

I recall the indignation and grief of my father when the news of the killing of the old Sioux statesman came to our home on a winter's day in December, 1890. He had known the old chief and felt that to have him killed, an unarmed captive, by men of his own Nation was a piece of tragic savagery which would always be a blot on President Harrison's administration. Bishop Marty, the great Catholic apostle to the Sioux, and Bishop Hare, the Episcopalian Bishop, a great friend of the Indians and a Sioux linguist, felt deep sorrow and publicly expressed it. The Eastern papers finally denounced the killing of Sitting Bull as an act little short of an assassination.

I recall distinctly the sharp, vivid shock which the news gave me, although I was but a small boy. This was due, perhaps, to the fact that, about eighteen months previous, I had seen the two great Sioux statesmen--Sitting Bull and Red Cloud--under the most peaceable domestic conditions.

The circumstances which led up to this event are present in memory. In April, 1889, we were living on my father's ranch twenty miles southwest of DeSmet, Dakota Territory. (It is needless to say that DeSmet was named in honor of the great missionary to the Northwest, Peter Johann DeSmet, S.J.) This ranch was called the "Big Place" to distinguish it from the "Prairie Queen" place, in Lake County, and the Redstone Ranch on the Jim River. The Prairie Queen place had only one and a half sections of land, while the Big Place really amounted to something: there was a whole section of land fenced with barbed wire. This, of course, was the pasture; two school sections rented for hay land; an entire section put into corn; a half-section in barley; three quarter-sections in oats; eighty acres in millet; and five sections, 3,200 acres, in wheat. One hundred fine Norman Percheron draft horses, not one weighing under 1,600 pounds, furnished the power for seeding, haying, harvesting, plowing and hauling. Thirty-five bronchos did general light duty; my father's fine Hambletonians being reserved for pulling rubber-tired buggies on short drives. The Democrat spring wagon (with three spring seats, each of which accommodated three men and a boy comfortably) was drawn by six mules, and was the vehicle customarily used on a long trip--such as was under discussion.

I can recall my earnest plea to my mother and father to "let me go too," and the final compromise, that I was to go only as far as DeSmet, stay there all night and ride back the next day with George Davidson, a sort of "straw boss" on the Big Place who was hauling out a load of barbed wire spool to fix fence. My father had just been elected a delegate from District No. 17 to the Constitutional Convention of South Dakota, to be held at Sioux Falls on July 4. Some question had arisen about a divergence between the Seventh Standard Parallel of Dakota, which was to be the dividing line between North and South Dakota, and the regularly designated 46th parallel of latitude. My father and some of his friends were riding north to inspect the

situation for their own information.

Some of the pioneers had opposed statehood and complained that Dakota Territory had dwindled from the time of my father's first trip to the Missouri River, in 1862, as a mere boy. Then the Dakota Territory stretched beyond the Rockies on the west, and had an area of 350,000 square miles--more than all of Europe west of Russia; equal to Texas and Oklahoma combined. Now the Territory had shrunk to 150,000 square miles, and there was a squabble over a divergence between the 46th parallel of latitude and the Seventh Standard Parallel of Dakota, which, I believe, were found by the surveyor to be about seven miles apart.

### **We leave**

We left the Big Place about six p.m. and pulled into DeSmet with the mules fresh and good humored at about ten p.m. My father advised me to stretch out on some sacks of oats in the livery stable office, and I slept there soundly until an instinct awakened me, and I saw they were hitching the six big mules to the Democrat wagon. It must have been about four o'clock in the morning and the stars were shining beautifully over the level prairie. George Davidson had reported to my father that old Hannah, one of his team, was lame and that the blacksmith was so busy sharpening plow-points for "sod-busters" that he could not get her shod that day. This, of course, would delay George's return to the Big Place, so my father decided that I might as well continue on the trip.

George M. Stratton was driving back to Redstone Ranch with his fine pacing stallion, Damascus I, and he promised to get word to my mother of the situation and explain that I was continuing on the journey with my father.

I afterwards heard the legend, much repeated, that the Constitutional Convention statesmen refreshed themselves while I slept with a light game of poker, in which tons of hay were bet in the final jack-pot against cords of wood piled up down in the Missouri Valley, near Elk Point. The loser was said to have been a gentleman who later occupied the office of United States Senator from South Dakota, and Republican boss until 1896 when he took a walk out of the Republican National Convention at St. Louis on the Free Silver issue. These high matters were, of course, beyond my comprehension, but I can still recall the hearty jocularities of the booming frontier voice, and the magnificent clouds of cigar smoke which defended the Democrat spring wagon against the onslaught of mosquitoes.

As we drove out of DeSmet headed toward Big Stone Lake, there was a sweet smell of buffalo grass and bluejoint, and at daylight we heard the plovers cry, and the prairie-chickens' call, and the plaintive oft-repeated melody of the meadowlark. The meadowlark's song even when heard today "strikes upon the soul." I think it was shortly after sundown when we drove into the great Indian encampment and heard from the half-French chief of the Sissetons and Wahpetons that they had distinguished visitors from the tribes west of the Missouri. Later on, a sort of council was held between the Sioux chiefs and headmen and the members of the Constitutional

Convention. I heard the names of Red Cloud and Sitting Bull, but paid little attention to those chiefs. I had seen thousands of big husky Sioux Indians, and my only interest in them was confined to the skilled, bareback riders, who would race their Indian ponies without the use of either bridle or saddle.

But, in the fall of the next year, 1890, these names filled the headlines in the Sioux Falls *Argus Leader* and the Sioux Falls *Press*. We had been hearing for weeks of the Messiah Craze, the Ghost Dance and of Sitting Bull. A close family friend Darwin Sims, had fallen with Custer at the Little Big Horn, in 1876, and his name was mentioned in the household. The Seventh Cavalry and General Miles were again in the headlines. My father thought that the whole situation could be eased without a collision, and refused to share some of the prejudice against Sitting Bull. He felt certain that either Colonel Cody (Buffalo Bill) or General Miles (Bearcoat) could secure the peaceable surrender of the old chief and statesman.

I can distinctly recall that hazy December of 1890. There was a mirage nearly every day. Once we saw a railroad train high in the air running upside down. It must have been at least fifty miles away. Looking west from the Big Place, the Wessington Hills seemed only five miles away, although we knew they were at least ninety miles distant, a good ways across the Jim River. (The maps call it the Dakota, or James River. Fremont, the Pathfinder, and Nicollet, the French geologist who explored it in 1838, found that the name was St. James River. It was named for Father St. Jacques, who was a missionary in the Indian country shortly after 1740; all attempts by zealots to change the name had been abortive.)

Late December in Dakota was sometimes pleasant and balmy and the atmospheric condition may have accounted for the mirage. I recall distinctly that fine December morning when a rider came from my father's grain elevator at St. Mary's with a message (in Dakota "message" invariably meant "telegram"). We supposed that the message pertained to wheat quotations in Minneapolis. but we knew at once from my father's expression when he read it, that there was some extraordinary news.... Sitting Bull had been killed before dawn by the Indian police sent to arrest him, reinforced by United States Cavalry who remained concealed. My father voiced his sorrow for the death of the chief and his anger at what he called "the bungling" of the government authorities. He expressed his fear that more blood would flow, and it was not many days until the news came of the tragedy at the Wounded Knee.

An impartial observer today must concede that, if Sitting Bull had been a Czech or a Pole defending his country from the invader. he would have been hailed as a great patriot. Even in 1890, many voices were raised in protest against the treatment meted out to him. A prominent publicist condemned the government's policy in a philippic, delivered at the time, intended as a funeral eulogy on the great Uncpapa chief. He pronounced him a far more eloquent orator than Choate or Depew, then the idols of New York, and told of the burning words in which the old Teton voiced his people's wrongs at the hands of the white man.

There seems little doubt now that starvation had a great part in the so-called Indian uprisings. It soon became known, too, that the Indian Bureau authorities to prevent an outbreak (as they claimed), buried the old chief's body like the carcass of a

dog--without dirge or rite--a thing most abhorrent to the soul of the religious Indian. For a long time the grave was unmarked but finally the Indian Agent caused it to be marked with a plain slab bearing the inscription, "Sitting Bull, Chief of the Uncpapa Nation." The monument fails to record Sitting Bull's great services to the Sioux Nations in the capacity of Prime Minister much like the duties exercised by Lloyd George in the World War. But Sitting Bull's name is imperishable, and is always remembered when the Sioux, or Dakota, Nations are named. Senator Voorhees's suggestion in the preparedness debate in Congress, in December, 1890 that it would be better to send 100,000 rations to the starving Sioux Indians--seems to have been the better solution. His quotation from General Miles, that Sitting Bull was "the greatest Indian who ever lived," will not be disputed by history students who impartially review the career of the great Indian statesman and orator.

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## Big Buffalo Hunt

### What happened to the buffalo and a lot of other things.

*Under the sod in the land of gold  
We have laid the fearless Bill;  
We all called him Wild, yet a little child  
Could bend his iron will.  
With generous heart he freely gave  
To the poorly clad, unshod--  
Think of it, pard--of his noble traits--  
While you cover him with the sod.  
From the "Burial of Wild Bill."*

by Captain Jack Crawford, the Poet-Scout

**THE REDSTONE MERCANTILE ESTABLISHMENT** had a powerful drawing card in the mighty anthracite base-burner. This stove was nine feet high and stood on a great zinc mat fifteen feet square. There was an open space or clearing around the stove about thirty feet square, usually occupied by a few arm chairs. But when the Phil Kearney Post of the Grand Army of the Republic was installed, with Captain Palmer, one of Farragut's quartermasters in charge of arrangements, 150 camp chairs and stools were crowded into the space. The ornate sword of the post rested on a 40-pound box of Climax chewing tobacco. The Redstone establishment in bitter winter weather, sometimes over Olaf's protests, served as an inn. Old buffalo hunters, scouts, or noted ranchmen and owners of big horse herds would sometimes come with their bedding and cooking utensils on a pack mule. My father invariably granted some of these gentlemen the privilege of bedding down on one of the many long counters within the radius of the stove's warmth. The fire was, ordinarily, lighted in the big stove in late September and was never allowed to go out until early in May. One blustering, snowy day in April, two guests who were entitled to counter privileges arrived: one a tall sinewy man, with a hawk nose and sharp blue eye, who wore the big, scraggly mustache of the Black Hills country, but did not wear his hair long. His companion was (and looked the part of) the early-day Indian scout. He had long gray hair which hung over his shoulders and a trim beard. He wore a big sombrero and two magnificent pearl pistols, the gift of the famous J. B. Hickok (Wild Bill). This

gentleman bore the sobriquet of the "Poet-Scout"; and his dirge or lament for the death of Wild Bill Hickok in Deadwood City on August 2, 1876, was a school-boy recitation in Dakota schools. My father always addressed him, deferentially, as "Captain Jack." His companion had the nickname of "Old Dakoty." His name, as known to his intimates, was Pike L'Siou; on his baptismal certificate, however, it was spelled Charles Picotte Le Sueur. One of his ancestors bore the famed name of the man who, with Le Moyne, Verendrye and de Lusignan, made the name of New France known and respected in the domain of the Dakotas.

### Horse sale

The occasion of the visit of the two famous scouts was the great horse sale conducted by the Belle Fourche Live Stock Company of Butte County, in the Black Hills. This enterprise had been fostered by the Government of Napoleon III and had brought fine Arabian stallions from the French possessions to cross with the bronchos which ran wild on the plains. They now had about 6,000 of these mustangs and were endeavoring to dispose of them at public auction in Eastern Dakota. Captain Jack and Old Dakoty were present with the company's horse-wranglers and ropers and riders somewhat in the capacity of guest artists at a radio advertising stunt.

They helped draw the crowd. Old Dakoty was introduced as one of Custer's trusted Black Hills Scouts; Captain Jack then entertained with some reminiscences, exhibiting Wild Bill's pistols and illustrating how the fearless Bill killed the hired murderers at Laramie after they already had the drop on him. He concluded this story with an exhibition of his marvelous agility by kicking off the hat of Old Dakoty, who stood six-feet-two in his stocking feet. He usually concluded with his poem which told how a bartender made a prayer at a dead prospector's funeral. No "sky pilot" or Bible was available, so the bartender made out with a deck of cards. The mustangs sold briskly at from \$8 to \$23 a head. The horse-wrangler, as soon as a horse was paid for, "put the purchaser in the saddle" according to the published terms of the sale; that is, his ropers immediately lassoed the horse, threw him, blindfolded him, saddled and bridled him, and permitted the purchaser to mount, while the cowboys were pulling off the blindfold and the lariats. Most of the broncs gave a fine show as buckers and plungers, in spite of their portion of pure Arabian blood. Many of the new owners were disgusted because their newly-purchased *remudas* would all shy at an ear of corn.

By April 17, the herd had been pretty well sold off, which was fortunate, as a heavy storm of wet snow struck about that time. The three or four hundred wild horses still left were driven into John Windedahl's two-section, wire-fence pasture, and the whole crew came to spend the evening and the night around the comfortable Redstone Mercantile base-burner. The citizens gathered in and my father started an interesting discussion on the subject of buffalo herds, hunters and scouts. All agreed that the palm should be awarded to Charley Reynolds as the most famous Dakota scout.

Before the Little Bighorn, Custer had detailed Charley to accompany Reno to stiffen that officer's back. In the retreat across the river, when Reno became panicky, Charley did his best to restore order to the detachment, and lost his life--killed by the Sioux hatchet, as were Bloody Knife and, Stab, two famous Indians in Custer's command. Sitting Bull told Father Genin that he ordered his braves to "take the hatchet" out of revenge against the "Yellow Hair" (General Custer) because the Seventh Cavalry had killed women and children of Black Kettle's band on the Wachita in Indian Territory (now Roger Mills County, Oklahoma).

Someone commented on the thinning numbers and practical disappearance of the wild Indians, the big buffalo herds and the enormous herds of wild horses. Various explanations were offered: prairie fires, blizzards, pestilences and famine were suggested as proximate causes. On this, Old Dakoty broke his taciturnity and said that there was but one explanation, and it had not been given. "Why," he said, "whoever heard of an Indian, a bronco or a buffalo ever being burned to death in a prairie fire? It never happened. The Sioux always built a back-fire, with a creek or a river or a lake as protection, and saved themselves and the buffalo and the horses, which they looked on as their own private herds. Surely no one ever heard of the most poorly outfitted Sioux Indian freezing to death, or having even a bad cold. Even a drunken Sioux Indian could lie out all night in a blizzard and not freeze. The Great Spirit looked out for him, the Indians claimed. As to the buffalo, they would come in fat from the big pasture (which extended from northern Kansas to the British possessions) when thousands of range cattle would be found frozen to death."

### **Locomotives**

At this point Captain Jack joined in the discussion and said there was one thing that wild Indians and buffalo herds and wild horse herds could not stand, and that was the screech of a locomotive engine on a railroad. He backed his opinion with a statement made to him at Cheyenne by Colonel Dodge, Chief Engineer of the U. P., then building from Omaha, Nebraska, to Cheyenne (which was still in Dakota Territory).

"Yes," said Old Dakoty, "the U. P. cut through the center of the buffalo range, and the northern herd of buffalo were forced up north, a lot of them even crossing the Canadian line."

Johnny Dearman, the traveling salesman for Keogh, Warner and Sherman of St. Paul, volunteered statistics on the purchase price of buffalo. In the earlier days, a fine bull-robe could be brought as cheap as \$1.65, and a cow-robe sold for under \$1.00. In 1886, the price of buffalo robes had advanced to the enormous figure of \$45.00 to \$60.00.

### **Buffalo calamity**

This once more visibly aroused the memory of Old Dakoty, and with apparent effort and feeling he commenced his explanation. "Yes," he said, "there was a terrible

buffalo calamity in 1881. You remember 1880 was a hard winter. But, in March, the Chinook wind began to blow at about the time that the big buffalo herd, consisting of millions of beasts, began to cross the Missouri. Anyone who has ever seen the buffalo herd on the march would never forget it. They move just like an army of United States soldiers, in regular formation. But there is one difference--there is no one to give the command to halt. When this great herd started to cross the Missouri, the ice was still solid, and the van of the herd got over. Then the Chinook wind softened the ice, and the animals began to go through into the freezing water. The hundreds of thousands and perhaps millions of animals behind kept pressing on, forcing the herd into the stream. The big thaw continued, and at the end there must have been a million buffalo carcasses swept upon the Missouri shore from Mandan, in northern Dakota, to the mouth of the Bad River, 150 miles downstream. Even down at Omaha they saw a big buffalo bull going down stream on a cake of ice, still alive, pawing and bellowing."

It was after that season that we began to hear low-lived, crooked, tin-horn gamblers called "stinkers." Before that time, we usually called them "white-livered skunks." Captain Jack claimed the privilege of explaining the genesis of the term "stinker" and Old Dakoty deferred to him as a superior literary genius whose productions had seen the light of day in print. Captain Jack said that a lot of tender-feet who never in their lives had nerve enough to shoot at a buffalo, a grizzly bear or a Town Marshal, became self-commissioned "buffalo hunters" in the spring of 1881, and claimed to rank with Buffalo Bill. "But," said Captain Jack. "up at Pembina, they named the chief of the gang `Buffalo Chips,' and General Phil Sheridan took up the nickname and applied it to some fake army scouts. However, the name `stinker' came from the practice of these `false-face' buffalo hunters who, in the spring of 1881, went out on the banks of the Missouri and skinned the carcasses of the drowned animals. Naturally, the hides so taken had a good strong perfume, and it wasn't that fragrance which Piper Heidsick cigars have, either. So, this whole crew of `skinners of drowned buffalo' by common consent came to be termed `stinkers,' and next thing we knew, the title was conferred on tin-horn gamblers, and so came into general use."

Then the talk drifted to the wild days of Deadwood Gulch, and of course Captain Jack read his beautiful poem on the death of Wild Bill Hickok. He explained that Mr. Hickok's real occupation was that of peace-officer, and that he was murdered by a hired assassin because it was understood that he was about to be selected as Marshal of Deadwood, which would mean the end of the crooked gamblers who robbed lucky but ignorant gold prospectors.

### **Distinguished educator**

My father then said that he thought we ought to have a word from a distinguished educator, who was visiting as an honored guest of the Phil Kearney Post of the Grand Army. This was General W. H. Beadle, President of the Madison Normal School. The General was a distinguished lawyer as well as an ex-army officer, with distinguished service in Grant's army.

The United States Court at Yankton, in March, 1877, had appointed him as

counsel to defend Jack McCall, the assassin of J. B. Hickok. McCall had been tried by the Vigilantes, at Deadwood, and acquitted on McCall's story--that Wild Bill had murdered his brother. U.S. Marshal Seth Bullock (whom T. Roosevelt, Dakota rancher, claimed as a cousin) suggested that two hundred ounces of "dust" passed to the 22-man jury was what got the verdict at Deadwood. Later, McCall, in a Cheyenne saloon, "counted coup," like a drunken Sioux Indian, and, boasting of his killing of Wild Bill, said that he never had a brother, and that the whole story was rank fiction. General Beadle pleaded former-jeopardy for Jack, by reason of the Deadwood trial, but the court disallowed it and was sustained by the Dakota Territorial Supreme Court. At the trial, General Beadle told us, the prosecutor gave McCall a merciless cross examining. "If you wanted the glory of killing a man who had 36 notches on his gun (Wild Bill Hickok), why didn't you walk in front of him and give him a chance for life? he asked McCall. The court room laughed when the defendant answered, "Because I didn't want to commit suicide."

The snow was coming down heavier than ever, and the wind was rising. My father, in spite of Olaf's plain frown of disapproval, said, "Well, boys, we'd better discontinue the big buffalo hunt, for tonight, anyway. You can all bunk down here on the counters and keep warm. Good-night."

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## **Big Injun Wagon-Box Fight**

### **The careers of several western scouts who haven't made Hollywood.**

**WHEN** the hunting party from Southern Dakota left the warm ranch kitchen on my father's "Big Place," 20 miles south-west of DeSmet, it was agreed that Colonel Jolley and Chief Justice Tripp would not attempt to go on the wild goose hunting expedition with Old Dakoty--"Pike" L'Siou--the following morning. But at 3:45 A. M. my brother and I crept noiselessly out and saw Mr. L'Siou and Zephier Brughier handling the old Civil War musket and two fine 10-gauge double-barrel shotguns by lantern light. Pike made us welcome, and said that our presence would fit in nicely with his plans. We hitched a team of the bronchos to the buck-board and hauled the two hunters with their guns out to the willow thicket about a half a mile from the School Section. Here the myriads of Canada honkers, brants and gray geese were resting in the big slough which the melting snow had turned into lake. When we reached the willows, we tied the bronchos to a tree and set out on foot. Pike then explained his strategy of attack upon the slough: "The wild geese are very suspicious; they will fly high in the air at any unusual sight or sound. The big Norman Percheron horses have been grazing around the big slough and the geese will not take flight from their presence. If you boys can catch up two of the `broke horses,' Zeph and I will mount them, driving a bunch of ten or fifteen horses ahead of us. When we get up close enough we will let out a whoop which will make the geese rise, and that's our chance."

When Pike and Zeph mounted the two big work horses, riding bare-back without saddle or bridle, we observed that Mr. L'Siou had rigged a leather belt and scabbard, which enabled him to carry both the Civil War musket and a shotgun. Zeph carried the other shotgun on horseback, and it was evident to us boys that he was not wholly at home on horseback with firearms. We tagged after the hunters at a distance. Pike's plan worked beautifully. A dozen of the big horses trotted ahead of the hunters toward the big slough. Then we heard a whoop that would have done credit to Red Cloud, the great Sioux chief, and three sharp reports of gunfire. We ran forward and found that Pike had discharged each barrel of the 10-gauge shotgun with great effect, from horseback. He had then skillfully dismounted and fired the Civil War musket into the rising flock of wild geese. Zeph had not been so lucky. The report of Pike's shotgun had frightened Zeph's mount, and the lurch of the big horse had dumped Zeph onto the ground. Thus he failed to do any shooting. My brother and I waded into the cold water of the big slough and picked up seven fine wild geese which Pike had brought down.

That afternoon Pike asked permission to cook one of the fat birds "antelope

fashion." He rigged up a big iron kettle out in the yard, dumped ten pounds of lard into it, made a brisk fire, split the big goose in two lengthwise, and suspended each half by a wire into the kettle of boiling lard. The result was a great success at the supper table that night at the Big Place. Pike explained that he learned the cooking trick from "Bat" Pourriere, who was known to all frontiersmen as "Big Bat," to distinguish him from "Little Bat," another famous frontiersman, who also had Indian blood.

### **Not "Big Bat," but "Portuguese Phillips"**

Colonel Jolley said that he knew Big Bat, and that he had heard that Big Bat was the frontiersman who did such terrible execution by rifle-fire on Red Cloud's braves, at the Wagon-box fight near Fort Fetterman in 1867. Pike said he was not certain but he had heard that honor accorded also to "Portuguese" Phillips and to "California" Joe. Judge Tripp said that the Fetterman Massacre near Fort Phil Kearney in December, 1866, had startled all the settlements in Dakota. He explained that at that time, Dakota Territory included all the Powder River country, the Bozeman Trail--at least from Bridger's Ferry to the three Forts (Fort Phil Kearney, Fort Fetterman, and Fort Laramie)--and included the sources of the Yellowstone and the Missouri Rivers. In 1869, he explained, Wyoming Territory was organized. Theophilus Rencontre, who was much older than either Pike or Zeph, said that his recollection was that "Portuguese" Phillips became famous for his great exploit in bringing the news of the Fetterman Massacre from Fort Phil Kearney to Fort Laramie, a distance of 236 miles.

Phillips made the trip alone, riding Colonel Carrington's fine thoroughbred saddle horse, and arrived at Fort Laramie at midnight Christmas Day, having made the trip in four days, travelling only in the darkness and dodging the alert Sioux scouts of Red Cloud's army. The thorough-bred horse fell dead within fifteen minutes after Phillips reached Fort Laramie. After delivering his dispatches which told of the slaughter of Captain Fetterman and his 81 men in Red Cloud's ambush, the scout himself fainted dead away on the ballroom floor of the recreation hall known as "Bedlam," in the presence of the commander.

Scout Phillips received no reward for this great service during his lifetime, but after his death Senator Warren of Wyoming succeeded in getting an appropriation through Congress for his widow, amounting to about \$5,000. Pike L'Siou said this feat was matched by Charlie Reynold's great trip, alone, in 25 degrees below zero weather from the Black Hills to Fort Laramie, carrying Custer's dispatches, and he added, Charlie received neither glory nor money for his heroism and endurance. Indeed, in General Terry's report of the disaster at the Little Big Horn where Charlie Reynolds was killed by Sitting Bull's braves, Charlie is referred to merely as a "a civilian." Theophilus, who was very proud of his strain of Sioux blood, said that the fortitude and endurance of the two great white Scouts was matched by at least one Sioux Indian. He told the tale of the famous run of Rain-in-the-Face, from Fort Abraham Lincoln (Bismarck, North Dakota) to a point across the Canadian border. Rain-in-the-Face had murdered an Army doctor and another white man near the Fort. Captain Tom Custer (the General's brother) courageously arrested him and took him prisoner in the midst

of 300 Sioux braves. He was imprisoned in the guard house at the Fort, awaiting his trial for murder, when he managed to escape and made the great run in the dead of winter, without food or aid. Afterwards, at the Little Big Horn, he vented the Redman's revenge by cutting out the brave heart of Captain Tom Custer. Theophilus said he did not believe that "Portuguese" Phillips was in the Wagon box fight. He had heard that the scout who did such famous execution was Jim Bridger, but that he had reason to believe that Major Bridger was at that time guiding some gold prospectors.

Pike L'Siou said that California Joe made a wonderful ride after the battle of the Washita, in Indian Territory. Joe carried Custer's dispatches to General Sheridan in Kansas, and made the 110 miles in less than 18 hours. Custer afterwards made California Joe his Chief of Scouts, but Joe celebrated the promotion by such a prolonged and intense spree that before he sobered up, he had been reduced to the rank of mere Scout again. The name given Joe at birth was Moses Milner, but the frontiersmen would no more have recognized him by that name than they would have known the Jim River by the name of Dakota River. The Jim had originally been named the St. James River in honor of Father St. Jacques, a French missionary priest who came among the Sioux before 1700. When Senator Douglas lost his Chairmanship of the Committee on Territories over his fight with Buchanan in 1858, a strong Know-Nothing sentiment existed in the country. When the bill to establish Dakota Territory was brought in, in March 1861, it contained a provision "that the River known as Aux Jacques should hereafter be known as the Dakota River." However, the act of Congress in this particular was inoperative and void for all practical purposes. The River is still known as the James, or Jim.

Theophilus said that Big Bat Pourriere was living at Wounded-Knee, in the Black Hills, and that when he went again to visit Napoleon Jack Carrondelet at Fort Pierre, he intended to go on over and see Big Bat and ask him about the Wagon-Box fight. My father said that he had recently been at the Pine Ridge Agency and had listened to a very fine speech made by the Great Ogalalla Sioux Chief, Red Cloud. The Old Chief had become a great friend of the whites, and a fervent Catholic. Judge Tripp said that in his opinion, Red Cloud was the ablest Chief ever produced by the Sioux, although Sitting Bull's fame, due in part to the Custer Massacre, had partly overshadowed Red Cloud. "But," said Judge Tripp, "Red Cloud had a great career. As a young warrior he was ambushed by eight Indian braves, one of whom shot him in the thigh. He was of course unable to move but, lying on the ground with his broken thigh, he did such execution with his Winchester rifle that he succeeded in killing or wounding all of his assailants. By his victory over Captain Fetterman he became the leading war chief of the Sioux. The terrible slaughter which Captain Powell and his 32 soldiers, aided by a famous frontier scout (whether it was Jim Bridger or Old Bat), inflicted on his braves at the Wagon-box fight, did not impair his influence. Subsequently, by his Cossack tactics of harassing wagon trains, soldiers on the march, and even threatening Fort Phil Kearney, he forced the government of the United States to make a treaty with him, abandoning three frontier forts which Red Cloud's young men immediately burned to the ground."

Old Dakoty said that the Wagon-Box fight was the greatest exhibition of

coolness and bravery known in the entire West. "But," he added, "Colonel Carrington, the commanding officer of Fort Phil Kearney and Lieutenant General W. T. (Tecumseh) Sherman deserve a lot of credit. Colonel Carrington had requested that his men be immediately furnished with the new breech-loading Springfield rifles instead of the old Civil War muzzle-loaders. General Sherman got these new arms, which had just been perfected, to Fort Phil Kearney by double extra rush. Captain Powell and his men had the new breech-loaders only about two weeks before the day when they formed the wagon box corral with 16 wagon boxes near the "Hated Fort on the Piney." Red Cloud had over 1,200 fine braves, armed with either the muzzle-loading rifle or the bow and arrow. His soldiers were unequalled in the whole United States as skilled horsemen. These braves could stand upright on a galloping Indian pony and hit a silver dollar at 50 yards with a tipped arrow. Red Cloud's nephew led the charge on the Wagon-Box corral. The Indians, though, were ignorant of the fact that the soldiers had breech-loading rifles which would enable them to fire again immediately after the first round. Red Cloud expected to lose 40 or 50 braves in the charge, and thought his superior force could then easily overpower the little band in the Wagon-boxes who would have to reload the muzzle-loaders. Instead of that, there was a continuous fire from the breech loaders, and the frontiers-man, or scout, whoever he was, fired 300 rounds. Four privates were detailed to load rifles for him. So the Indian charge was broken and the thirty-three men stood off the Red Cloud Army until reinforcements came from the Fort with howitzers. When the shells began to burst at the first fire of the howitzers, the Indians retreated, because one of their maxims of warfare was that they could not fight the "Wagon-guns."

### **The Sioux: The Greatest Americans**

Colonel Jolley said that the Sioux Nations were undoubtedly preeminent among all the American Indians for bravery in war for eloquence, for statesmanship, and for the number of eminent Chiefs they produced. "What other Indian Tribe," he asked, "has a roll of names like Red Cloud, Running Antelope, Sitting Bull, Spotted Tail, Crazy Horse, Gall, John Grass, and many others? At least three of their great men rank equally with the great Tecumseh and perhaps overshadow him. Sitting Bull implacably defended a lost cause, and would have neither truce nor peace with those whom he considered the robbers of his Nation. I think that it is a severe commentary on the white man's civilization that it doomed to extinction the buffalo, the broncho, and the magnificent Sioux savages."

Theophilus Rencontre spoke rather vauntingly of the superior policy of the French in dealing with the Sioux, and bitterly condemned the Canadian government for its execution of the famous French half-breed, Louis Riel, who led the rebellion of the Red River half-breeds against the Dominion government. A full discussion of the Pembina country seemed imminent, but Judge Tripp and Colonel Jolley announced that they must leave early the next morning for Sioux Falls, and the discussion was adjourned without settling finally and to full agreement the point as to the identity of the frontiersmen who did the wonderful shooting in the Wagon-Box fight.

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## Black Hills Freighter

### More reminiscences from the Dakotas

**THE APRIL** snow-storm at Redstone effectually terminated the horse sale of the Belle Fourche Live Stock Company. The marvelous Dakota sunshine thawed the snow in two days, and wheat seeding and spring plowing became the order of the day. The Belle Fourche foreman arranged with John Windedahl to summer the mustangs left in his pasture at \$1.00 per head, and departed with his crew and chuck-wagon for Butte County. Captain Jack Crawford left by stage for Sioux City, en route to Omaha, where he could catch the U. P. for Cheyenne. "Old Dakoty" told my father his cousins Zephier Brughier and Theophilus Rencontre, from Jefferson, below Elk Point, went taking a party of hunters up to the Sisseton Reservation and on their return would pick him up. My father at once invited him to be a guest at the Big Place--20 miles southwest of DeSmet.

The old plainsman immediately made himself comfortable in the machine-shop where tools, binders, mowers, plows, corn cultivator and other farm machinery were housed from the weather. There was a big wooden platform in the corner of the shed, and there Old Dakoty spread his blankets. An old Civil War musket hung on two nails in the corner, above the platform, and Mr. Pike L'Siou (Old Dakoty) at once busied himself with an examination of it. That night, around soft-coal fire of the ranch kitchen. he told us that the hunting party which his cousins were taking from Elk Point to Lake Traverse, on the Sisseton Reservation were ambitious of killing some wild geese, a feat which George Davidson, the boss of the Big Place said was more easily planned than accomplished. George said that the whole section which we rented for hay land was under water and that it was literally covered with thousands of grey geese, "Canada-honkers," brants, swan and cranes, resting on their way north to the Canadian breeding grounds. George said that these flocks were well equipped with sentinels and that the local hunters (who killed ducks by the hundreds) had not been able to bag a single one. Old Dakoty said that his cousins were famous shots and he believed they would be able to bring in some game. A discussion started as to the most delectable breakfast dish: the majority voted in favor of prairie-chicken, fried in corn-meal; ham and eggs and beefsteak had their supporters. Old Dakoty said he preferred liver, and told of a famous breakfast that he and Jack Crawford had with California Joe (Custer's famous scout) before the battle of the Washita. It turned out that the "liver" came from a buffalo calf. Someone asked, what came of California Joe, and Mr. L'Siou replied, "'76 was bad medicine for frontiersmen and scouts. Charlie Reynolds, Wild Bill Hickok, and California Joe all went to hunt the white buffalo that

year. Charlie died in June at the Little Big Horn. Wild Bill died at Deadwood City in August, and California Joe went over the big divide in December, at Red Cloud, while acting as a Black Hills guide."

The next morning before 5:30, when the light was barely grey in the April dawn, there was a mighty shout from George Davidson which brought us all running to the water tank. There was Old Dakoty with two magnificent, fat wild geese which he had killed with the old Civil War musket. George said that his mouth watered for a taste of roast goose, and he hoped we would have one of them served up that night. We went back to our labors of getting our teams harnessed for a big day of wheat seeding, and had a great surprise when we came in to breakfast. The old frontiersman brought in a platter of his own cooking and it turned out to be fried breast of wild goose, and as a delicacy I must do Pike the justice that, in my judgment, Delmonico, even before prohibition never equalled it. We had plenty of game during the rest of the visit of the famous scout.

In a few days, a covered wagon with six mules drove up, and this equipage turned out of course, to be the hunting party, which consisted of Dakoty's cousins and two great friends of my father, Colonel John L. Jolley, the famous trial lawyer from Vermillion, and Judge Bartlett Tripp, of Yankton, who had just been appointed Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Territory of Dakota by President Cleveland. As George Davidson had predicted, these hunters had bagged nothing larger than mallard ducks, and their disappointment was great at the prospect of having to report failure on their return to Southern Dakota. When they heard of Mr. L'Siou's success, they at once accepted my father's invitation to stay over and have a try at wild goose hunting under his expert tutelage.

### **The hunt**

That night, around the kitchen fire, Colonel Jolley told of the great degree of civilization attained by the Sissetons since they had been expelled from Minnesota on account of their part in Little Crow's war. Colonel Jolley said, "Their chief, Gabriel Renville, is half French, and speaks French fluently, as well as Sioux. They have a legislature with two houses, and make laws with much of the formality of congressional acts. They still maintain their friendship with the other Sioux Nations, which are considered to be savages. Indeed, it was on their reservation that the great Sioux council was held, in 1867, to discuss the intrusion of the whites into the Indian's Sacred Grounds--the Black Hills. There were representatives from all the Nations and Bands of the Sioux--Tetons, Santees, Yanktonnais, Uncpapas, Brules, Ogalallas, Minneconjous, Sans-Arcs and all the others. The Great Cheyenne orator, Running Antelope, was there, as was Red Dog, the Arapaho Chief. They passed a law providing the death penalty for any Indian who revealed to the white the presence of 'gold' in the Black Hills. At that meeting, Sitting Bull was elected the supreme military commander of the armies of the Sioux, and their allies, the northern Cheyenne. Sitting Bull was a Chief of the Uncpapas; it was his supreme military command as general that he exercised at the Little Big Horn, in the fight with Custer, and at the Rosebud, in his

fight with General Crook, the `Grey Fox.'"`

Judge Tripp said that Sitting Bull was a great statesman, and a remarkable orator, as well as a military leader. He expressed a desire to know how the Indians developed such eloquent orators. General Custer, who was a close friend of Lawrence Barrett, the actor, thought that Running Antelope had a finer voice than Edwin Booth. Custer said that the greatest speech he ever heard, and the most impressive, was that delivered by Running Antelope at Fort Abraham Lincoln 1875, describing the miserable condition of his starving people. General Custer told Judge Tripp that on his recommendation, the War Department decided to issue rations to the starving Indians, but that the Indian Agents through jealousy induced General Grant (then president) to countermand the order. Colonel Jolley said that Red Cloud was a very famous statesman and orator, but his favorite of all was the Brule Sioux Chief, Spotted Tail. He described a conference of the Secretary of the Interior, in Washington, with a delegation of Sioux Chiefs, headed by Red Cloud and Spotted Tail. The Indian Commissioner had a head as bald as a billiard ball. (A bald-headed man is held in contempt by Indians; long hair such as was worn by Custer and Wild Bill Hickok was much admired as a standing defiance to enemies, to lift the scalp lock, if able.) The Commissioner disputed one of old Spot's statements, and claimed it was a criticism of the President. Spot replied. "The President has a good heart toward his Red brother, but he has many cheats about him, and some liars. I have always observed that, among liars, the bald-headed man is the biggest liar of all."

The next day, in the presence of President Grant, the Commissioner attempted to belittle Chief Spotted Tail. He abruptly asked him how he attained his rank of "chief"--whether it was hereditary, or came by the selection of the tribe. Spot replied that the rank was not hereditary. He said, "I was made Chief because of my great deeds in war." The Commissioner seized on this, and asked, "Oh, you became Chief by killing a lot of people, like a blood-thirsty murderer, did you?"

"Spotted Tail," said Colonel Jolley, "made a magnificently graceful gesture toward President Grant, paused for ten seconds without saying a word, and then answered gravely, `Yes, sir, I gained my rank as Chief of the Brule by killing in war, just as the Father here (President Grant) gained his chiefship.'"` Colonel Jolley said that there was a flicker of a smile on Grant's stoic countenance, as he lit a cigar and terminated the Council meeting. Judge Tripp told of the assassination of Spotted Tail by Crow Dog, the leader of a disgruntled faction. The United States Court, at Deadwood, sentenced Crow Dog to be hanged upon his conviction for murder, and the Dakota Territorial Supreme Court affirmed the judgment. However the Supreme Court of the United States, in the case "Ex parte: In the Matter of Kan-gi-shun-ca, otherwise known as Crow Dog, Petitioner," 109 U. S. 556, held that the sentence and judgment were void, because the Court had no jurisdiction of the crime of murder of one Indian by another Indian. The Court said: "It is a case of life and death. It is a case where, against an express exception in the law itself, that law, by argument and inference only, is sought to be extended over aliens and strangers; over the members of the community, separated by race, by tradition, by the instincts of a free, though savage life, from the authority and power which seeks to impose upon them the

restraints of an external and unknown code....It tries them, not by their peers, nor by the customs of their people, nor the law of their land, but by superiors of a different race...." The relatives of Crow Dog, under the Sioux custom, had paid commutation, in the form of ponies and of buffalo robes, to be the relatives of Spotted Trail, and under the Indian Law, had wiped out the blood-crime.

Colonel Jolley said that the matter of throwing open the Black Hills to gold prospectors brought all these troubles on the Indians and the whites, including the Custer Massacre. He said that there came near being an unofficial war among the whites over the question of "routes to the Black Hills." The short route was by steamboat, from Sioux City to Fort Pierre, and thence overland by passenger-stage or ox-team freight, to Rapid, Custer City and Deadwood. The military, under orders from Washington, prevented the use of this route, to favor the U.P. route, from Chicago to Cheyenne, a distance hundreds of miles greater than the Sioux City-Pierre-Deadwood route. After an airing of this matter on the floor of Congress, the Pierre-Deadwood route was thrown open. Buffalo Bill used one of the Deadwood Stages from the Pierre Route in his famous "Wild West Show and Congress of Rough Riders and Ropers of the Wild."

### **More memories**

The discussion roused memories in the minds of Zephier Brughier and Theophilus Recontre. Between them, they pieced out the story of the great trip made from Fort Pierre to Deadwood, in the Spring of 1881, by John Daugherty, the famous freighter, and their cousin, Napoleon Jack Carondelet. John Daugherty had the contract for freighting from the Excelsior Mills Company, of Yankton. The Excelsior owned a fleet of steamboats and a great wholesale grocery house, as well as the mills. It transported millions of dollars worth of goods from Yankton to Fort Pierre by the Missouri River route; transshipping them from Fort Pierre to Deadwood by Daugherty's one hundred ox-teams, of six oxen each. But, in the spring of '81, after the early thaw, the ordinary route became impassable; the stage coach was compelled to turn back, and no ox team could travel four miles over the slush and ice. The Black Hills country was isolated, and Deadwood merchants sent a distress call to the Excelsior for medicines, whiskey, coffee, sugar, tobacco, and kerosene. The company called on John Daugherty to solve the dilemma, and offered a bonus of \$2,500 to get one light load through. Daugherty considered going north, along the Missouri to Mandan, west to the Little Missouri, and up the valley to the hills. This was known to the Indians as the "Thieves' Road," and it was over this route that California Joe took a party into the hills in spite of the cavalry. It was soon evident to Daugherty that this plan was impracticable. He happened to run into Napoleon Jack, and received what amounted to an inspiration. Napoleon Jack had a small herd of tame buffalo, which he had lassoed as calves and tamed. His buffalo ox-team, led by his trick buffalo, Jule Seminole, named for the famous Cheyenne Scout, gave stunt performances at the Ice Palace at Minneapolis and the Corn Palace at Sioux City. Jack and Daugherty hitched the Buffalo team to an Indian travois, loaded on the groceries, followed a buffalo trail

known to the Sioux and the French, floated the travois across the Big Cheyenne and broke the drought at Deadwood.

Chief Justice Tripp applauded this story with glistening eyes, and said he was well acquainted with John Daugherty. Old Dakoty said that he knew Napoleon Jack, and knew both Jule Seminole, the Cheyenne Scout, and Jule Seminole, the trick buffalo ox. "But," he added, "if we are going to be out of bed at 4:00 o'clock to sneak upon the brants and Canada honkers, it's time for me to roll in my blanket."

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## Education in Dakota

### **Feed and horses and poker were not excluded from the curriculum before the Dakotas became states.**

**DAKOTA TERRITORY** had a great boom after the bumper wheat crop of '79. The Prairie Queen section of wheat owned by our family netted \$20,000. The crop went 35 bushels to the acre--No. 1 hard, testing 63 lbs. to the bushel by legal test. It bought \$1.25 a bushel in Minneapolis on a special contract purchase by English millers. Up to that time Northern Dakota was always called the "Pembina Country" and its citizens were willing to have it admitted to statehood under the name of Pembina, leaving the famed name of Dakota to the southern half of the territory. But after '79, "Dakota No.1 hard" was the available trade-name, and Northern Dakota insisted on its undivided one-half interest in this asset.

In the various Congresses, after that year, efforts to secure admission to statehood, either as one state or two states, were constantly made. These scholastic statistics of Dakota were paraded: more dollars were spent for education than in Maine; more and higher priced teachers than in South Carolina; more pupils in school than in Tennessee. There was a slight catch to it, though. The average of "days of school per pupil" was about 79, and thereupon hinges my story.

At my father's "Big Place" southwest of DeSmet, in good wheat years when the July weather was cool and the heads filled out and the berries ripened slowly to their full plumpness, wheat harvest did not begin until the first week in August. We kept three headers and three binders cutting, and figured it was a poor day if we did not cut 150 acres of grain. Besides that, my father contracted, usually, with Andy Dailey to run his header on the east quarter sections of the Big Place, and with John Windedahl to cut with his two binders (one McCormick, and one Deering) on the west acreage. Each had to come some distance in the morning with teams, and return at night, so that their combined average was not over 60 acres a day. This enabled our binders (all Deerings) to leave the wheat harvest and start cutting the oats and barley as they ripened. We always "knocked off" work, and so did Andy Dailey, for August 15, because that was a Holy Day of Obligation, in spite of the fact that we ran on Sundays. Father Ahern, a graduate of Louvain and Maynooth, usually drove his ponies up from Montrose to say Mass at an improvised altar, either in a room at the Big Place or in the Rock Creek schoolhouse. As the 15th of August was also my father's birthday, a half-barrel of beer was placed on tap and was cordially enjoyed by the harvest hands and guests of the countryside.

We usually finished wheat harvest about August 25. Meantime, our binders

had cut the half-section of barley and the 480 acres of oats. The shocks stood in these fields ready for stacking and made a magnificent sight in regular rows. We were accustomed to haul the bundles of oats and barley up to the main yards of the Big Place and place the stacks so that when we threshed the straw would run into the alley of "The Shed." This was a structure 300 feet long, divided into two parts by an alley 50 feet wide which ran full length down the center. After threshing, this alley stood full of oats and barley straw piled 100 feet high.

When the stacking was finished September had come, and we were waiting to get the threshers for the wheat, oats and barley--either the Buffalo Pitts, or the J. I. C. Steam Thresher and Separator. In the meantime, all hands started running gang-plows, each pulled by five big horses to turn the stubble under for fire-breaks around all the "settings" of stacked wheat. When the threshers got there, all our teams were used in hauling the grain direct from "the machine" to my father's grain elevator at Redstone, and the "flat-house" at St. Mary's. When threshing was over, it was usually well along toward November, and the family moved from the Big Place into the house which my father rented from Judge Deyo Baldwin in Redstone--the children to attend school.

It was my mother's original plan that her children, after having missed the first two months of school, would have at least the remaining six months of the eight-months' term in Redstone. For two or three years this theory worked. But one day a suave shoe salesman from Boston came into my father's big pioneer store. The great painted sign across the front of this block-long wooden building announced "REDSTONE MERCANTILE COMPANY--Dry Goods, Groceries, Fine Tobaccos, Farm Implements, Boots & Shoes, Caps & Mitts, German Socks, Overshoes, Hardware, Rock Salt, Harness and Saddles." A great snow storm (which would have been called a "blizzard" except that, after 1888, that title was reserved to the "Great Blizzard" of that year) had blocked all railroad transportation for about three weeks. So Mr. Nugent, who was representing the big Boston shoe firm, had plenty of time for conversation with my father. It developed that Mr. Nugent had a brother in Boston whose business was buying horses for the express companies. The traveling salesman advised my father that he might expect a call from the horse buyer in the spring, as there was a good market in Boston for big draft horses. We learned to our surprise that in that city a big truck was drawn by one horse instead of by a team.

Mr. Nugent knew a lot about horses, and went out to the Big Place and looked over my father's fine Norman Percherons. He told my father that they were splendid horses but too lean for the Boston market. My father became indignant and said that if his horses were any fatter they would not be in shape to work. Nugent said, "If you want to sell horses to my brother for the Boston market, fat them like you would fatten a hog, and finish them off with brown sugar to give a gloss to their coats." My father pooh-poohed the idea, but soon received a letter from Mr. Nugent's brother in Boston stating that he meant business, and quoting attractive prices on big draft horses, provided they were "sound in wind and limb and free from all blemishes of every character."

My father had long chafed over "hanging around the store in the winter time." He welcomed something else to do, and anyway, Olaf Norstrom, L.L.D., a Norwegian

aristocrat and scholar who had got stranded in Dakota, was the real dictator and boss of the Redstone mercantile establishment. He was faithful beyond any limit to my father's interests, and was not only a skilled merchant, but understood the then mysterious science of double-entry bookkeeping. Olaf did not hesitate to lecture even my father over some of his impulsive purchases, inspired by a desire to help some young "traveling man" get a start.

According to Mr. Nugent's instructions, the big barn at the Big Place suddenly took on unwonted life, in February. Two hundred tons of prairie hay and fifty tons of millet were put into the haymow. The grain bins on the north side were filled with 2,000 bushels of oats. Fifty tons of mixed ground corn and rye were hauled out from the Redstone Mills, and five big barrels of brown sugar and a hogshead of molasses from the Redstone Mercantile Company. My father selected twenty fine horses of his own for fattening, and began to buy up big teams from other farmers and ranchmen.

Then came the tug-of war.

One fine, Sunday afternoon in February, near Washington's Birthday, my father lit a cigar very deliberately and stood holding the match and puffing slowly as if to get the cigar burning with a good clear light around the full circle. He still held the match (which had gone out) between his thumb and forefinger. We children were experienced enough to know that this move generally presaged the opening of an important, and usually difficult, negotiation with my mother. Finally my father, endeavoring to be casual, spoke up with an assumed cheerfulness and said: "Sarah, what marks did the three boys get in school, in the Christmas examination?"

My mother, not at all beguiled by the maneuver, said in the most acid voice she could assume, which was not, after all, very forbidding: "Dick, those poor children didn't get very good marks. The surprising thing is that they passed at all, after being kept out of school so long. They will have to study hard the rest of the school year to make up."

My father said, "Why, I thought they had pretty good marks....I am going to need two of the boys for a day or two out at the place, until we get the horse feeding under way."

My mother's protests, as she well knew they would be, were of no avail. We were delighted at the idea of a vacation. Thereafter it was an annual event for us to spend from February 15 to about March 7 on the Big Place.

When the Boston horse buyer arrived my father had forty horses hog fat; some of them would weigh over a ton each. They had been finished with brown sugar, and their coats were glossy and smooth. George Davidson would lead them out, one big team at a time. From the feeding barn down to the gate was about thirty rods. George would lead out a big horse; my brother or myself would "step" his left foot into George's big hand grabbing the horse's mane with the left hand at the same time, and in half a second a boy would be on the horse's back with the halter-ropes in his hand.

One of the handlers would give the big horse a slap on the rump with a wooden paddle and the horse would, apparently, start at a mad dash to gallop down to the gate. There was where a little strategy came in, and where my father needed his own boys rather than strangers. The horses were over-fattened, and the dash down to the gate

and back was to test their wind for the buyer. To let them travel too fast would be injurious, so both my brother and myself, who had been good bare-back riders since before we could remember, would pull hard on the halter-rope and let the horse amble gently down to the gate. On the way back, when we reached the place on the road parallel to the Big Shed, about ten rods distant from the yard in the front of the feed barn, we would scourge the horse vigorously with the end of the halter-rope so that he would come up to the barn at a gallop. All of our horses passed the test for "winding."

My father sold the two cars of horses to Mr. Nugent at a fine profit, but the money would not be forthcoming until delivery in Boston. To the surprise of many citizens of Redstone, one evening the northbound passenger train switched to a side track and coupled two palace horse cars behind the Pullman. Our horses were in St. Paul the next morning and the two cars were made part of the fast overland freight to the East, of which Jim Hill made a specialty for fine livestock.

A rather enjoyable incident grew out of the unusual procedure of permitting horse cars to be hauled by the passenger train. A dapper little drummer named Johnnie Deerman traveled for Keogh, Warner & Sherman, the great dry goods wholesale house of Minneapolis and St. Paul. Olaf had switched the Redstone Mercantile Company's business from Carson, Pirie & Scott, of Chicago, to the St. Paul firm. The dapper traveling man had, according to, the humor of those days, been popularly christened "Harry Hayward" after the notorious melodramatic traveling salesman who was convicted of having procured the murder of Catherine Ging, the poor servant girl whom he had betrayed. Hayward was subsequently hanged, amid much newspaper fanfare. Little Johnnie Deerman had the impudence to complain rather publicly about the special privileges my father had secured from the railroad, in having his horses transported by passenger train. It became one of his favorite anecdotes to "the trade" and, of course, he enlarged upon it in repetition. When he learned that some of his mouthings had come to my father's ears, he was perturbed lest his company lose the fat dry-goods orders which Olaf had been giving him. He took the matter up with Olaf, who assured him that the dry goods matter was wholly business, and that Keogh, Warner & Sherman would not lose any of the trade. Being a little sneak, he then suggested to Olaf that perhaps my father might lodge a complaint against him. "No," Olaf said, "no fear of that, but look out for yourself, old Boss has his own way of making people very sorry when they do him a dirty trick."

Johnnie Deerman was really skilled in his business. He was considered by many village belles between Fargo and Sioux Falls to be the swellest dresser who made that territory. He had a cute small mustache, and wore many flashing, expensive rings. He was a good story teller, and a good poker player too--according to my father, up to the point where his courage began to ebb. To his surprise, my father treated him with his usual bland manner, and listened with apparent interest to his latest stories and gags. A small poker game, even, was indulged in, and all passed enjoyably. But Johnnie kept brooding over Olaf's warning, and when he heard that my father had sold the two cars of horses in Boston for the round sum of \$10,000. a sort of petty vindictiveness took possession of him.

A great friend of Johnnie's from St. Paul, who went by the name of "Dude"

Cabe Mackenzie, had just taken over the Grande Teton Hotel at Madison. This was a magnificent building of Sioux Falls granite and had been graced by the presence of President Hayes when he came out to Dakota to see the bonanza wheat crop. Mr. Mackenzie had the only sealskin coat and cap in Madison. The diamonds he wore on his left hand were said to be worth \$25,000. On his engraved calling cards appeared names of the French nobility, to wit, "DuLhut Cabanis Choteau Mackenzie." His nickname of "Dude" was a corruption of "Dute," which was the abbreviation of his first name. His nickname of "Cabe" came from the distinguished Orleans family, "Cabanis." Mr. Mackenzie was a high-toned gentleman gambler. Those who knew him well said that he had a sprinkling of Ojibway Indian blood mingled with the French and Scotch. He fitted up rooms above the Gold Nugget Saloon, so-called because gold nuggets were sunk in the black cement floor in front of the bar. One of his stooges from Grand Forks ran a very private, select, supposedly secret gambling hall in these rooms.

Johnnie Deerman knew of my father's predilection for the "picture cards" and suggested to Cabe that part of that \$10,000 horse money really belonged to him anyway, since his rest on the Pullman had been sadly marred by the hitching of the horse cars onto the passenger train going to St. Paul. The rest of this story I heard from Uncle Will after my father's death.

Uncle Will began at the point where my father had met him in Madison to discuss the question of selling their joint wheat crop or holding it through the winter, hoping for a better market in April. Uncle Will was hauling 100-bushel loads of wheat with six horses from Prairie Queen to Madison, and was staying over that night as a guest of Coon Klotzpaugh, in his warm, comfortable livery stable office. He and Coon had walked into Lew Maloney's Bar for a drink of Canadian Club whiskey, and ran into my father having a drink with Johnnie Deerman, alias Harry Hayward.

In the ordinary course, after another round of drinks, Coon Klotzpaugh suggested a little social game of poker in his livery stable office. Johnnie Deerman readily agreed, but suggested that, just as a tourist proposition, they all go by and give the once-over to the new swell gambling joint. Well, to condense the story, when they got in there, they started to play, and pretty soon my father, who had \$2,000 cash in his pocket, was engaged in a stiff game with Dude Mackenzie. To everybody's surprise, in just a few hands my father dropped \$1,600. Not unnaturally, Johnnie Deerman, as a friend, stood close to my father, matching his play, and could see my father's hand.

At this point, Uncle Will made some jocular diversion. Cabe ordered glasses of 25-cents-a-drink whiskey served all around "on the house." My father, Coon Klotzpaugh and Uncle Will walked down the street. Uncle Will said that for once my father was truly nonplussed, and admitted that he could not understand the situation. He said he knew Mackenzie was not marking the cards, and that the game was square. At this point, Uncle Will shot a heavy squirt of tobacco juice into the street, which my father took as a derisory gesture, and demanded an explanation. Uncle Will said, "Why, your friend, Harry Hayward, was signaling in the looking glass with his diamond ring, and every time there was a good pot he tipped off your hand to Cabe."

The three friends held a council of war and decided that my father needed a

large supply of cash immediately. Where to get it at that hour in the morning was a problem. Fortunately, they ran into Tim Lannon, the banker, and explained the circumstances. He walked around to the back door of his bank and came back with \$5,000, handing each of the Lyons brothers \$2,500 and saying that Uncle Will could drop in later in the day and "fix up" the transaction.

When they returned to the gambling room, they declined Mr. Mackenzie's invitation to play, saying they came only to have a drink before leaving town. Uncle Will, however, finally agreed to "high-spade" at \$50 per cut for five cuts. He won four out of the five, netting him \$150 of Cabe's money. During the proceedings, he had produced his roll of \$2,500, and finally allowed himself to be persuaded by Cabe and Deerman to have a few hands at poker. Naturally, my father was soon drawn into the game again. But this time he and Uncle Will and Mr. Klotzpaugh had things fixed so that no one could see their hands, and they not only won back what my father had lost, but took \$8,000 of Mackenzie's money, in which Deerman had a 20 percent interest.

Deerman, pasty-faced and shaken, blurted out that he had used \$300 of the firm's money and would be ruined as an embezzler if he could not replace it. He begged my father for a loan. My father peeled off three \$100 bills and handed them to him.

"Johnnie," he said, "when you go out into the next room don't stop there. There are some young lads there playing penny-ante. If they win your roll, they won't give it back--they play for keeps."

And after a pause, turning a savage steel blue glare on the trembling Deerman, my father went on, "And if I were you, the next time I got into a poker game, I believe I would take that diamond off my finger. Some fellow, you know, might get mad at you for using that to signal with, and chop your left hand off."

Then, turning to Cabe, and in the level voice in which he usually spoke to one of the clerks in the Redstone Store, my father said, "Cabe, tell your men that your gambling joint closes this morning--for keeps. One crooked game is one too many in the Sioux Valley."

Mackenzie, who knew he was all through, asked only for a little time to dispose of his hotel lease on the Grande Teton, and soon returned to his old stomping ground of St. Paul and Grand Forks. Uncle Will concluded the story with great solemnity by saying, "Tom, my brother Dick was the best poker player in Dakota."

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## Going to College--1900

**THINGS** at the Big Place began to break badly for my father, in 1893. The wheat crop was short, and the price low. In 1895, we merely got back our seed out of the harvest and threshing, and the famed Dakota No. 1 hard wheat brought only 44c per bushel at the elevator.

The year 1897 gave me my first sight of the dust storm. The dust drifted around the fence corners in September like snow. My father's hearty cheerfulness gave way to gaunt, grim silence. The Red Stone Mercantile Company had \$100,000.00 in uncollectible debts. But the worst problem was the question of wintering our fine Norman Percheron horses. There was no feed and no grass between the Sioux River and the Jim. The cattle had long since been sold, and so had all the fine flocks of turkeys, chicken and geese. One day, my father announced at the breakfast table that he had arranged to have the horses wintered at Slim Buttes in the foothills of the Black Hills. There was plenty of grass in the canyons of the Bad Lands.

I had previously completed the eight grades of the Redstone School, and had been tutored in Latin, geometry and rhetoric by Olaf Norstrom, the cultivated and learned Norwegian who was the manager of the Redstone Mercantile Company. Olaf claimed that we made more progress in book-learning the two years I helped him around the store than would ordinarily be made in four years of high school. Studying under Olaf was so full of interest that it was a pleasure instead of a task. We had no fixed hours for studies, but simply utilized spare time. Often we began at eight o'clock at night while discussions of cattle herds, horse breeding, and grain freight rates to Minneapolis raged around the big hard coal stove, the magazine of which had a capacity of three full bushel-baskets of anthracite.

Olaf's sanctum was partitioned off from the main store by high double-shelves of canned goods, and there he imparted knowledge to me by apparently merely visiting, and arousing curiosity and interest. However, he occasionally insisted on memorization and recitation in the Latin tongue. I could repeat for him Maharbal's famous remark to Hannibal, that the gods give not all talents to one man: *"To you, O Hannibal, they have given the genius which enables you to win the victory, but they have withheld from you the judgment by which it might be fully utilized."*

Olaf was a most patriotic Scandinavian, and claimed that the Norsemen were the great civilizers of Europe. He boasted to Father Ahern of the Danish King of Waterford, Thorkils Silkesjaage. Father Ahern suggested that the Danish Kings met their Waterloo when they encountered Brian Boru. Olaf said that Brian Boru's name, correctly translated, meant merely "Brian, the Cattle-rustler." Father Ahern replied that after Clontarf, the Danes should have given Brian a new nickname, because on

that occasion Brian certainly made the Danes rustle. Olaf told my father that I could pass the entrance examinations to Yale, Harvard, or Princeton. This brought a smile to my father, grim as the situation was: "Not much danger, Olaf, of that bluff being called. That is, unless those colleges pay boys by the month for attending them, and furnish transportation besides."

It was evident that my poor father was distressed over not being able to send me to college. My mother had audibly cherished the ambition since I was in the cradle that I would go to Notre Dame and win the Oratory medal. As a girl, she had attended the Winnesheik Normal School, where her classmates were Hamlin Garland and Darwin Sims, who tied for the oratory medal. Hamlin Garland went on to Boston and to his great career as a novelist. Darwin enlisted as a trooper in the Seventh Cavalry, and bit the dust with Custer, at the Little Big Horn.

Olaf came over to supper one night. When we were finishing up the dessert of canned greengages, he brought up the subject of higher education. He told my mother proudly that, in his church (the Lutheran), the clergy always found some way for an ambitious boy to get an education. My sister promptly remarked that I was not in that category because the only ambition I had ever expressed was to win the silver-plated saddle given at Pierre for the best youthful rider under the age of seventeen years. Olaf, however, regarded me as his pupil, and upon Father Ahern's next visit, broached the question. Father Ahern at once wrote to Father Morrissey at Notre Dame and got an answer back stating that I could enter St. Joseph's Hall by paying \$50.00 tuition and work my way through college by waiting on table and washing dishes. My father at once said that he could furnish the \$50.00, and Father Ahern made arrangements to have me take the entrance examinations under his supervision. Within two weeks, an official looking document came from Notre Dame advising that I was eligible as a freshman, and granting me the privilege of enrolling in St. Joseph's Hall on the payment of \$50.00 tuition. My father forthwith sent the \$50.00 to the registrar, and regarded the incident as practically closed. However, immediately after his birthday, August 15th, my mother began a mild agitation on the subject of my wants as a budding college student. She had the list of needs from Notre Dame, towels, shirts, underwear, etc. She advised my father that I must have a trunk, and she thought it would be well for me to purchase a suit or two in Chicago, her idea being that the Dakota styles might be a trifle conspicuous on the campus. This, however, roused my father's spirit of fierce pioneer democracy, and he at once "put his foot down" on the notion of trying to make one of his boys a dude, or aristocrat. He offered the resources of the Redstone Mercantile Company for two suits, shirts, towels and underwear, and suggested I could buy two starched collars in Chicago, which would always give me a clean collar for Sunday. Olaf loaned me the battered trunk that had done duty on his sea voyage from Oslo. My mother then fell back on the subject of transportation and said that I must have money for a railway ticket, and a few dollars over. My father inquired in an abstracted manner of my mother what my age was--as if it was a subject completely outside his stock of information. My mother replied, indignantly, "You know his age, and he is just one month past sixteen."

My father at once retorted, "Well, when I was sixteen, I was driving an Express

wagon in Nashville, and getting \$100.00 per month."

My mother replied that times had changed, and that if I was going to Notre Dame, arrangements would have to be made soon. My father, however, who was always equal to the emergency, already had the arrangements made. But, like a prudent strategist, he did not divulge the plan until the time came for action. So, at the supper table that night, he asked me if I felt equal to driving a team of the bronchos to Prairie Queen, forty miles distant, for Uncle Will's use. I immediately replied in the affirmative. He then explained that Uncle Will had bought up a few cattle, was shipping them to Chicago, and that I could ride in the caboose, on a shipper's pass.

After saying the home farewells at Redstone, I went with my father to the Big Place, and hitched up the "brons" to the buckboard. As I stepped into the buckboard, my father remarked that he supposed that I knew that times were hard, and handed me an envelope, which was found to contain ten one-dollar bills. Three nights after that, at 10:00 P.M., Uncle Will came into the caboose of the stock-train on the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul to say goodbye. He deposited a big pasteboard box which contained about five pounds of magnificent Dakota roast ham and two loaves of bread. The other stockmen in the caboose making the trip to Chicago were all acquaintances of his, and one short, wiry man with a thick gray mustache seemed to be a particular friend. This gentleman was the famed Jack Sully from Fort Randall, and Uncle Will placed me under his special protection. When Uncle Will shook hands saying goodbye, a piece of paper stuck to my hand, and it turned out to be a \$10.00 bill.

But my farewells were not quite finished. Mr. Coon Kotzpaugh came up just as Uncle Will was turning away, with the information that this particular stock train was going the Northern route, through La Crosse, Wisconsin, and that we might have chilly weather. This was merely his way of introducing a gift which was truly magnificent. A French count from the Bell Fourche Ranch had given Mr. Klotzpaugh a Turkish saddle blanket, and this was presented to me on the theory that I might need it to keep warm in the bunk, which the caboose De Luxe provided. As I prepared to stretch out in the bunk, one of the stockmen said that he never lay down for fear of "crawlers." But Mr. Sully told me to go ahead; that the speaker's true reason for not lying down was an intense preoccupation with cards and whisky. I waked up feeling fine and rested at six o'clock the next morning, crossing Minnesota, and at one o'clock in the afternoon our train stopped at La Crosse with the announcement from the conductor that we all had time to eat the famed turkey dinner at the great La Crosse Railroad Dining Room. I sat down next to Mr. Sully, and we had just fairly started on the turkey, cranberry and dressing, when the brakeman came into the dining room swinging his lantern (which for some reason he carried in daylight) and shouting for all the cattle buyers to turn out at once, as orders were changed, and our train was pulling out of the station. Mr. Sully's coolness did not desert him, even if I was a bit excited. He seized up two sections of the Sunday paper which I had bought and made two generous bundles of turkey, dressing and cranberries, giving me one to carry. When he got out onto the platform our freight train was moving at a slow pace out of the station yards. Mr. Sully at once advised me that the train would be moving too fast for us to board the caboose, and that we must run over the tops of the cars. I evidently

hesitated, for Mr. Sully said, "Oh, it's nothing at all....Here ...” and he at once unbuckled his beautifully worked leather and silver belt. "Climb up. I'll walk ahead of you. Hang onto my belt; I won't let go of the other end. Don't look down; look straight ahead at me."

Mr. Sully was a man who spontaneously exuded confidence. Under his generalship, we reached the caboose safely and entered through the cupola. Even when running across the top of the train, I involuntarily admired Mr. Sully's beautiful belt. When the United States Marshal's posse shot Mr. Sully dead near Fort Randall, in Charles Mix County, three months before my graduation, a Winchester rifle bullet went through that beautiful belt. The federal authorities claimed that Jack Sully had gone into the enterprise of international cattle-rustling, a violation of the federal statute. Marshal Jack Omohundro paid a social call to his old friend, Mr. Sully, advised him that a warrant was out, and urged him to go to Sioux Falls and surrender. After consideration, Jack Sully wrote the Marshal a post card telling him that he would not surrender--"Serve your warrant." Uncle Will always stoutly defended his friend's reputation, and claimed that Jack was the victim of conspiracy on the part of rival cattle interests who had political pull sufficient to cause the issuance of the warrant.

We reached Chicago on Monday morning at 8 o'clock, and that afternoon I entered Notre Dame, the most lonesome boy east of the Mississippi River. It was my first experience in a totally strange land, where the magic of my father's name had no skill. There were rules and regulations to be considered--a disagreeable novelty.

My rough Dakota suit did not attract unfavorable attention, but my high-heeled shoes, of which I was so proud, and my Boss Rawedge Cowboy hat (youth's model) called for derision and nicknames. But this was not the worst. The beautiful grounds of Notre Dame, with the trees and magnificent buildings, aroused no spark of admiration in me. I was looking for the dream country, where the sky met the earth. Father Houlihan, C.S.C., who finally encouraged me so that I got over my homesickness and was enabled to become a member of the student body, saw me standing one afternoon, gazing around trance-like. With his great tact and kindness, he managed to draw me into a conversation. Finally, he asked me just what seemed peculiar to me in the sights at which I was gazing. I finally told him about Dakota, where you could see the horizon for six miles in any direction, a perfect circle.

*I love my prairies, they are mine  
From Zenith to horizon line,  
Clipping the world of sky and sod,  
Like the bended arm, and wrist of God.  
I love their grasses; their skies,  
Are larger, and my restless eyes  
Fasten on more of earth and air  
Than seashore furnishes anywhere.*

I had not then read Hamlin Garland's poem, but it expressed my feeling. Father Houlihan was very sympathetic, even to the point of inviting me to ride to the

College Farms with him, whence he pointed out a small meadow, bordering on St. Joseph's River, which went by the name of St. Joe Prairie. The humor of the great name, applied to the few acres of meadow, suddenly restored my equilibrium. I put my magnificent Stetson hat away in Olaf's trunk, spent 35 cents for a college cap, and began the process of becoming acclimated as a student of Notre Dame.

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## **“Politix” in Dakota**

**"When hearts beat hard, and brains, high-blooded, ticked."--The Ring and the Book.**

**WHEN** my father brought the wagon train from Burr Oak, Iowa, to Prairie Queen, Dakota Territory, in the 70's, he had a letter in his pocket from the Vice President of the Milwaukee Railroad to Mr. R. F. Pettigrew, Attorney at Law, Sioux Falls, D. T. My father presented this letter, together with the requested filings of the wagon-train company, to Mr. Pettigrew late one May afternoon. After a pleasant chat, he arose to leave, whereupon Mr. Pettigrew said, "What time do you get up in the morning?" My father replied, "Well, we are all farmers, and can't sleep after daylight, but I suppose you don't want to see me earlier than tomorrow afternoon, or perhaps not that soon." "Oh, well," replied Mr. Pettigrew genially, "I am a farmer too, so drop in as soon as you have breakfast." My father answered, "Well, that will be right at 6:00 o'clock." The next morning, shortly after six, my father was at the small frame one-story building which bore a board sign announcing to the world, "R. F. Pettigrew, Land Office." Mr. Pettigrew pushed over the Land Office certificates showing that my father and his fellow members of the wagon train had legally filed on 480 acres each of fine Dakota land--160 acres homestead, 160 acres preemption, and 160 acres tree-claim. Mr. Pettigrew had proved fully as efficient as his friend, the Milwaukee Vice President, had prophesied. It was self evident that the Land Office Register and his subordinates did not keep union hours when Mr. Pettigrew had business earlier.

My father told us that Mr. Pettigrew's fees for his legal service were ridiculously low, but Mr. Pettigrew waived all thanks and all discussion of the meagerness of his fees with a question prompted by his real life interest, which was politics. He said, "Mr. Lyons, what is the politics of the members of your wagon-train company? I observe a great many Irish names in the list, and I have been wondering if you have any Democrats in the crowd." (Mr. Pettigrew was, even then, before he was 30 years old, spoken of as the Republican boss of Dakota Territory.) My father answered, "Well, Mr. Pettigrew, I am bound to be candid with you--we did have one Republican in the crowd when we left Burr Oak, but the boys found out about it and dropped him into the Big Sioux, at Luverne. I never heard whether he managed to swim back to the Minnesota shore, or went down the river to Sioux City." Pettigrew got a good laugh out of this, but said, "Well, I'm glad that your crowd are Democrats. You may be interested in knowing that we haven't any Democrats in Dakota Territory. And a good many people think we don't need any of them, either. But my observation is that you never know what the future holds. and of course the day might come when

we need Democrats in Dakota."

This was the beginning of a friendship which ended only with the Senator's life. Due to the tremendous area of Dakota Territory (equal at one time to the combined areas of Oklahoma and Texas), it was difficult to arrange a territorial-wide meeting. The representatives from Laramie County in the southwest and from the Pembina District in the northeast were a widely separated (taking transportation difficulties into account) as Chicago and El Paso. A few years after my father's arrival in the Territory, when R. F. Pettigrew had been elected Delegate in Congress from Dakota, there was strong agitation for statehood, and a general desire to have a meeting at Bismarck to discuss the question. The Republican Territorial Convention was scheduled to meet there, and Mr. Pettigrew invited my father and Tom Walsh (later Senator from Montana) to attend, under a formal safe-conduct guaranteeing that there would be no abuse of Democrats in that Republican Convention. My father and several other friends attended under this arrangement, and the peace protocol was scrupulously kept until the last hours of the convention. Then a "bloody-shirt" Republican got the floor and proceeded to lambast the Democrats with his favorite quotation--"I did not say that all Democrats were traitors--what I said was that all traitors were Democrats."

Tom Walsh excitedly seized my father's arm and said. "Dick, what can we do with that damn fool? Frank Pettigrew ought to stand by his word." My father arose and made a point of order against the gentleman's remarks, stating that he and other Democrats had traveled 450 miles to attend the meeting, merely for territorial purposes, under an agreement that not one word of criticism of Democrats would even be suggested. Mr. Pettigrew, who had been absent, came into the hall at that moment and most vigorously stated that my father's point of order was well taken, should be sustained, and that the speaker who was abusing the Democrats was as senseless as a wild ass of the Asian steppes. The convention by a gale of laughter applauded the ruling of the chair, sustaining the point of order, and the cognomen "Wild Ass of the Prairie" clung ever after to Major Pickeral, the over-patriotic Grand Army orator.

In 1889, when my father was elected delegate to the Constitutional Convention at Sioux Falls, the Republican Party was in charge of the convention, and Mr. Pettigrew was said to be in charge of the Republican Party. In any event, he saw to it that his old friend and client was appointed on all the important committees. My father had another very pleasant experience connected with the convention. The Democrats unanimously opposed constitutional prohibition, and nominated a full slate of convention officers, which was, of course, foredoomed to defeat. Their candidate for chaplain of the convention was Episcopal Bishop Hare, with whom my father formed a warm and lasting friendship.

### **Cleveland**

In 1892, when, to the surprise of all the Dakotans, Grover Cleveland was elected President, Senator Pettigrew pointedly advised my father that Cleveland was going to drive all the western Democrats out of the party with his gold standard

policies, and jocularly urged my father to make ready for re-baptism as a Republican. The Senator added, "I have observed, though, that the Irish Democrats are just about as likely to leave the Catholic Church as they are to quit the Democratic Party." My father replied, "Frank, if you will read history, you will find that the Democratic Party opposed the ostracism of Catholics and Irishmen when your Republican party and its predecessors, the Whigs and the Know-Nothings, made intolerance one of their principal doctrines. One of the great calamities," my father continued, "was the defeat of Stephen A. Douglas for the Presidency. There would have been no Civil War and no consolidated government, with the twin evils of the tariff and the trusts, if he had been elected. Slavery would have disappeared anyway, by a compromise, and payment of compensation, and there would have been no race hatred." "Well," said Pettigrew, "it was the fire-eater of the South, like old Ben Tillman today, who wrecked your party at Charleston, in 1860. Secession began there, but, of course, it was a blessing for the Union, because it brought Abraham Lincoln into the presidency, and gave us the party of free men and free homes. Speaking of Catholics, one of the best Republicans and most patriotic Americans I know of is Archbishop John Ireland, of St. Paul. I had dinner with him and Jim Hill the other night, and they are both hoping for the day when William McKinley will be President."

President Cleveland's second administration was indeed ill-starred, from the standpoint of western Democrats. He vetoed the pension bill and went fishing on Memorial Day, and these events brought forth a terrible berating from the Grand Army Republicans. Then times got hard, and the most active occupation in the land was that of the sheriff, crying foreclosure sales. The West was in revolt. The eastern Democrats opposed the income tax, and voted for the repeal of the Sherman Silver Act, thereby, according to Senator Pettigrew, fastening the gold standard on the country.

One hot afternoon in the summer of 1895, the Senator called at the Redstone Mercantile Establishment to see my father. There was with him a tall, hazel-eyed, handsome young man, with long raven-black hair, whom the Senator introduced as Democratic statesman from Nebraska. When this gentleman departed for the hotel, the Senator remained behind, to leave with my father a birthday gift of a quart of choice "liquor," saying that the gentleman who had just departed was a "white ribboner." He added, "He's a spellbinder, though, from the forks of the creek. His delivery is just as good as Will Sterling's, although he is not as strong on reasoning power and logic as Will. He has made a study of the money question too, and I think you and he, and all the other western Democrats, had better get ready to support a silver man like McKinley for President." My father said that if he were as good an orator as Will Sterling, then he was a "grass-cutter." He added that the best orator the Democrat had, in his opinion, was John G. Carlisle, then in Cleveland's Cabinet. He then said, "Frank, it looks to me as if Mark Hanna and the Gold Democrats are going to run your party, and you will have no place to light except in the bandwagon of 'Silver Dick' Bland."

Sure enough, there was tremendous excitement in the Redstone Mercantile Establishment in June, 1896, when the Sioux Falls *Press* carried a boxcar headline to the effect that Senator Pettigrew and a dozen other Republican Senators had "walked

out" of the Republican National Convention at St. Louis, when that convention adopted the "money plank" dictated by Mark Hanna.

But a still greater thrill came the second week in July, when the news came of the speech of a young man from Nebraska, known as the "boy orator of the Platte." There was a magnificent picture the next day in the Chicago *Record Herald* entitled, "The Cross of Gold," and under it, "Pen-portrait of the Honorable William Jennings Bryan, whose speech, yesterday, on the money question, makes him a possibility for the presidential nomination."

My father looked hard and earnestly at this picture, then he said, "Well, by George, that's the young fellow Frank Pettigrew brought in here a year ago, when he left me that bottle of Canadian Club. Well, this is a surprise!" That night, he read the speech aloud to us, and said, "I believe he will be nominated and elected."

### **Bryan**

In October of that year the news came that William J. Bryan had electrified the East with his magnetic eloquence, and that silver crosses were blazing in a triumphal trail of victory from Florida to Maine. There was a feeble rumor that even South Dakota, the ramparted stronghold of Grand Army Republicanism, was wavering. The news came that Bryan would sweep through Dakota like a prairie cyclone. Senator Pettigrew consulted my father as to routing his tour. Bryan spoke at Sioux City at 9:00 A.M. to 30,000 people; made eight speeches between there and Sioux Falls; spoke for an hour at Sioux Falls to 50,000 and the word came that he was en route to Huron and would pass through Redstone at 6:00 P.M., but that the train would not stop because the railroad officials would not consent. Ten thousand people had gathered at Redstone. My father hitched the Hambletonians to a buggy, and we drove the fifteen miles to St. Mary's in an hour. There my father telegraphed a railroad magnate in Chicago and had an answer back immediately that the Bryan train would stop seven minutes at Redstone. We drove on to Vilas, put the team in the livery barn and boarded the train when it stopped for the Milwaukee crossing. In just a few minutes my father was in earnest conversation with Senator Pettigrew and other State leaders, including the Democratic candidate for Governor, Honorable Andrew E. Lee, of Vermillion. At the news that my father was on the train, Pat Wickham, General Mark Sheafe and Hugh Smith rushed forward, and when he produced the telegram authorizing the stop at Redstone, they hugged him. Senator Pettigrew said, "We'll soon be there. I'll notify Clancy [the man who had charge of Bryan's arrangements]. Come on, Tom," he said to me, "and shake hands with the next President."

My father and I followed him down the aisle of the car, which was full of smoke. Near the other end, a big bulky man was stretched out asleep, covered with an overcoat. In a minute or two Clancy awakened him. He was in his undershirt and trousers, and I wondered how he would get his shirt, collar and tie on in time to speak. As he sat up, a man helped him into his unlaced shoe. Another man held a bucket of ice water and a towel. The big man with the black hair splashed ice water all over his head and neck and gave it one wipe with the towel. Then he pulled a silk muffler around his

throat, pulled on a big double-breasted overcoat over his undershirt, buttoned it up tight to his throat, put on a black ranchman's hat and followed my father out onto the platform. The crowd was so silent with astonishment that you could hear a pin drop. Then my father said, "Fellow citizens, the Democratic candidate for President refused to go through Redstone without greeting you. I introduce William Jennings Bryan." There was a shout, as exultant and fierce as ever split the welkin at a Roman gladiatorial show. Then the magic of the eloquent orator's voice fused all hearts in that crowd into one with its magnetism. He had expected to speak seven minutes, but the engineer started the train at the end of the third minute; and Bryan said, "It is evident that I leave you unwillingly, but now I must go. I want you each to take this question and decide it for yourselves. What makes our country great is the responsibility of the individual citizen. But, if you need any advice as to whom to put in the White House, I suggest that your own citizens, like the great Republican leader, Senator Pettigrew, and the staunch Democratic leader, R. F. Lyons, are safer advisers for you to follow than Mark Hanna, the Standard Oil magnate, who owns the Republican party." The train had now gathered speed, but the cheer of the crowd could be heard for a quarter of a mile.

I saw that Mr. Bryan took another ice water splash, laid aside his hat, covered himself with the overcoat, and went back to a peaceful sleep. That night, at 9:00 o'clock, he spoke to 50,000 in a Dakota October wind at Huron, and went on and spoke to 30,000 more at Aberdeen at 2:00 A.M. There were no "loud-speakers" then, but everyone heard the golden voice, with its sonorous swell, that, aloft and clear, was sent to the last verge of the vast audience, "as when in the belfry arch is swung the silvery bell."

On the Sunday before election our hopes were high. Hugh Smith and Pat Wickham came with Father Ahern for dinner, and in the afternoon General Sheafe arrived. There was a discussion as to Bryan's chances for election. My father said that we would know something, he thought, in the next hour, as Senator Pettigrew was in a nation-wide conference in Chicago, and had promised to send him a wire. Sure enough, in a little time, the telegram came. My father read it over for almost a full minute without a word. Then he lighted a cigar and passed the telegram over to Pat Wickham. Mr. Wickham also read it in silence and handed it to General Sheafe and Hugh Smith. My mother finally said, "Well, what in the world is the mystery?" My father answered, reassuringly, "Well, Frank says everything is all right. He merely advises against betting on Bryan's election." "Well," my mother said, "that means that it's all over for poor Mr. Bryan." Hugh Smith said, "That's my version of it too. When Frank Pettigrew won't take a chance and bet his money, the chances are slim." "Well," said Pat Wickham, "we will elect Andy Lee, anyhow." And they did.

In 1908 my father was State Chairman, and in January, 1909, Senator Pettigrew invited him and his friends to have breakfast with Bryan at the Senator's stock farm near Sioux Falls. Cakes, sausage and maple syrup constituted the principal dish. At each man's plate there was a fine big water glass of golden maple syrup. The glass at Bryan's plate really contained maple syrup; the Dakota pioneers each had a glass full of the Senator's celebrated Bourbon. At the end of the breakfast, Senator

Pettigrew's blunt speech manifested itself. He said "Bryan, in 1896 we all thought you were going to win. And, maybe you did, and just didn't have the right men doing the counting. In 1900, of course, you had no show; but this last time, Dick Lyons and I were both badly fooled. Tell us just how the hell it feels to get the stuffing beaten out of you three times for the Presidency." The Commoner met the situation nobly. He said, "Senator Pettigrew, and my pioneer Dakota friends, let me answer that statement by quoting your own Dakota proverb, `When a man sleeps on the ground, he's in no danger of falling out of bed."

The epilogue is contained in a book entitled "Western Democrat," by the late Arthur F. Mullen, for many years Democratic National Committeeman from Nebraska, and floor leader for the Roosevelt forces at Chicago in 1932. Mr. Mullen comments on Bryan's vote in 1912, against the majority report of the Credentials Committee, which had seated the Pettigrew-Andy Lee-Champ Clark delegation from South Dakota. Mr. Mullen says: "...Dick Lyons, Chairman of the State Central Committee (South Dakota), who had the right to issue the credentials...declared the [Clark] ticket victorious over the Wilson-Bryan ticket. The South Dakotans on the Wilson-Bryan ticket were so cognizant of the justice of Lyons's action that they were willing to compromise...."

*So all the passionate hearts are dust,  
And dust the great ideas which burned  
In varying form of love and lust  
'Till the world's brain was turned.*

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## Dakota Hail Storm

**WHEN** Theophilus Rencontre and Zephier Brughier, Old Dakoty's cousins from Elk Point, got ready to leave the Big Place to return to Southern Dakota, it was early in May, and our fine big Percheron mares had been segregated in the "maternity ward" of the corral at the Big Place. The news of the foaling of a fine colt was considered more of importance in Dakota than a Proclamation of the President or an Act of Congress. The matriarch of the herd of mares was "Old Lil," a beautiful Cleveland Bay, which my mother's father had donated as a present to the family the year of my birth.

Lil had grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and her progeny were readily distinguishable by the keen-eyed judges of horseflesh who were on the roads between Sioux Falls and Forestburg, the county seat of Miner County, on the Jim River. Each member of our family on attaining the age of five years received the distinction of a ride on gentle Lil's broad back. Her disposition and intelligence made credible the tale in the "Fifth Reader" about the Arab's horse which lived in the tent with the family like a pet dog.

Pike L'Siou, Old Dakoty, was plainly not anxious to accompany his cousins on their departure from the Big Place, and since he had convinced my father that he was expert in handling mares with young foals, he was invited to remain. George Davidson placed in Pike's hands the great home authority of amateur farriers, "Doctor Lym's Home Veterinarian, Medical Adviser and Compendium of Useful Knowledge." This thick book had several pages of curious facts ordinarily carried by almanacs and also matters having special reference to that great Dakota subject, the horse. Under the title "The Seven Most Famous Horses of History" was the following list:

- Bucephalus--Steed broken by Alexander-the-Great**
- White Surrey--Steed of Richard Third mentioned in Shakespeare.**
- Roan Barbary--Steed of Richard Second mentioned in Shakespeare.**
- Black Bess--Dick Turpin's mare.**
- Morocco--Bank's Horse, a famous High-School horse of about 1600.**
- Bayard--Charlemagne's magic horse.**
- Pegasus--The winged steed of mythology.**

George M. Stratton said that the list was pedantic, and that a real horseman would not have overlooked Nancy Hanks and Maude S. Captain Palmer said that General Lee's horse, Traveller, and Stonewall Jackson's mount, Little Sorrel were famous horses and that "Sheridan's Ride" entitled the "Steed that Saved the Day" to

honorable mention, but that he had never heard that horse's name, and never heard the name of the horse George Washington rode at Yorktown, either. Old Dakoty said that Comanche, Captain Keogh's horse, the only survivor of the Custer Massacre, ought to have a place in the story, and that Custer's horse, Dandy, was also entitled to mention. The big book advised also that mares suckling colts should not be worked at all for six weeks after the arrival of the foal, and only lightly until the colts were weaned. Accordingly the mares with colts were seen hitched only to the hay-rake, or to some other light type of farm implement, although a light load of prairie hay was not considered too much of a burden for them and the sight of the handsome colts frisking along behind the hayrack was a very pleasant one.

About the Fourth of July, as we drove by the wheat fields on the way to the School Section where we were putting up hay, we noticed that the wheat plants had jointed and that the wheat was beginning to head. The season was promising in every respect: corn was knee high, which was according to the formula, and the prospects promised a bumper crop of all kinds of small grain. The last week in July, the deep dark green of the wheat fields was giving way to a yellow sheen, and my father sent word to the Big Place to run the three headers and three binders into Redstone for a thorough over-hauling preparatory to the beginning of harvest on the Section "east of town," which he judged would be ripe and ready for cutting a week ahead of the six sections at the Big Place.

This move left only George Davidson, Pike L'Siou, my younger brother, and myself out at the Big Place to finish up hauling prairie hay from the School Section to the stables, and to put all in readiness for harvest. George Davidson was annoyed by a minor catastrophe which was to prove of great importance. Thereon Davidson had come screaming and weeping to the breakfast table with the news that his setter pup had fallen into the cistern. All hands immediately rushed to the rescue, but it was in vain. It was a badly drowned pup which we fished out of the 60-barrel cistern full to the brim of fine rain water caught from the roofs, and depended on as a drinking supply for the harvest hands. It was necessary to empty the cistern, and we planned to start hauling drinking water in the next two or three days from Northup's spring, two and a half miles distant, to replenish the cistern supply.

That night, around the ranch kitchen, Pike L'Siou told us of the great cloudburst on the Jim River in the sixties which drowned an entire wagon-train company of 23 people, including their dogs and ponies. Those who had seen the storm which came up suddenly, in the night, claimed it was a water-spout and as evidence adduced the fact that big pickerel were found in all the small creeks and sloughs, and that they could have got there only by deposit by a wind storm and water-spout which carried them hundreds of miles. Undoubtedly a great wall of water rushed down the creeks which flowed into the Jim River and caused such damage and loss of life. Gold prospectors on their way back from Virginia City were caught in the storm and drowned. Pike remarked that the storm had succeeded a day of intense moist heat, when the temperature had gone to more than 100 degrees, succeeded by a sudden shift of the wind to the north, followed by a hail storm.

The next day we used two teams hauling hay, while George Davidson went

with another team to Bill Campbell's place to borrow his tank wagon to haul water from Northup's spring. The wheat fields were a glorious sight, the weather was warm and the wheat was rapidly ripening under a breeze from the southeast. That night was uncomfortably hot, but George Davidson remarked that it took such weather to make corn, and that we would all know the weather was hot the following week when harvest would be on in full blast. He had heard from my father that the harvest crew would start cutting the section east of town the next day, and we were warned to get the finishing touches on all preparations at the Big Place.

The next morning we took all three teams to the "Tree Claim" to stack millet, which had been cut and bunched. We took our lunch with us, as we intended to haul in three loads when we came in at night. The day was what was called in Dakota "hot and muggy," and working with the heavy millet was a very sweaty job. After eating our lunch, we felt considerable fatigue, which we were unable to shake off with the ordinary vigorous exercise. George Davidson finally remarked that the southeast wind had switched to the southwest, and had become what was technically known as a "hot wind." He said that it was a good thing that the wheat was practically ripe, otherwise this hot wind, if it had come ten days earlier, would have caught the wheat berries "in the milk," and would have cut down the yield a third. While we were talking, the air seemed to get clearer and we felt a great sense of relief. In half an hour the wind was coming from due west and was perceptibly cooler and pleasanter.

Old Dakoty remarked that he could see a cloud in the north and that the weather could easily threaten hail if the wind got in that direction. George Davidson scouted this suggestion, but said that he feared we might have a hard rain which would "lodge" the heavy stand of wheat and delay harvest for a full week. Gunder Serns drove up with the news that harvest was in full blast south and east of Redstone, and that he certainly hoped for two weeks of fine weather. Old Dakoty said, firmly, that the symptoms, if we were in the Black Hills, would mean stormy weather, or maybe a wind and hail storm.

Gunder Serns drove on and we worked on vigorously pitching off two loads of millet at the stack. As we finished, the wind was blowing straight from the north, and a menacing black cloud was spreading over the sky. George Davidson gave the word to start the teams for the house; our speed soon increased. As we passed the corn ground, rain began to fall in large isolated drops, each as big as a teacup, which splashed in the dry dirt between the corn rows. Old Dakoty said: "That's a sure sign of hail and I fear a big wind-storm too; the color of that sky means a twister; put the horses on the dead run boys, and when we get there, unhitch and turn them loose and follow me."

When we reached the yard of the Big Place, opposite the long shed, we stopped, and without waiting to unhitch the teams, stripped the harness off of them, leaving the tugs still hooked to the singletrees. It was evident that Old Dakoty had been considering his strategy for the last half mile. While we were freeing the horses from the harness, he had rushed to the stable and seized a 12-foot ladder which stood against the barn. He lowered this ladder immediately into the cistern, which was still empty, and shouted to each of us to climb down. George Davidson adjusted the catch on the eaves troughs so that the water would not run into the cistern. Old Dakoty had,

thoughtfully, dropped some broken benches and boxes into the cistern, and we were not physically uncomfortable occupying them. We heard a roaring sound, and Old Dakoty said, "That's the cyclone." Then came some light crashes. George Davidson said, "That's hail. It's light, not bigger than bird's eggs, but it will cut all the fine wheat to ribbons." Then there was a real crashing noise, and George said, "Those hail stones are as big as turkey's eggs; they'll pound everything that's left into the ground and smash the corn to smithereens too."

When we got out of the cistern, we rushed immediately to view the damage. Where had stood the fine sections of waving wheat, estimated at good for a 20-bushel yield, there was a scene of smashed, discolored straw, pounded into the mud. The 640-acre cornfield was as barren as it had been the previous March, before planting. Tom Morgan rode up on horseback with the news that lightning had struck the line-fence between his pasture and ours, killing 17 of our fine heifers which the storm had driven against the fence. We learned afterwards that the entire period of the hailstorm was exactly 17 minutes.

That night my father arrived from Redstone behind the grey McNairs. His first question was as to the safety of "Old Lil" and the colts. When he found there were no casualties in this department, he became more cheerful. The section east of Redstone had escaped the hail storm altogether, and he figured it would yield 15,000 bushels of wheat--enough to pay the coal bill for the winter and to furnish seed-wheat for the next season. He said, "Every cloud has a silver lining. I was complaining just the other day to Archer & Howe, of St. Paul, of the price of wheat, which is only 44c a bushel on the Redstone market. I told them that it cost at least 60c a bushel to produce wheat. So, from one point of view, the loss is not so great financially, but it is a little severe emotionally. However, there will be another season. The loss of the cattle can be mitigated too by the same line of reasoning, since good beef cattle bring only 2c per pound. "George," he continued, to George Davidson, "I'm going to let you have your whim. You've been wanting to go into turkey raising for the last five years; now I am going to back you in that venture. You can drive over to the Black Hills with the teams and header-boxes and bring back 3,000 incubated turkeys and turn them loose on this six sections of wheat land."

The story of the turkey venture must await another telling. Suffice it to say that for Christmas dinner in Redstone that year we chose spare-ribs and back-bone of fine fat hogs of December killing. My father took a pencil and endeavored to demonstrate to my mother on the last day of the year that, under the current prices, the hailstorm had not been such a calamity as it seemed, but my mother declined to acquiesce in this view. She pointed out the vast supply of food which the crop would have furnished for poor, hungry people the world over.

My father, to tease her, and to divert the thoughts of all of us from the terrible destruction of the hail storm, said, "Well, Sarah, I'm afraid that when you attended the Decorah Normal School they hadn't yet installed a course in the new science that Cap Palmer calls Political Economy; it treats of production, distribution, price and real profits. It is very interesting."

"Well," my mother said, "Dick Lyons, you are not so smart after all; if you had

stayed in Iowa, as you promised me you would to get me to marry you, we wouldn't have to worry about hail storms. And maybe I don't understand political economy, but I believe that this great Dakota land that you are so infatuated with is likely to give me a pretty good understanding of, and a post graduate course in, real domestic economy." "As long as we have coal for the winter," my father said, "and seed wheat for the spring, I am not going to worry about your not having a new sealskin coat every year."

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## Flesh and Grass

### **A Dakota Pioneer dies where the Prairies turned into the Dust Bowl.**

**IN 1934** when the Dakota dust storms raged furiously and the United States government was compelled to purchase and slaughter emaciated, starving livestock, my father, in the last month of his life, described again for us the beauties of the magnificent Dakota prairie in 1873. The region from Omaha to Fort Buford was called the Upper Missouri country, and, except for a few garden patches and some tillage and cultivation as far up as Charles Mix County, it was one great ocean of grass.

The natural phenomena of the mighty prairies awed astonished and delighted all beholders. The mysteries of the mirage fascinated them; the glories of the northern lights (aurora borealis) had a mysterious influence of wonder, slightly mixed with fear; the "sundogs" which appeared on each side of the sun in the sharp, frosty winter mornings were the subject of much discussion. In summer, when the thick carpet of the Buffalo grass closely covered the earth, and the strong stems of the bunch grass grew as high as a horse's shoulder, there were many hypotheses offered by amateur naturalists to explain the fact that the prairies which produced grasses so abundantly and luxuriantly were devoid of trees. My father's explanation was that the great prairie fires, several of which he had seen raging across the plains, licked up everything in their path and prevented young trees from getting a sufficient growth to survive. The banks of the streams were fringed with willows and cottonwoods, and he deduced from this fact that they received sufficient moisture through their roots, which went down into the water courses, to enable them to survive. He explained that, in the early years, even in times of severe drought, there were no dust storms, because nature's preventive --the Buffalo grass--held even the loose, dry soil in place against the force of the heavy winds. When, however, all of the land "East of the River" had been broken up and put into crops and all the lakes and marshes were drained and a system of drainage ditches had practically destroyed the small rivers, nature's protecting blanket had been destroyed. This, of course, was merely another manifestation of the vulture aspect of the boasted "Anglo-Saxon civilization" which had destroyed the great horse herds, buffalo herds, and Indian tribes which had dwelt, from time immemorial, on the prairies of Dakota, to whom the Sioux Nations had given their name.

In 1917, when the World War stimulated wheat prices, the thirty thousand square miles of range "West of the River" were invaded and put in wheat. A season or two of excessive rainfall gave sufficient moisture to mature the crops, but when normal conditions returned, it was soon evident that the region had been intended by

nature for a short-grass country--good only for grazing. Then, when the droughts came, there was no carpet of Buffalo grass to hold the soil and the high winds whipped it aloft hundreds of feet into the air and hundreds of miles in distance so that Dakota dust was seen in the streets of Chicago.

My father was 86, and had told us all, bluntly, in the Dakota harvest phrase, that he was near his end, saying most calmly, in the presence of Uncle Will and myself, "It is near quitting-time for me, and while I might like to stay to see some of the grandchildren get started right, still that is not to be, and, I guess things will manage to move on some way without me."

Uncle Will read aloud a telegram which had just come from Senator Peter Norbeck to my father, telling him that he understood he was pretty sick, but that he must hang on a while longer, as South Dakota could not spare him just then--in the critical days of drought and depression, in which my father's encouragement had, on previous occasions, been so valuable to the pioneers. Uncle Will and my father then turned to a discussion of the "virtues of the buffalo grass; how it cured on the stalk in the fall; and that the oil it contained nourished stock all through a Dakota winter, so that they would come in fat in the spring."

My sister had received a Bulletin from the US Department of Agriculture, and I read aloud a statement *re* the buffalo grass:

**Buffalo Grass (*Buchloe dactyloides*) is the dominant grass in short grass regions. It grows on uplands and may be heavily grazed by stock. Buffalo grass is palatable and nutritious to all classes of livestock. It will stand extremes of drought and very heavy grazing. Buffalo grass cures in the fall and makes good, nutritious winter forage. It spreads by vigorous runners, though it needs surface moisture for the stolons, or runners to develop roots. Its seed production is light, except in favorable seasons.**

My father and Uncle Will agreed that this account of the great buffalo grass accorded with their findings, based on more than 60 years of observation. Uncle Will asked me if the bulletin told anything about the "blue-joint," which, in seasons of sufficient rainfall, grew higher than an Indian pony's head. I found an account under the name of "Big Bluestem (*Andropogon furcatus*)," which described the Dakota grass called "Bluejoint." The bulletin stated:

*Big bluestem is the dominant native perennial grass in the bottom land type of pasture. Originally big bluestem was the principal grass in the richer prairies of Eastern Dakota, now all under cultivation.*

*Big bluestem is very palatable and nutritious in its earlier stages of growth and the protein content is about 14*

*percent. In September, when the crude fibre has increased, and the grass has matured, the fibre is about 33 1/3 percent.*

*Big bluestem is a sod grass, spreading by root stocks which greatly add to its ability to withstand grazing, and to its value as a pasture plant. The fact that it does not joint and mature seed until late summer makes it especially valuable for supply forage during the summer months.*

*The root system of the big bluestem is rather coarse, and consequently not so drought-resistant [as buffalo grass]. Late spring freezes may check the growth of this grass, but, even so, it usually makes a good growth in May and June. The roots have a working depth of from 5 to 8 feet. It begins flowering in August and continues until frost. It will stand close grazing.*

My father and Uncle Will were delighted with this description. My father remarked that this big bluestem, or blue-joint, as it was invariably called in Dakota, was the grass that gave the prairie fire the fuel which enabled it to out-travel a racehorse, when driven by a high wind. He remarked that he had seen the prairie fire jump 40 rods of "braking," which the pioneers had depended on as a secure fire-break. Uncle Will remarked that no fire-breaks could be depended on to stop a prairie fire driven by a Dakota fall wind, and that the only safety lay in a "back-fire." The mysteries of the back-fire were fully explained for some young visitors. I had had the good fortune to see Uncle Will and Uncle John Rei with their crews set the back-fires which saved the Prairie Queen section "improvements," which consisted of dwelling house, stables for 100 horses, a corn crib, and granaries holding 40,000 bushels of small grain (wheat, rye, barley, oats and flax). The technique of the back-fire consisted in stepping off 20 rods from the fire-break, in the direction from which the wind was blowing. There the fire was started, and the wind blew it, of course, toward the fire-break, where it was stopped, not having gained much momentum in the short distance. The burned space was consecutively increased by new hack-fires. A crew of men stood ready, with soaking gunnysacks, to snuff out any brands which might escape and start a fire inside the area protected by the fire-break. By the time the raging prairie fire was at hand, Uncle Will and Uncle John had a fire-break 60 rods wide. However, the voracious prairie fire snuffed out the beautiful grove which had taken 15 years, from 1873 to 1888, to develop, and which was one of the show places of the Sioux valley, containing, as it did, 20 acres of fine shade trees.

My father then asked me if the bulletin contained any description of the short blue grass which grew in bunches, but did not reach the height of the ordinary blue-joint. I found a description of red bunch grass, which he identified as the "Little Blue-joint." It read:

*Little Bluestem (Andropogon scoparius) is a bunch grass having a fine, very much divided root system making*

*it well adapted to absorb moisture in relatively dry soil. It is a dominant upland grass. It has about the same growth habits and feeding value as big bluestem. Considerable seed is produced in years when favorable growing conditions prevail. After the seedling is established it tillers profusely, soon forming a large bunch.*

Uncle Will said there was another grass which will grow along the railroad right-of-way, and could stand a burning summer drought, which he called "plume grass," on account of its plummy head, but that stock did not care for it, and would only eat it in times of excessively dry weather when the pastures were burned up.

"Well," my father said, "it was a great mistake to break up all of Dakota. I believe it would have been better if the government had made it a condition of homestead entry, that only half of the land should be broken. Of course, hindsight is always better than foresight. But, poor Dakota--when I remember the great days, the wonderful hay crops--the harvest--when wheat went 30 bushels to the acre, in the '70's --the tremendous vegetable crops. Why, in the Chicago restaurants when I used to take a trainload of cattle up there, they would advertise that they were serving Dakota potatoes. Well, you can all imagine what a heart breaker this terrible season is. I have seen the days of the blizzard, and the prairie fire, and the drought and the grasshopper, but this beats it all for disaster. I wonder how the poor people will survive and manage to hold their land. Perhaps it is just as well that I am going to turn in my checks this summer, and won't be here to see the fall."

My father did not live to see that fall, nor even the summer through but about the time the bluegrass would ordinarily have been making its best growth, he went to his appointed place, and we buried him under Dakota sod.

**Only the actions of the just,  
Smell sweet, and blossom in the dust.**

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## Hot Winds in Dakota

### A bad wheat year and a few sheep.

**ON MARCH 21**, in Redstone, we celebrated the advent of official spring by opening up the "flat-house" to begin cleaning wheat for seeding. The "flat-house" had been constructed by my father for use in the grain-buying business before the "dump-elevator" had been invented. My father frequently remarked, for our encouragement in the strenuous heavy labor of wheeling the big twelve-bushel barrow from the bin to the fanning-mill, that the self-binder and the dump-elevator had taken all the drudgery out of wheat raising. He recalled the days when he and Mike Donlan and John Windedahl had the job of loading a thousand bushels a day into a freight car from the "flat-house" by arm-and-back power. Now our labors were reduced to handling only about six thousand bushels which it was necessary to run through the fanning-mill to clean out the mustard seed, weed seeds and small defective wheat berries which made "screenings," good only for chicken feed.

The "spring" day on which we started had a temperature of twenty below zero, but it was clear and bright with a brilliant sun; there was almost no snow on the ground--it had been an open winter and my father was anxious to get the seed wheat cleaned and hauled out to the big place while the roads were still passable. We all knew that an April blizzard about the middle of the month was a possibility and we were anxious to get the wheat seeding over before that event, because a blanket of snow on the newly seeded wheat would almost guarantee a prosperous wheat plant and plenty of luxuriant "stools." Hauling the seed wheat out to the Big Place became something of a problem when we got down to the last thousand bushels. The weather had turned warm and we had a big March rain; every night the thermometer would go down to about zero and all the next forenoon the roads were merely ruts filled with water and melting ice. We did not attempt to haul a bigger load than thirty bushels, although our wagons had a capacity of eighty-seven bushels each and on good roads the big Percherons could handle the capacity load without trouble. To our surprise April came in warm and mild and on the fourth day of April we were engaged full-blast in wheat-seeding. We finished seeding about the seventeenth of April and my father thought that we were in great luck that very night because there was a three-inch downpour of cold rain and the next morning all the ruts had ice in them.

My father explained that the little freeze did not hurt a thing and that the wheat and the soil would be the better for it. That day the wild geese gave us a great orchestral salute from high in the sky and that night Steve Archimbault slept out in an

improvised thicket in the clump of willows near the school-section and came in about 4:30 A.M. with two fine fat wild geese. In about ten days the wheat fields began to be green, the weather was warm and mild and there was a gentle "never-resting prairie wind" blowing day and night which made the wheat plants grow rapidly. By May 1, when we started corn planting, my father began to show signs of worry and told George Davidson, that it was getting "terrible" dry. However, about May 12, a storm came up very suddenly and an inch and three-quarters of rain fell in an hour. This did not serve to restore my father's equanimity as he recalled that the spring of '79 was very much similar and the crop was short by reason of drought. He recalled also that a violent rainstorm ran off the surface and did not soak into the sub-soil. However, the corn came up looking green and prosperous and the wheat crop seemed to make a fairly good growth, although it was plain that the dry spell had injured it.

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The same gentle warm prairie breeze continued to blow, although now every afternoon the wind became somewhat stronger and finally about June 20 began to blow constantly from the southwest. Two days later my father said with a grim expression, "This is a regular Dakota hot wind, and if we don't get rain in a week the wheat stand, short as the stalks are, will begin to head." The wind continued both day and night from the southwest and even an hour after sundown it had sufficient of a burning quality to be uncomfortable. On June twenty-seventh the wheat headed, although the stalks were only a few inches high. My father still did not give up hope. He said, "About '81, we had a condition like this, but we got a big rain on the twenty-ninth of June and the crop went twenty bushels to the acre of number one wheat weighing sixty-three pounds to the bushel, although the straw was so short that we had to cut some of the grain with the mower."

But alas for human hopes--the wind held steadily in the southwest and the burning quality as very perceptible now two hours after sundown. My father looked drawn and worried. My poor mother asked him, "Dick, do you think the hot wind is withering the crops, especially the corn?" My father answered. "Sarah, I don't know for certain yet whether it is withering the corn. but I feel as if tonight it is withering my heart." We were all silent and mournful because it was a new experience to see my father lose his optimism and admit it. However, the next day he was in more cheerful spirits and after a conference with George Davidson said that he thought the wheat would probably go seven bushels to the acre of No. 2. After all this was better than a total loss. On July nineteenth, we started cutting the crop. We did not attempt to use the binders because the stalks were so short, but started in with a single header, thinking that there was enough straw to make heading feasible. At noon, however, my father shut down the heading operations and we started cutting the grain with mowers and raked it up as we did the prairie hay. The straw, the heads and the entire plant visible to the eye was bleached and desolate looking. Hamlin Garland wrote that "he loved the gold of newly shaven stubble, rolled a royal carpet toward the sun fit to be the pathway of a Deity." The white bleached stubble that we saw had a hot

discouraged look and whenever I hear of somebody talking about the fields "white with harvest" I still recall the bleached drought-stricken swath that the mower left.

Nature was certainly perverse that year. We had no sooner got the hay rake and the "bucker" back in the machine shed after stacking the cut grain than a great wet spell started. It rained every day for three weeks and a total of twenty inches of water fell. The wheat stacks were soaked and flooded and when the weather turned warm they began to sprout. The mowing, raking and stacking had shelled at least half of the berries and the six sections were soon covered with a rank luxuriant growth of what Steve Archimbault called "self-seeded wheat." The moisture and the warm weather gave this crop a great stand although of course there was no possibility that it could mature before frost. The pasture and hay land sections also sprouted a tremendous grass crop and the blue joint again made a beautiful sight waving in the wind almost as high as the shoulders of a horse. George Davidson urged my father to endeavor to make some use of this great plant growth. My father, however, seemed for once to lack initiative and could not get his mind off the ruined stacks of wheat which he had estimated at only a seven-bushel-to-the-acre crop at best, but about August fifteenth, his birthday, he reached a momentous decision and told George Davidson that the stacks were not worth threshing and that if any plan could be figured out for utilizing them and the great growth of green wheat and grass that he would endeavor to finance it.

After several nights of earnest debate, Steve Archimbault told my father that he believed that about six hundred May lambs could be purchased in the Bad Lands, that these lambs could graze on the wheat fields and eat the stacks and that by Thanksgiving they could be sold in Omaha at a good profit. "Well," my father said, "all I know about the sheep business is what I heard from my friends around Miles City who had big cattle herds. The worst plague they could put upon a man was to wish that he might die a `sheepman.' However, I do not share that prejudice, and you might as well take twenty-five teams and header boxes and hay racks and drive over to Ree Heights and see what you can do."

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To my great delight I was permitted to go along as a teamster under Steve's command. In due time we stopped at a big stockade near the Missouri River where Steve's uncle Jean Crebassa lived and for the next ten days we were engaged in finding and loading May lambs. I left with Steve on the last load. After I became well acquainted with Uncle Jean, he told me some of the tales of the Missouri River which his father, Toussaint Crebassa, had passed on to him. One that he enjoyed enormously was his story of old Fort Union at the confluence of the Yellowstone and the Missouri. He said that the ruins of the house of the Bourgeois were still standing. I was greatly mystified at this until he explained that in the days of the fur-traders, the Bourgeois was the big boss or big chief and that he had power of life and death over his company of voyagers. The legend was, he said, that the greatest Bourgeois who ever lived was not a Frenchman. but was Manuel Lisa, the Spaniard, and that the French admitted that

Lisa was as much of an iron man as Frontenac or LaSalle or La Verendrye. He told the tale of McClellan, a real wilderness man, who had been one of Mad Anthony Wayne's runners and who had vowed to kill Manuel Lisa if he ever met him on the Missouri above the Riviere St. Jacques (the James River which flows into the Missouri). However, when Lisa came up the river, a few years after the Lewis and Clark expedition, McClellan had his chance, but there was something so awe-striking and authoritative in the air and look of the big Bourgeois that McClellan was intimidated.

We reached the Big Place with most of the lambs in good condition and from August to Thanksgiving Day they had a great feast of wheat stacks and green growing wheat and luxuriant prairie pasture of bluestem. By December first, they had been sold in Omaha, at a profit of two dollars and a half per head. The next spring, Mr. Cyrus Clark, the proprietor of the Palmer House at Redstone, took up with my father, apparently in a serious way, the matter of sheep culture. He knew that the venture had proved somewhat disappointing and that the sheep had cropped the school section so close that even the hardy buffalo grass was a poor stand. He recalled the warning of a former Commissioner of Immigration to the effect that Dakota was an uncertain proposition as a farming country by reason of occasional shortage of moisture. My father had, however, recovered his spirits and his optimism and immediately came to the defense of that great region with the eloquence of an almost infatuated lover. They were standing out under the maple trees in front of the Palmer House and as they talked a covered wagon drawn by three lean, emaciated, stumbling horses drove up. Mr. Clark said, "Another bonanza wheat farmer who has gone broke in this great Dakota of yours, Richard, is heading back to Missouri, to live on his wife's relations." Mr. Clark then called out to the man who had descended from the driver's seat in the covered wagon the customary Dakota salutation, "Stranger, where you heading for?"

The stranger evidently thought that he had trouble enough without being cross-examined, and no doubt he had become somewhat irritable due to constant repetition of the same question by every person he met, so his answer was delivered in a somewhat surly manner. He said, "Headin' for Hell, I reckon."

Mr. Clark took no offense at all at what was plainly intended to be a disagreeable reply.

Instead he said, with a large, benevolent gesture of his arm, "Drive right into the feed yard, Stranger. You're there."

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## West of the River

**"All Navigable Rivers, within the Territory occupied by the public lands, shall remain and be deemed public highways ...." U.S. Revised Statutes, Sec. 2476 --derived from Act of May 18, 1796, and Act of March 3, 1803. U.S.C.A. Title 43--Public Lands.**

**COMMENCEMENT**, at Notre Dame, was graced by the presence of Cardinal Satolli and Attorney General Bonaparte (grandnephew of the first Napoleon). President Morrissey had awarded me one of the two student places on the program as a consolation prize for my defeat in the Inter-collegiate Oratorical Contest, at Indianapolis, so my father, mother and sister, and Judge Baldwin and his wife, came to the Commencement from Dakota. On our return home, as we were pulling out of Chicago, on the Chi. & N. W. Ry., my father took up the matter of my future activities. I was already well familiar with his cardinal business principle: that the best property any man could own was a good piece of Dakota land. He regretted that I was not 21 years of age, and hence disqualified from participating in the great Rosebud Lottery drawing, by which the United States government was throwing open to settlers a vast tract of land, "West of the River." The Rosebud Indian Reservation had been the property of the Teton Nation of the Sioux, or Dakota Confederation, but the white man's land hunger had finally forced its acquisition by the United States.

In Dakota, "the River" had, from time immemorial, been the exclusive title of the "Mighty Missouri." The Dakota citizens stoutly contended that the entire Missouri-Mississippi system should by every right, bear the name of the Missouri, from its source in the icy rills which flowed eastward from the Great Divide to its mouth in the Gulf of Mexico. Geographers and geologists might take the contrary view, but the true faith of Dakotans was expressed in the popular jingle of the homesteaders:

*To the West, to the West,  
To the Land of the Free.  
Where the Mighty Missouri  
Flows down to the Sea.*

Dakota's Silver-tongued orator, Will Sterling who was considered more eloquent than Bryan, had a purple passage on the Missouri. He quoted Daniel Webster. The Defender of the Constitution after a visit to St. Louis, according to Will Sterling said:

*Yes, when I visited Colonel Benton at St. Louis, I went up the Mississippi to see what is termed the junction of the Missouri River with the Mississippi. But what I saw was the place where the yellow turbulent waves of the Great River of the West seized upon the tamer, milder, upper Mississippi, and impart to it their own hue and character, and their turbulent violence. I mean, sir, the place where the wild, rude, vigorous Missouri takes captive its tame domestic sister, and bears it triumphantly to the glittering waters of the Gulf.*

Will Sterling demonstrated, to the satisfaction of his Dakota audience, that the Great River, in its entire progress from the eternal snows of the Great Divide to the Atlantic Ocean, should have had its name preserved as "The Missouri."

Father Ahern, who, when sojourning in Quebec and Montreal had delved into the Jesuit Relations, said that the Mississippi exercised a hypnotic charm over the pens of historians. He attributed this to the romantic career of De Soto and his tragic death and burial in the bosom of its waters. La Salle and Joliet, he said, had appropriated the river to their fame and named it the Colbert, in honor of the Intendant in the French government, at Paris. De Soto called it the Grande. Father Ahern inquired of my father as to the genesis of the word Missouri. After a consultation with Pike L'Siou, he concluded that it was a Winnebago word, inasmuch as the Missouri Tribe of Indians was a sub-Nation of the Winnebagos, but Captain Jack Crawford dissented from this view. He said that the Winnebago word for Muddy Waters, or Smoky Waters, was "Winnipeg." He believed that the Indian Tribe took its name from the River. He cited the fact that the Sioux word for "Muddy Waters" was "Minneshoshe," which he thought to be the origin of "Minnesota." Captain Jack said the Kaw word "Ne-Sho-Ja," when twisted by white tongues, came nearer to being the original for "Missouri." I was destined to hear another explanation, based on a myth of the Ojibways, the hereditary enemies of the Sioux, from whose language the French took the word Sioux, and applied it to the great Dacotah Nations.

Will Sterling told of the tremendous length of the river, and how it was navigable for a distance of three thousand one hundred fifty miles above the junction with the Mississippi. He boasted of its mighty tributaries, the Yellowstone, the Platte, and the Kaw, each of which had a length of 3,000 miles. The Platte, according to Colonel John C. Fremont, the Pathfinder, was originally called the "Nebraska," an Indian word meaning the "Big Shallow." The Platte was, jocularly, said to be a mile wide and an inch deep at its mouth. Sterling said that between the bluffs of the upper Missouri, in its course through Dakota Territory alone, from Jefferson just above Sioux City to Fort Buford, there were more than 16,000 quarter-sections of fine land. And, he added: "The Great Missouri River, by reason of the violent and shifting character of its current, has a first lien on every acre of this fertile arable soil. Its source," he continued, "is not to be found at the Great Falls of the Missouri in Montana, not at the junction of the Gallatin, Madison and Jefferson Rivers (named by Lewis and Clark), but far above, in the mountain rills which originate in trickles from icicles which rest upon the eternal snows of the Great Divide, in the Rocky Mountains, separated by only a few miles from the heavy waters of the Columbia."

In 1880, Mr. R. F. Pettigrew, Delegate in Congress from Dakota Territory, obtained an appropriation for a Survey of the Upper Missouri. It developed that the early exploration of the River was shrouded in mystery. Thomas Jefferson had endeavored to induce the Russian government to send an exploring outfit from Sitka to approach the source of the stream from the West. When this project fell through, he secured a promise from the French government that an exploration party would go up the stream from St. Louis. However, before this project got under way Bonaparte, the First Consul, ceded Louisiana. This gave President Jefferson his real opportunity and the Lewis and Clark Exploration Party to the head-waters of the Missouri and the Yellowstone was soon under way.

All these discussions came vividly to my memory one fine day in the Spring of 1905 when perched on a wagon to which four of my father's big Percheron horses were hitched, crossed the Missouri, on the ferry, from the Charles Mix shore to the Rosebud Indian Reservation. My father had bought a "relinquishment," which permitted me to file on an 160-acre homestead, and I was en route to become a settler and make improvements required by law. My big wagon had a breaking plow and a disc seeder, and it was not many days till I was fairly well qualified as a "sod-buster." I soon found, however, that the triple duties of breaking, "batching," and digging stone were too much for one man, so I looked around for an assistant or a hired man. I soon found an eligible character in the person of a young man of French and Sioux forebear, named Luchaire Perrijon. He was a good cook and stonedigger and we struck up a warm friendship.

One Sunday afternoon in July some of his kinsmen came to see my fine flax crop, the tiny blue blossoms of which gave the 140-acre field the appearance of a lake when viewed from a distance. One of Luchaire's visitors was his granduncle, Antoine Cardinelle. He had many interesting tales of the early settlements along the Missouri. He was said to be at least 90 years of age, and had been a pilot on the steamboat which bore the prospectors to the Gold Rush in the Montana fields at the time of the great Virginia City strike. He was greatly disappointed to learn that I was not the nephew, or in any other wise connected with the redoubtable Hayes Lyons, the famed Virginia City road agent who departed this life after a trial by the vigilantes. Of greatest interest to me, however, was his account of the genesis of the word "Missouri." He told of the great Ojibway Nation, the only enemies whom the Sioux had been unable to conquer and he claimed that the word "Missouri" was a French corruption of an Ojibway word which meant, "The Great Lizard that has its tail in the ice and snow, and its mouth in the warm water." This, of course, bore out Will Sterling's argument--that the mighty river which ran from the Rocky Mountain divide to the Gulf of Mexico was, and of right should be, denominated the "Missouri."

As Uncle Cardinelle was well-versed in early Dakota history, I think his interpretation of the word "Missouri" is entitled to great weight. He had received the traditions of the mighty French explorers and missionaries. He had tales of Pierre Chouteau of the American Fur Company, who had founded Fort Pierre and sold it to the United State government for a military post, from which the capital of South Dakota takes its name. His tale of floods and ice-floes and Indian councils and Indian

flights whiled away many a long December and January night around my roaring cookstove in the frail homesteader's shack. Two of his heroes were the brothers La Verendrye, who he claimed explored the Missouri and were the first white men to see the Rocky Mountains.

However, all good times come to an end, and the day came when, pursuant to properly published notice, I appeared with my witnesses before the Register of the Land Office, and made proof that I was duly entitled to a homestead patent of 160 acres of land upon making the commutation payment of \$1.25 per acre to the United States government. In due time, the patent came, bearing the famous signature of a one-time Dakota rancher, T. Roosevelt, who executed the same as President of the United States. My father read this document aloud to the assembled family and said, "That's a better degree, according to my way of thinking, than an L.L.D. from Harvard or Notre Dame either."

However this might be, six or seven years later, at Tulsa, I vividly recalled Uncle Cardinelle when I received a clipping from a South Dakota paper which stated that on February 16th, 1913, some school children in Pierre, South Dakota, had discovered a leaden tablet which had apparently been buried for many years. The experts pronounced the tablet genuine and authentic. It stated in French that the brothers La Verendrye were on that spot on April 2, 1743, and that Louis XV, their lawful King, was the Lord and Master of all that country, and that the ruler thereof, under the King, was the Marquis de Beauharnois, Governor of Canada. As there is an historical record that the Verendryes stopped with the Mandans, on the Missouri, after a mighty exploring trip to the West where they saw snow-capped mountains, I have great confidence in Uncle Cardinelle's claim.

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## Mandan

### The Story of Kearney who knew not to yield.

**WHEN** I got thoroughly settled on my claim "West of the River", I quit breaking at the end of my second two weeks and started sowing flax with my disc-seeder. Later on in the season, I got a chance to let some "contract breaking" to Charlie French and others, and by this means I succeeded in breaking and putting in one hundred forty acres to flax. In October Charlie French came with his separator and horsepower to start thrashing. The season of beautiful Indian summer or "squash summer" as Uncle Antoine Cardinelle by virtue of his Sioux blood called it, had begun. There was a golden haze in the air. The afternoons were languid; the days were short; the sun set early in a blood-red glow; the stars shone with a majestic peaceful beauty over the wide flat prairie, and the never resting prairie winds blowing gentle all day and all night furnished a musical accompaniment to the purr of the separator. Every morning just before dawn, there was a light frost, and one morning Luchaire Perijon claimed there was a window glass pane of fragile ice on Choteau Creek. The flax crop was a great success, it went more than thirteen bushels to the acre, and sold for about thirty-three hundred dollars, giving a clear profit of seventeen hundred dollars over the cost of the "relinquishment" and all expenses.

On the day we wound up thrashing, my father and Colonel Jolley drove over from Bon Homme County, where Colonel Jolley had a suit to quiet title to a double allotment affecting the heirs of a Yankton Indian.

They were en route to Fort Randall to look up some witnesses. That night I had a big fire in the cook-stove and fried ham and eggs until one in the morning for the members of the thrashing crew, who were disposing of the contents of an eight-gallon keg of beer by way of a farewell party. Uncle Cardinelle did not enjoy beer, so I had brought a quart bottle of good standard brandy for the old gentleman, who was said to be almost ninety years of age, although he still plied his trade of stone-mason. He had been a river pilot on the Missouri in the golden days, having come to Elk Point with his parents from Canada at the age of three. He was fond of describing the burial of the Emperor Napoleon in Paris, under the fiction that he had been an eye witness, although he had never been in France. His father, according to Colonel Jolley, had been one of Napoleon's soldiers, and Uncle Antoine undoubtedly reproduced his father's account of the event. He really had a great personal acquaintance and friendship with Strike-The-Ree, the Yankton Sioux Chief, who was present in August, 1804, when

Thunderbird and White Crane held their famous Council with Lewis and Clark at the Mouth of the James or as it was known at that time, the Saint Jacques River. Strike-The-Ree told him that Captain Merriwether Lewis gave a very dramatic signal for the meeting of the Council by setting the prairies on fire, a gesture that duly impressed the Sioux. Uncle Cardinelle said at that time and for many years thereafter the Dakota Nations were not unfriendly to the white men or to the United States, although they remained staunch to their ancient allies, the British, during the War of 1812. He told of Durion, the French Sioux interpreter, and Manuel Lisa, the Spaniard, who was the first United States Indian Agent to the Tribes of the Upper Missouri, and always retained their friendship by his fair dealing. Lisa lived in St. Louis, which was the principal city of Louisiana Territory, and Uncle Cardinelle commented on the fact that all of that great Dacotah region had at one time been under the sovereignty of "the two greatest kings who ever lived" as he termed them--Louis XIV and Napoleon I. Colonel Jolley patriotically said that Thomas Jefferson would compare favorably with either of the great men named, and quoted Will Sterling, Dakota's silver-tongued orator, who in his great lecture on the Missouri River referred to Thomas Jefferson as "One who comes tramping down the aisles of fame with the Declaration of Independence under one arm and the Louisiana Purchase under the other."

### **Bon Homme Island**

Colonel Jolley asked Uncle Cardinelle his views as to the origin of the fort on Bon Homme Island in the Missouri River and said that Lewis and Clark had left a good map of it in their official journal. There Cardinelle said that the general tradition was that that fort and other similar fortifications, the remains of which were still plainly visible throughout the Dakota region, had been built by the Mandan Indians, whose origin was shrouded in great mystery. My father said that he understood that the legends concerning the Mandans were purely romantic, and that they were in fact a cognate branch of the Sioux, somewhat similar to the Assiniboines. But Colonel Jolley disputed this, and said that the Mandans had been in Dakota much longer than the Sioux, and that they were a more highly civilized type of Indians. He told the story of George Catlin, the famous painter, who believed that the Mandans were descendants of a great Welsh colony which had landed in America about 100 A.D. under the leadership of the mythical Prince Madoc, and had intermarried with Indian tribes on the Atlantic seaboard. Various Welsh gentlemen bearing the glorious names of Morgan, and Thomas, Morgan Jones and Llewellyn and Caradoc and Maethvan and Rhys had solemnly certified with voice and pen to the absolute verity of the Madoc Legend. One enthusiastic Welsh missionary even told the tale of having saved his life when in captivity among the Mandans by accidentally speaking Welsh. The Mandan Chief immediately understood, and at once embraced the captive as a blood brother. My father and Colonel Jolley thought this tale might have been due to the well-known Welsh gift of literary artistry.

"But," said Colonel Jolley, "one portion of the great legend concerning the Mandans does rest on historical fact. Their tribe was at one time, before the Sioux

came west of the Mississippi, the most important in the entire region of the Upper Missouri from Kansas City up to Port Buford. At one time the entire country between the Platte River and the British dominions on the north and the Missouri River and the Rockies on the west was universally given the name of Mandan by all of the frontiersmen, buffalo-hunters, stagecoach drivers, fur traders and gold prospectors, who traveled through that great region on the rivers or over the plains. When Minnesota Territory was organized, its western boundary was the Missouri River, and all that part of Dakota between the Missouri and the Big Sioux was comprised in Blue Earth County, Minnesota Territory. It was probably the largest county in the United States at that time. As the region west of the river between the Missouri and the Rockies was left without any legislative organization until Nebraska Territory was created in 1854, the fact that the few thousand white men who traversed the region, by common consent gave it the name `Mandan' testifies to the importance and prestige of the Mandan Indians. They were indeed highly civilized, made wonderful pottery and blue beads which jewelers say were unique and cannot be reproduced, their secret formula having been lost. They are also entitled to the fame of having first made pemmican; and the Mandan women were undoubtedly considered the most beautiful of the squaws. It is supposed that up to about 1750 they still held all of the territory from the mouth of the Sioux (now Sioux City) on up to Manitoba." Uncle Cardinelle said that the Sioux were unquestionably the Indians who dispossessed the Mandans; that when they came west of the Mississippi they were glad to get away from their furious enemies, the Ojibways, who had often defeated the Sioux in battle, and waylaid their great canoe parties on the Mississippi. When the Sioux got fire-arms though, and became "horse Indians," they were practically invincible, as even the United States Army learned at Fort Fetterman and the Little Big Horn.

My father asked Uncle Cardinelle which of the Army generals he admired the most. Uncle Antoine had a great fondness for General Sherman, but it turned out that this was due to a conversation which he claimed took place between that Commander and the Great Chief Red Cloud of the Ogallalas. At the peace treaty in 1868, Sherman got very chummy with the old Chief, and after considerable jesting in which Sherman of course had the best of it, he asked the Chief if there was any favor he could do him. "Yes," answered Red Cloud, "General Sherman, I wish you would give me this old Civil War cannon, which is lying out on the parade ground." "Why," Sherman said, "Chief, what in the world do you want with that old cannon? Do you want it just as a souvenir or for business purposes?" When the Chief did not answer, but merely remained impassive, Sherman said to General Crook, "By George, old Cloud wants that cannon to kill soldiers with. Now, Chief, isn't that the truth?" "No," said Red Cloud solemnly, "kill soldiers with club. Want cannon to kill buffalo-hunters." Uncle Cardinelle then went on to mention some of the great stars of the Army like Sheridan and Custer. He thought the frontiersmen and scouts like Charlie Reynolds, California Joe, Pike L'Siou and Wild Bill Hickok, were the finest physical specimens of man who would ever live. He said they had more courage, endurance and resourcefulness than any of the great heroes who were so famous, and pointed out the tremendous nerve required to make a trip, alone in winter weather of 25 degrees below zero, of two

hundred or three hundred miles all of the time in danger of death from freezing, starvation or the bullets of the alert, vindictive Sioux scouts. Also, he said, capture meant death by burning at the stake, the mere thought of which would unnerve the man of ordinary courage. And he added, "Plenty of men can be brave when in a crowd or when they have the support of even one other man, but the men I named were alone and in danger for weeks at a time." There was something impressive about the old river pilot's tone of voice, which made all his hearers know that he spoke from personal observation. But he said, "The bravest Army officer I ever saw was General Phil Kearney. He made a great mistake due to his credulous trust in the honeyed words of the savage old Chief Inkpaduta, who persuaded General Kearney to disarm his officers and men and come into a great Sioux Council where he was absolutely at the mercy of the chiefs and braves, who had of course concealed rifles and knives under their blankets. General Kearney realized his great error and that he and all his officers and men were in danger of immediate massacre. A great wood fire was burning and from it lighted embers had been taken to light the peace pipe by the treacherous sub-chiefs of Inkpaduta. Two barrels of army powder stood in the corner of the room where the council was being held. When the peace pipe was passed to General Kearney, he called for a fresh wooden ember, then he stood at his full height before the council, made a sudden step toward the two barrels and called out in a menacing tone to the interpreter, to tell Inkpaduta to order his braves to throw down their weapons on the ground at once, or he would send all to Hell by the powder barrel explosion route. Whether the Indians were overawed or so admired Kearney's courage that they yielded was not known, but the weapons were thrown down, and Kearney extricated himself and his officers and men from danger."

My father asked where the episode took place, and Uncle Cardinelle said it was at the Council Bluffs on the Missouri River about the year 1848. Uncle Antoine explained that the Council Bluffs at that time did not signify the present site of Council Bluffs, Iowa, but referred to bluffs on the Nebraska side of the Missouri River above Omaha. "Well," said Colonel Jolley, "this very spot of land here in Dakota west of the Missouri River has great historical interest. It was once a part of Canada, later of the Province of Louisiana. It has been within the Missouri Territory, Iowa Territory, Dakota Territory, but I believe that in some way it should preserve the great name of Mandan, which the fur traders and the buffalo hunters gave it in the great days before the Civil War."

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## Prairie-Chickens

### Hunting the birds and a conversation.

**THERE** was great excitement in Redstone one blustery April Fool's Day when the Sioux Falls press carried the startling news that Governor Mellette had signed the "Game Law," prohibiting the shooting of prairie-chickens between February 1 and August 1, inclusive. The farmers and ranchers had protested vigorously against the measure, and there was talk of attacking it in the courts on the ground that it was unconstitutional. The argument was that the farmers and ranchers furnished the prairie-chicken breeding grounds and feed in the shape of grain and worms, and that they had a right to dispose of the prairie-chicken crop just as they had the right to control and dispose of the other products of the soil. It was claimed also that the legislation was the result of propaganda by some foreign bird lovers' society in New York or Pennsylvania. My father bluntly explained to the great counsel of the citizens in convention assembled around the mammoth base-burner of the Redstone Mercantile Establishment that the legislation was just and necessary to prevent the entire destruction of these beautiful game birds, and that he had personally urged the Governor in writing to sign the measure, and that he would defend the Governor's action in the next Democratic State Convention where the disgruntled planned to make an attack. The prairie-chicken is defined as a pinnate or spotted grouse. When my father brought the wagon-train into Dakota territory, in the early 70's, the three principal sources of protein supply were the cat-fish, the prairie-chicken and the buffalo. Pemmican, made from jerked buffalo meat cooked with the jelly of the Pembina berry (wild cranberry), in deep fat made from buffalo, or Catalo suet, made a ration which, according to Pike L'Siou, (Old Dakoty) was superior on a long trip to the German iron ration of non-rot sausage. Charley Reynolds, Custer's famous scout who died at the Little Big Horn, claimed that a few shavings of dried Pemmican, boiled with onions, made a dish which was a real delicacy. The prairie-chicken flocks covered the entire prairie and the sight of the hen-mother pretending to have a broken wing, running to lure boys and other intruders away from her nest, was a sight to strike even the toughest heart. In the absence of law, the unwritten code doomed anyone who injured the brooding hen, or her nest, to the universal indignation of the community, like some Roman interdict.

In July, when the young chickens were grown and flying, the flocks made a grand music, just before the dawn, calling and drumming, and whooping to each other. Even an amateur hunter, without a bird-dog, in the early days could go out with a 10-gauge shotgun, and bring in 20 birds. Steve Archimbault, who had a reputation even in the Belle Fourche country as a good shot, could kill them on the fly with a pistol, shooting from a header-fox. However, a hegira of hunters came from Chicago

and Milwaukee and Minneapolis with repeating shotguns, and soon threatened the flocks with extinction. Professional hunters came to ship enormous bags to the Eastern restaurants, and the prairie-chicken was in a fair way to go the route taken by the buffalo and the wild-horse herds.

When the game law went into effect, the flocks were no longer so plentiful, and it was necessary to hunt with dogs. In Redstone, Captain Palmer had a magnificent Irish setter; Mr. Ward who had the distinction of owning a wonderful handmade, gold inlaid, double-barreled, 10-gauge shot-gun, relied upon a powerful Llewellyn setter to find his birds; Judge Baldwin claimed that his handsome Gordon setter was not only a very capable bird-dog, but was also a great family pet. My father's dog was a present from Mr. Archer of Archer and Howe, the great grain-commission merchants of St. Paul. She was an English pointer of a pedigree almost as famous as the Hapsburgs, and was so intelligent that she could almost take part in a conversation.

After the passage of the game law, Mr. Clark, the proprietor of the Palmer House at Redstone, was besieged with requests from Chicago for rates for hunting parties, who desired him to secure bird dogs for them. He replied, laconically, that there were men between the Sioux River and the Jim River who would loan their pistols, their wolf-dogs, their saddles and saddle-horses, and he had even heard it said that there were some who would loan their hunting-case gold watches and their wives, but he hadn't found a man who would loan a bird dog. Captain Palmer came in trepidation to the Redstone Mercantile establishment to file a protest against Mr. Clark's apparent cynicism. "Fan Palmer says that Cyrus Clark is going altogether too far, and the women of Redstone will boycott his hotel, if he doesn't look out. Of course, she said to me," continued Mr. Palmer, "you, Will Palmer, are so spineless that you couldn't pass there whenever you would smell waffles and Vermont maple syrup and ham frying, without going in and eating an extra meal, but I will call a meeting myself. Tut, Richard, what is the world coming to?--with these Susan B. Anthony's and Prohibition, and Game Laws? Bishop Hare was here the other day, and was greatly amused over that story about the station agent who advised a clergyman to hurry down and get a big box marked 'Religious Books.' He told the preacher that it was an emergency, as the box of books was leaking. You know, Richard, I always have my interstate shipments of Kentucky Dry Goods marked 'Harness and Saddles.'" "Well," my father replied, "Cap, I guess the ladies have always more or less run the world, and we are too late to protest now. Of course, Mr. Clark was merely using what Frank Pettigrew calls hyperbole an example of what he said himself when he was asked if he had heard of a political enemy's death. Frank said, 'No, I haven't heard of it, but I certainly approve it.'"

### **The season**

As the prairie-chicken season approached, there was great discussion as to whether the season really opened on August 1 or on August 2. The Attorney General of the State finally ruled that the season opened at midnight. July 31, and the Dakota hunters made ready in anticipation, although not a few had a trial mess of

prairie-chicken, fried in cornmeal, for breakfast a few days before the effective date.

Numerous companies came to the Palmer House, and succeeded in attaching themselves to parties of local citizens who owned the much-prized bird dogs. Mr. Archer came from St. Paul with a party of five friends and two Gordon setters. We met them at the Northwestern depot with the Democratic spring wagon and the mules, to convey some of the party, and the dogs and baggage. My father and Mr. Archer and a guest of his, W. I. M. Luygx, a representative of a great Belgian Syndicate, rode with my father in the buck-board behind the Hambletonians, to the Big Place. That night, round the ranch kitchen, Mr. Luygx cross-examined Pike L'Siou on the subject of the Black Hills and the Bad Lands. Mr. Luygx was a geologist, and had had great experience in South Africa, in Bolivia and in the Klondike. The English and Dutch Syndicate, with which his Belgian company was affiliated, was, of course, interested in the great Homestake Mine at Lead but their principal interest was in the question of tin deposits, in commercial quantities.

Mr. L'Siou had great information on the subject of gold in the Black Hills. He claimed that gold mining operations had been carried on in the Hills for at least a full century prior to Custer's expedition with the Seventh Cavalry to the Hills, in 1874 (which he had accompanied as a scout). He told of finding ancient timbered mines, and that the geologists believed that there were vast deposits of tin and copper and magnesium, as well as gold. He told the oft-repeated saga of Sitting Bull having told Father DeSmet of the existence of a great gold mine in the Hills, and that Father DeSmet had scrupulously kept the secret. The great Indian council held on the Sisseton Reservation, in 1867, passed a law providing that any Indian who revealed the knowledge of gold in the Black Hills should be punished by death. It was that same council which elected Sitting Bull commander-in-chief of all the Sioux Tribes. Bands and Nations, and of their allies, the Cheyennes. It was this command which Sitting Bull exercised in his great campaign of 1876 against the United States Army, under the command of General Phil Sheridan, and his competent subordinates, Gibbon, Crook, Terry and Custer. The military genius of Sitting Bull was never adequately recognized except by General Miles, in a statement made in the last month of the old Teton's life, in 1890.

My father and Mr. Archer got into a discussion of the Homestake Mine, and the purchase of that property by Senator Hearst, of California, at the time when the excitement of the finds on Frenchman's Creek was at its height. Mr. Archer had heard of a great poker game (draw poker) between Senator Hearst and Sanders, later Senator from Montana--said at one time to have been a leading member of the vigilantes. The game was going on in Senator Hearst's private car. It was Hearst's time to bet, and the passenger train had pulled onto a siding to let a cattle-train pass. Sanders said, "Those are some of my cattle, Senator." "Well," said Hearst, "not the whole train load?" "Yes," said Sanders, "the whole train load are mine; they ought to bring a hundred thousand dollars in Chicago." "Well," said Hearst, "that is my bet." The train had pulled back onto the main track, where an armored truckload of gold bars was being loaded into a guarded express train. "Those are my bars," said Senator Hearst. "What's that load worth?" inquired Sanders. "About one hundred seventy-five thousand dollars

in Denver," answered Hearst. "That's my bet," replied Sanders.

Mr. Luygx inquired about William Randolph Hearst, who just then was blossoming out into his fame as a yellow journalist, and was interested to know that the great newspaper man was the son of Senator Hearst, and that the Homestake Mine was still the property of the Senator's widow. Mr. Luygx had visited at Harvard College where one of the professors, Dr. Droppers, a classmate of W. R. Hearst, had told him that Mr. Hearst would one day be President of the United States, and that when that day came, the country would soon drift into a dictatorship. He said that William Randolph Hearst had the strangest personality of any man who had been at Harvard in his time; that he was a great mystic and that he had made a special study of the career of Julius Caesar, the Roman dictator, and decided to emulate him. He told classmates that Caesar, a patrician and aristocrat, through his connections with Caius Marius, the husband of Caesar's aunt, conceived the idea of making himself the leader of the popular party and fighting those of his own social rank--the Senatorial aristocrats. He said Hearst's plan was to become Mayor or Governor of New York, and from that springboard to vault into the Presidency.

"Well," my father said, "there is a young fellow in the United States right now who has a good chance for the Presidency; he used to live over in the Upper Missouri Valley, north of the Black Hills, and I met him several times with Seth Bullock, at Dickinson and Mile City. He was a corking good talker, and a real cattle-man too. I hear that he has a chance to be the Mayor of New York. I mean, of course, Teddy Roosevelt." "Well," said Pike L'Siou, "I would sure vote for a man who could run a cattle-ranch in the Bad Lands; why, the timber wolves over there, the year Captain Jack Crawford and I tried it, killed all our calves and young colts. There was one old smart-aleck wolf--the leader of the band, smarter than Jule Seminole, the Cheyenne scout; we could never get near him. Captain Jack told me later that one of the Belle Fourche stallions stomped him to death the winter of '90. But, of course, that might have been one of Jack's yarns." "Well," my father said, "George Davidson is going to call us at a quarter to four! Let's take a vote on whether to sleep three hours, or have some hot coffee and sandwiches now, and play poker until it's time to take the dogs out."

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## Scorched Earth in Dakota

### A prairie fire and a feed barn that wouldn't be rebuilt.

**WHEN** we finished cutting the six sections of wheat on the Big Place, the third week in August had come. My father was anxious to get a machine to start threshing immediately, but John Windedahl, who ran the flat-house at St. Mary's, insisted that the stacks must go through the "sweat," claiming that any omission in this line might result in shriveled berries, cutting the grade to below No. 1 hard. My father reluctantly acceded to this opinion, but said that the great danger of losing the fruit of all the hard work and good luck lay in the hazard of heavy rains and rotting stacks, or extreme dry weather and destruction by prairie fire. He finally decided to get two "machines" started as early as possible, in September, and contracted with Bill Campbell and Gunder Serns to thresh simultaneously. Bill Campbell had a Buffalo Pitts separator and steam-engine, and his fame extended from Oklahoma Territory, where he started threshing in early June, to Winnipeg, where he wound up the season just as the time came for snow to fly. He ordinarily "knocked out" 1,500 bushels of wheat before daylight in the short fall days, and the ordinary farmers were hard put to prevent him from keeping his boast--that he would run the grain on the plowed ground if they did not have a wagon-box under his separator spout.

Gunder Serns had a J.I.C. Minneapolis threshing rig; he was not a professional, skilled thresher like Bill Campbell, but was a substantial farmer, on a large scale, and something of a local statesman. As the nominee of the Populists, Farmers' Alliance Republicans and Democrats, he had been elected State Senator, and came often to my father's Big Place for a pow-wow.

Shortly after the middle of September, one Sunday forenoon, Bill Campbell drove up with his six mules hitched to a democrat wagon, stopped at the water tank and signaled his presence by a fine rendition of his Comanche war whoop with which he invariably encouraged his thrashing crew to greater efforts. He saw my father's team of grey McNairs hitched to a wagon wheel, so he alighted and went on into the ranch kitchen where he advised my father that he would wind up in the Seven Day Advent settlement on the following Sunday (which he explained was their Monday) and would arrive at the Big Place between dark on Sunday and dawn on Monday. He told my father that his crew had had enough Seven Day Advent "chow" (non-meat diet) to last them for twenty years, and that he had promised them a big meal of ham and eggs and corn-beef at the Big Place at whatever hour of the day or night they pulled into a "setting." A setting, of course, is a group of six or eight stacks of

harvested grain--bundles, when cut by the binder, loose like hay when cut by the header. My father assured Bill that the Big Place would redeem his promise.

The next day word came from Gunder Serns that he was heading toward the Big Place and my father announced that all must be ready for the thrashers by the following Saturday. I have never understood the insistence of the allegedly educated on the pronunciation and spelling "threshers." Both the "Century Dictionary" and the "Standard" give "thrasher" as a valid word, meaning "thresher." So does Webster's "New School and Office Dictionary." Bill Campbell and Gunder Serns would both have been insulted if any of their intimates had referred to them as "threshers." A Chicago expert, who used that pronunciation in a trial before a Jim River jury, was blamed for losing the case thereby.

### **A lot of horse**

My father gave his directions to George Davidson, the boss of the Big Place. He figured there would be about 60,000 bushels of grain to be hauled from the two machines to the elevator at Redstone and the Flat House at St. Mary's. This would require 50 teamsters. One hundred and twenty big horses were groomed as my father figured that about 20 replacements would be necessary, due to lameness or shoulder gall. Sixty sets of big harness passed in review before Charlie Henderson, the Redstone harness-maker, who came out to the Big Place with his assistants and, with plenty of new leather, put all the harness sets in first-class shape. All our big, wide-tire wagons were overhauled; axles were greased, tongues and neck-yokes inspected, wagon boxes and end-gates tested, so that no stream of grain would be seen flowing through them onto the public highway; nor was the commissary overlooked.

The ranch house at the Big Place, with the exception of the lean-to kitchen, was put at the disposal of Mrs. John Anderson and her corps of skilled female Swedish assistants. Mrs. Anderson's name was spoken reverently by lumberjacks in the north woods, who came every year to help with harvest and thrashing in Dakota. Her famous dish was "oatmeal," which she boiled for not less than seven hours. She insisted on having original, undoctored, non-breakfast food, ground whole oats; and my father procured five barrels of it, at some expense, from Reid, Murdoch Co. of Chicago. She said this was real Swedish oatmeal, and, indeed, it was a delicacy, especially when covered with melted butter and New Orleans Black-Strap molasses, as she recommended. Of course, some stuck to the old-fashioned sugar and milk. In any event, it was delicious. The Redstone Mercantile Company was drawn on for 500 pounds of cured ham and bacon, a barrel of corn-beef, 50 pounds of butter, 200 pounds of sugar, and 100 pounds of ground Arbuckle's and Lion coffee. These two brands were the favorites, and rivals, and the supporters of each had to be considered in making the big wash-boiler full of coffee, which stood constantly on the kerosene stove in the lean-to, day and night, throughout the thrashing. Mrs. Anderson put the ground coffee into 5-pound cheese-cloth bags; every two hours these were fished out of the wash-boiler with wooden pliers and fresh bags of coffee put in. Teamsters,

separator men, water monkeys and thrashing-engine firemen were coming and going at all hours of the night and day, so there was always hot coffee on tap, and sandwiches for anyone who wanted them.

As Bill Campbell and Gunder Serns were each the autocrat of his thrashing crew, and had exclusive jurisdiction up to the point at which the red wheat berries ran out of the separator-spout into the wagon-box, likewise my father was absolute dictator from that point on, and of course, of all general matters at the Big Place. In my father's absence, it was positively and clearly understood that George Davidson exercised the powers of a pro-consul, and no ties of blood or friendship in any person authorized any questioning of George's orders. My father, during the tense period of thrashing, made his headquarters in a buck-board, drawn by the magnificent McNairs. This team were the colts of two registered Morgan mares, full sisters, whose merits had been the subject of an article in the *Breeder's Gazette*. Their sire was George M. Stratton's famous stallion, Sultan Saladin. George M. had paid a fabulous prize for this pacing thoroughbred, and did not like to be reminded of it. One day, as he drove the beautiful chestnut animal in front of the Palmer House in Redstone, the proprietor, Mr. Cyrus Clark, in order to tease him, called out, "George M., what did you give for that Jay Gould-Jim Fisk stud-horse?" George M. answered tartly, "Gave my note." Mr. Clark shielded his long patriarchal white beard with his hand, squirted a stream of tobacco-juice toward Sultan's shining nigh fore-foot, and answered calmly, "Cheap enough by Judas Priest, George M., cheap enough."

My father kept no regular hours during the thrashing, but drove continually from Redstone to St. Mary's and back, and to the sites of the two machines on the Big Place. Wherever he ended up at midnight he stayed until dawn. He endeavored to spend every other night in the lean-to, off the kitchen at the Big Place, where he could confer with George Davidson, Bill Campbell, Gunder Serns and others, and utilize the night hours for making all necessary repairs and preparations for the following day. Twenty kerosene lanterns were kept in commission in the machine shed, where a 52-gallon barrel of kerosene was on tap in the corner. There was strict rule, however, against filling lanterns except in daylight. At a previous thrashing, someone whose identity was never established started a dangerous fire by drawing kerosene by lantern-light. Only George Davidson's heroic efforts, so my father said, kept the whole place from being burned up.

### **Delays**

The Sunday fixed by Bill Campbell for pulling into a "setting" on the Big Place came and went, but neither Bill Campbell nor Gunder Serns showed up. A messenger from Bill brought the word that a disgruntled stack-pitcher had shoveled stones into his separator, wrecking some of the cylinders; that new parts were en route by express from Chicago, and that it might be a full week before he would reach the Big Place to commence thrashing. My father was plainly dismayed. He had not expected Gunder Serns to be there promptly, but he had counted on Bill. He told George Davidson, confidentially, that he was worried. There had been no rain for almost ten

weeks; the prairies were brown. The customary autumn heat hung over the horizon. There was "that nameless pathos in the air which dwells with all things fair." The wheat stubble was turning white, and a September frost was yellowing the corn leaves. But the deep dust on the roads and in the pasture left no doubt of the correctness of what had become almost a neighborhood greeting, "It is getting pretty dry."

George Davidson had heard of right-of-way fires started by sparks from the Northwestern's locomotives which had created a minor panic before they were controlled. Fortunately the high prairie winds had not commenced. My father's anxious look changed to genuine cheerfulness when Uncle Will and Cousin Pat Lyons drove in from Prairie Queen and Lake Badus. Pat Lyons was a professional thrasher himself, and had ended his Lake County season. Uncle Will reported that the Prairie Queen section had a great season: oats went 80 bushels to the acre; barley, 60 bushels, and potatoes were yielding 150 bushels of early Ohios per acre. He said that the 400 acres of corn ground would yield 30,000 bushels of corn, and that he would have fat Chester white hogs and short-horn cattle ready for the Chicago Christmas market. "But," he ended, "I thought Lake County was dry, but it is nothing to this. A high wind would sweep a fire over the prairie and stubble like it did in '79. That fire, Dick, you remember, was twelve miles wide and thirty feet in length: the town of Sioux Falls came very near going up in smoke." My father spoke reassuringly of the wide fire-breaks of plowed land, around each of the "settings." Then a messenger came from Bill Campbell saying he and his crew would be on hand for supper, and bustle and excitement immediately became the order of the day.

Bill's men demanded oatmeal, as the opening supper dish, and Mrs. Anderson scored a magnificent success in supplying them. After supper they departed to sleep in the straw piles left from last year's thrashing. Bill himself and his engineer and separator-man always slept in the shadow of the machine. At about 3:30 in the morning of the next day, my brother and I reached the Big Place with some extra wagons from the Lars Morstad farm, near Howard, the county seat of Miner County. It had been a tiring, slow night trip of about twenty-two miles, with five wagons and ten horses, over uncertain roads--a part of the time in pretty thick darkness. George Davidson was in the machine shed, and helped us "put up" the teams. He was much tickled by a story my father had told Gunder Serns during the night pow-wow in the lean-to. State Senator Serns had brought up the names of Alec McKenzie and Jud LaMoure, two famous Dakota Territory figures. Mr. McKenzie was the representative (lobbyist) for the Northern Pacific, according to the tale, and Mr. LaMoure was Speaker of the House of Representatives. My father, Tom Walsh, Will Sterling and R. F. Pettigrew, with many others, had journeyed in the winter to Bismark, to attend a meeting called by Mr. LaMoure, at which McKenzie was to impart matters of public importance concerning railroad building. There were bunks and cots in all the rooms of the little one-story hotel, including the dining-room where the legislative committee assembled. After calling the meeting to order, Mr. LaMoure stretched out on one of these bunks, and it was self-evident that he proposed to snatch forty inks. A rather pompous member of the committee protested against this undignified procedure, saying it was unfair to men who had traveled from all over the territory to this

important meeting. He added, "Alexander McKenzie, the representative of the Great Northern Pacific System, will soon be here, and what will he think if he sees the chairman fast asleep?" Delegate-in-Congress Pettigrew winked at my father, and it was evident that the protester did not understand the close working agreement between Jud LaMoure, a Republican, and Alec McKenzie, a Democrat. Mr. LaMoure's countenance did not betray surprise, or any other emotion. He merely said, dryly, "Well, I am going to take a nap; I was up all night playing poker with those gentlemen from Southern Dakota, and I am a bit fatigued and, also, my purse is a little lean." Then, with a kindly smile, he added, "I think Alec will understand. Wake me up. when he gets his check-book out." My father added that Alec McKenzie had about as magnetic a personality as any man he had ever encountered, in spite of a somewhat flexible moral code when it came to influencing legislatures. Mr. McKenzie came to grief later, in Alaska, over the matter of gold placer mining claims. Judge Thomas Lyons (no kin of our family, though we would be proud to claim him) was reported to have sentenced the great man to jail for some of his proceedings.

### Fire

When my brother and I came out of the stable, west of the windmill, where we had put up the teams, Cousin Pat was waiting at the water tank with a gallon syrup bucket full of hot coffee, and it tasted grand out of our tin cups. After a moment of conversation, we were surprised to see Cousin Pat climb up the windmill tower. A light wind was blowing, and the wheel was turning pretty fast. In the darkness, it looked as if he were about to do something to interfere with the wheel, which would, of course, have been dangerous, but any doubt on the matter was suddenly resolved by a strange, unnatural quality in Cousin Pat's voice as he said, "Tom, I think you had better call your father." But there was no need to call my father. We saw the screen door to the lean-to open, there was a flare of a match, and there was my father, bare-footed, wearing trousers and undershirt, lighting a cigar. The flame of the match threw a clear light on his big golden brown mustache and his big white hat. Westerners of his type always felt dressed if they had on the big hat, and somewhat uncomfortable with it off.

My father said, very quietly, "What is it, Pat?" Uncle Will, dressed only in underclothes, appeared with him at the windmill.

Pat's voice was very quiet. He said, "Dick, I smell fire." My father turned to George Davidson and said, "Let's hook up teams to the thrasher's water-tanks. Do not call anyone yet but Bill Campbell."

As we started bringing out the teams which we had not unharnessed, Bill Campbell and his separator man were climbing the windmill tower. Uncle Will said, "The wind is rising. The fire-breaks are not to be depended on. Dick, if you are going to save these six sections of wheat stacks, you will have to sacrifice the pasture (one section), the hunt section, and burn off the school section, too, with a back-fire." My father did not hesitate, but formed the teamsters into squads under the command of George Davidson, Uncle Will and Pat. All hands were summoned. Bill Campbell

shouted from the windmill tower for his men to hitch his six mules to his democrat spring-wagon. He came down from the tower and spoke, in a low tone, to my father. He said, "I could hear the sound of a horse galloping; I judge it is someone from Tom Morgan's place (four miles northeast); I'll bet they can see the flame from his windmill. I think I will drive my mules over there, just to see that none of them get caught."

By the time Bill reached the pasture gate, across Rock Creek, half a mile away, Tom Morgan had dismounted and opened the gate. Bill did not stop for a parley, but yelled to Tom that he was driving to his place and would see that all were in safety. Tom had come with the news of seeing the flames, and to implore aid. A word of conversation with the experienced pioneers convinced him that, in the rising wind and the dry condition of the stubble and the prairie, his fields would be on fire before teams and tanks could reach them. He mounted a fresh horse and rode back to aid Bill Campbell in bringing the human beings to safety. The experienced fire-fighters immediately started the back-fires, using the Rock Creek and the plowed fire-breaks as a starting point, and, of course, burning against the wind. Suddenly Uncle Will came back, driving the McNairs on the run. He called out to me, and I got in the buck-board with him; he drove straight to the big feed barn, sixty rods north of the windmill and across Rock Creek. "Tom," he said, "do exactly what I tell you. You know I had lots of experience with getting horses out of a burning barn, when Coon Klotzpaugh's livery stable burned in Madison. Thereon Davidson's two pet goats are on the north side of the big barn, and there are forty big horses in there on that side. When we get there, jump out and get the goats, as soon as you can. Steve Archimbault has gone there on Feather [a bronchos]. He and I will do the rest."

The big feed barn had eighty horses, and eighty sets of harness inside. It had been supposed to be absolutely safe. However, the haymow had been filled to the roof with 250 tons of hay, and Uncle Will, through long experience, feared that this hay was generating gas, which might ignite or explode. When we reached the creek bank, I had a good view of the fire. Its flames were racing through the bunch-grass, and great strands of burning grass were whipped up in the air more than a hundred feet, and borne on ahead of the fire by the gas and draft which it generated. Uncle Will drove the McNairs on the run across the creek, and there was Steve, waiting in front of the big barn. "We must do our work before the horses are frightened by a crowd of men," he said. "A frightened horse will run right back into his stall, even though it's afire. Horses, however, will follow goats, even out of a burning barn. It seems to be some peculiarity in the goat smell that does it. You lead the goats, and lead the first team of horses right with them. Steve and I will tie them, head and tail together, and you will have a procession of forty, anyway. Go right straight down into the creek, and go southwest, down the stream. Don't turn back, and if anyone tries to interfere with you, Steve will cut him down with a rifle." There was no doubt whatever of Mr. Archimbault's ability or resolution. He had come to the Big Place from the Belle Fourche, in the Black Hills, with a letter of introduction to my father from Seth Bullock.

I started down the slope with the two goats and one team of horses, and when I

looked back, I saw a real cavalcade. Uncle Will and Steve had tied halter ropes to horses' tails, and I was leading the procession. I followed Uncle Will's advice not to look back, and to pay no attention to any disturbance, but when I crossed the Big Johnson pond, in Rock Creek, near the Miner County line, I sensed that something was wrong. Soon I heard explosions that sounded like a Fourth of July cannon, and then I saw flame jet from the roof of the big feed barn. Some of the uncontrolled men had already rushed there, slightly panic stricken, though with excellent intentions. George Davidson and his crew had already got the harness sets out, when a crowd of men began to shout that "Windy" Lawrence, an asthmatic engine fireman, who occasionally took too much grain alcohol flavored with peppermint as a remedy, was asleep in the upstairs harness room, and in danger of death by burning. Steve Archimbault expertly shinned up the pulley ropes of the giant hay-fork, kicked open the harness room door, and announced that the room was empty. Windy himself shouted in the crowd below that he was safe and present, and urged Steve to slide down the rope at once, as the roof was caving in. Twenty-seven horses became panic stricken and, in spite of many efforts to save them, rushed back into the flames and were burned to death. There was a horrible smell of burning horse-flesh, and screams of pain that sounded almost human. The big barn and all the hay and grain were burned to ashes, but the back-fire saved the wheat stacks, and the thrashing went on as usual.

### **Insurance**

That evening Captain Palmer, who handled the insurance, came out to assure my father that the policy was in good standing, as he had paid the premium about sixty days before and charged it to the account of the Redstone Mercantile Company in his own bank, the Miner County Bank and Trust. My father got a crew to digging a trench, with plows and scrapers, and the carcasses of the burned horses were scraped in, covered with quicklime and buried in soil.

The next day, the Minneapolis representative of the insurance company called, and acknowledged the loss in full. He advised my father that the insurance company, in compliance with its policy, would immediately construct a new feed barn, an exact replica of the one destroyed, and would pay the other losses to the amount of eighty percent of the market value.

Captain Palmer was amazed when my father said, "Well, you won't need to bother about rebuilding the big feed barn. I am not going to need it again."

Captain Palmer, who had been one of Farrgut's quartermasters, used his most violent expletive, "Tut, tut, Richard, you are certainly not getting discouraged or blue?" "No," my father said. "Cap, I have been in the Dakota guessing-school too long for that. Here's the reason." And he pulled out a letter from Mr. Nugent, the great Boston horse-buyer to whom he had been consigning carloads of horses for the past ten years. Mr. Nugent advised that he had gone out of the horse business, and that the Boston express companies were installing horseless trucks propelled by gasoline-combustion engines.

"What was that poem, Cap, Mrs. Reeves recited at the Lyceum and got Libbie

Clark to accompany her on the piano, about my life being in the yellow leaf?"

"Oh," said Captain Palmer, "that was one of Byron's, but he stole it from Shakespeare. Macbeth said, you know, that he had lived long enough, and his way of life was in the sere, the yellow leaf. But of course that can't apply to you, Richard."

"No," my father said, "but it applies to what the school readers call man's noblest friend, the horse. The great days of the horse are over. I only hope that it won't hurt the country too much--it is bound to do an injury to South Dakota. The days to come can't be better than the grand times of the past. But the past was based on horse-power. The future will, of course, be interesting. It can scarcely be so full of glory to an old horse raiser like myself."

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## Sugar Rations in Dakota

**THANKSGIVING DAY** of the year the Big Place was hailed out was attended at our dinner table by Pike L'Siou and Olaf Norstrom, the efficient manager of the Redstone Mercantile Establishment. We had two big 30-pound turkeys on the table, well browned, giving forth a fragrant smoke from roasting, and well stuffed with oyster dressing. George Davidson's venture with my father's backing into the turkey business had proved a great success. Within a week after the destructive hail storm, he had gone with six teams and header-boxes to Slim Buttes, in the Black Hills, where a millionaire Chicago commission merchant had established a dude turkey-ranch and hatched out thousands of incubated turkey chicks every month from April to the first of October. George returned with three thousand, succeeded in raising 2,500 fat turks. We were to begin the next day hauling them in from the Big Place for delivery to Nels Satter, the manager of the Redstone Creamery, who was carrying on a wholesale poultry business on the side. Thanksgiving Day was unusually cold and blustery; it was 22 below by the official C. & N.W.R.R. thermometer which hung outside the depot door, at exactly 12:00 noon, when my father examined it on his way up from the elevator.

L'Siou said that the winter had opened early and that he feared a hard winter such as that of '79, or '76, he couldn't remember the year. He explained that on the fifth day of January, the railroad companies all discontinued service throughout Dakota Territory, on account of the tremendous snow-drifts which made the running of trains an absolute impossibility. Olaf promptly remarked that in 1876 railroad mileage in Dakota was too inconsiderable to worry about, although he believed there was a line from St. Paul to Bismarck, and a few "streaks of rust" in Sioux Valley. My father remarked that railroad transportation and equipment had improved marvelously since that time and that the big snow plows of modern make assured open transportation throughout the winter.

The next day, it was still snowing and blowing, and the thermometer registered 31 below zero when my brother and I got in from the Big Place with the second load of turkeys we had hauled that day. My father came out into the street with Olaf in front of the Redstone Mercantile Company and took the teams away from us, ordering us into the store to get warm. When he and Olaf returned to the store, he lighted a cigar with a good deal of deliberation, and said, "Olaf, there might be something to Pike's prognostication of a hard winter. In the event of a tie-up in transportation, what would we have a shortage of?"

Olaf promptly answered, "There are three items which run out first in grocery supplies--chewing tobacco, coffee and sugar. Do you think we had better stock up a

little on these?" My father answered, "Yes, double our customary orders next Monday to the wholesalers, and for good measure order two extra hogsheads of blackstrap molasses, and two extra 500-pound casks of brown sugar, the cheapest variety, like we order to feed the horses to put a gloss on their coats." On January 10 we were hauling in the last loads of the turkeys, in very cold weather. Nels Satter warned my father that he could not accept any more turkeys because the Northwestern had declined to permit further shipments on account of the risk of loss of the poultry by freezing. The next day, all Northwestern trains were several hours late, and the Sioux Falls *Press* (which was two days old when received) carried the story that railroad traffic all over Dakota was being blocked by thick snow-drifts in the railroad cuts, and that the ordinary wooden snow-plows were unequal to the emergency. Then there followed a period of absolute isolation, so far as mail and railroad communications were concerned. The telegraph was our sole means of keeping in touch with the outside world.

Olaf's judgment was speedily confirmed; supplies of plug-chewing tobacco were speedily exhausted, and confirmed tobacco "chawers" were reduced to the extremity of chewing Section-Bosses' Delight smoking-tobacco, making a pretense that they were indulging in Piper Heidsick Fine-Cut. Coffee supplies ran low, but by boiling the grounds over two or three times, and falling back on tea and chocolate as a substitute, no real hardship was felt. At the beginning of the sixth week of the snow blockade, Olaf rationed sugar with great sternness and impartiality. My father, after considerable argument, induced him to relax the rule in favor of Mrs. Pooley, the English dressmaker, of Redstone, whose daughter Lib had married Felix Maethvan, a green-horn Welsh miner, who lived in the great Welsh settlement on the Jim River. Felix was unaccustomed to the rigors of the Dakota winter, and he had failed to make proper preparations, especially, according to Mrs. Pooley, since a brand new United States citizen was expected by Lib to arrive before spring. A week later, the blockade situation had grown serious. Every day the sky was grey and overcast. A light snow was constantly falling, and the cutting northwest wind stirred the drifts sufficiently to give a dreary wintry aspect to the view in every direction. The sun was pale and remote, and at dawn was seen accompanied by the sun-dogs, a sure sign of continued cold wintry weather. Mrs. Pooley came in great distress to the Redstone Mercantile Establishment to lay her dilemma before my father, but in his absence was compelled to tell her troubles to the unsympathetic Olaf. Olaf said that Mrs. Pooley had heard, by the celebrated female grape-vine telegraph, that things were almost desperate with Lib and Felix. They had run out of groceries, including sugar and kerosene; they needed medicines, since Felix had contracted the new influenza disease known as "La Grippe." They had no matches in the house, and as their only fuel was twisted hay, they feared that the neighbor boy who was helping them might let the fire go out, and they had no way of rekindling it. Since they lived more than three miles distant from any neighbor, the situation was indeed worrisome. Mrs. Pooley hoped that my father could find some way to send succor and relief. My father looked very grave at Olaf's recital, and remarked to Pike L'Siou that all the roads in that direction were absolutely impassable for teams, according to the expert report of Joe Formanack and Myles Creegan, who had tramped in over the drifts two days before to bring supplies to their

community, five miles this side (nearer Redstone) of the Meathvan community. That night, at home, around the hard-coal fire, my father and mother were greatly troubled over the situation, and my mother remarked that my father could surely find some young men who would make the trip a-foot, or a-horseback.

The next morning, early, my father laid the situation before Olaf and Pike L'Siou. Olaf canvassed the list of young men who might be eligible to make the trip, and offered the enormous sum of \$5.00 apiece to any two men who would haul a light bob-sled loaded with provisions the 17 miles to Lib's place. Several candidates took up the offer, but by six o'clock that night all had positively declined, for one reason or another.

The next morning my father directed me to hitch Judy to the cutter, as he was driving over to John Windedahl's place, a mile West of Redstone, to confer relative to starting the fanning mill to clean seed wheat. When we reached John Windedahl's place Pike L'Siou, attired in Buffalo coat and cap and German stocking, with rubber Arctics (overshoes), was visible. He had arranged a sort of rope-harness, fastened to a bobsled, and it was evident that it was made for two men. While my father was in the house talking with Mr. Windedahl, Pike showed me the mysteries of the "diamond hitch." He had fastened four big blanket-loads of groceries and medicine to the bob-sled, "just exactly," he explained. "as he would have tied a pack on a pack mule." When my father reappeared, he was togged out exactly like Pike, in Buffalo coat and cap and Buffalo mittens. He said to me, "Tom, hurry back, so you won't be late for school, and keep your mind on your lessons today. If your Mother asks you anything, you don't have to tell everything you know. Just say that I may not be home at the regular time for supper, and that when you saw me last I was talking about cleaning wheat with Mr. Windedahl." That noon my mother gave us her popular midday meal of tomato soup, made with six cans of whole tomatoes and three quart of cream. And for dessert she served the famous delicacy of fried-cakes (doughnuts) fresh out of newly rendered ham-fat. She reserved the potatoes and meat ration for the evening meal, saying she knew my father would be hungry.

I kept the secret religiously, although I had great misgivings as I came the half-mile from the schoolhouse at 4:00 o'clock. There was a haze over the sun. The northwest wind was blowing the snow from the tops of the drifts, and the sky looked cheerless in the approaching sun-down. One look at my mother convinced me that she had heard the news, and indeed, Mrs. Pooley had come to thank her with noisy sobs of gratitude, for sending my father to the rescue. At 6:30, John Windedahl drove up with my father in a cutter, attired in his ordinary habit. As he got out of the cutter, he lit a cigar very casually, and made some remark to John Windedahl relative to repairs on the fanning mill, evidently with an idea of covering his trail. My mother gave no sign of anything unusual as we sat down to supper. My father spoke with hearty, explosive enthusiasm of the fine sirloin of cornbeef, flanked by two halves of a big head of boiled cabbage. Then my mother took revenge for the secret. She said, "Why, I don't see how you can have any appetite after eating a big meal at Mr. Formanack's. What did she have for dinner for you and Pike?" My father pushed back his chair, and said in a very placating tone, "Well now, Sarah, I might have known that poor Mrs. Pooley

would have to run to you with the news. I have to plead guilty and admit that I am like the Irishman who was on trial for over indulgence in brandy. My intentions were better than my judgment." My father then told us of the trip. Pike L'Siou had mapped it out with as much care and military precision as if he were General Custer. They made three miles an hour traveling "as the crow flies," according to Pike's compass. When they completed the 12 miles to Joe Formanack's, Joe insisted on taking my father's place, and he and Pike made the additional 5 1/2 miles to the Maethvan settlement. Lib and her husband were badly in need of care and relief, and Joe Formanack arranged with Myles Creek to send his nephew, Dick Looby, a competent broncho-buster, to assume command of the entire situation. My mother's only comment was, "You still haven't told us any of the details of Mrs. Formanack's fine dinner." "By George, it was good," said my father. "Spareribs and head cheese, boiled rutabagas, gooseberry pie, and hot coffee--and believe me, I needed a drink of the coffee." That night Olaf called with a long telegram from Will Sterling, at Omaha. Mr. Sterling had been made the General Counsel of the Northwestern, at a salary of \$10,000 per year. My father had appealed to him to induce the head officials at Chicago to endeavor to open the Dakota Road.

Mr. Sterling's telegram read as follows:

*Dear Dick: The President of the Northwestern is here; he has bet Marvin Hughitt that he will open the Hawarden-Oakes-Huron branch in time to travel over it and get to St. Paul to drink a whiskey toddy with Marvin and Jim Hill on Washington's Birthday. He is sending over new rotary snow plow, pushed by three mogul engines, and followed by three passenger trains and three freight trains. The President is an old locomotive engineer, and will be at the throttle of the engine which pushes the rotary snow plow. Bet your shirt, and next year's wheat crop, on his bucking the drifts and opening the branch.*

*Yours truly, and please believe me,*

WILL STERLING.

"Well," my father said, "Frank Pettigrew told me that Jim Hill said it took more brains to run a railroad in Dakota than to be President of the United States, and I am beginning to believe he is right."

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## Old Settlers' Picnic

### In Dakota Territory

**THE YEAR** after the "sheep fiasco" on the Big Place near Redstone, the crop prospect in the spring was most encouraging; and by June 15, everybody could see that there would be a regular bonanza crop of Dakota No. 1 hard, which would go twenty bushels to the acre or better. The standard brand of Dakota optimism created so much enthusiasm that a meeting was called in the Redstone Mercantile Establishment to consider plans for a full-fledged Fourth of July celebration with a parade, a brass band, a baseball game by teams in uniform, the reading of the Declaration of Independence, and an eloquent address by the orator of the day. The debate in favor of the move was led by Langley Pierce, who affected a brand of super-patriotism based on his claims as a volunteer federal soldier and an Indian fighter. My father flatly vetoed the proposition with the statement that we had had two failures and that everybody ought to work every possible hour to save the big crop. He said, "My teams will be at work every day from now until snow flies, putting up hay, plowing corn, harvesting small grain, thrashing and fall plowing. Let the celebration wait till we get some crop money in the till."

Langley attempted to deride the argument on the ground that my father was a Democrat and hence not quite so earnestly patriotic as an old soldier like himself and suggested that the matter be referred to the G.A.R. Captain Palmer, who was commander of the Phil Kearney Post, took Langley rather sharply to task and said, "Pierce, you're just anxious to put on a red sash and gallivant up and down the streets on that old spavined pacer of yours. Now when it comes to politics and patriotism I heard down at Louisville at the national encampment that you voted for John Bell of Tennessee, in 1860, and that you volunteered as a federal soldier by the galvanized route, after Custer's troopers had taken you prisoner in the Shenandoah Valley. Also, I don't believe you scalped quite as many of Red Cloud's braves as you sometimes tell under the inspiration of honest John Barleycorn."

This rather harsh reprimand did not visibly affect Langley, although his long gray military moustache sagged somewhat and seemed to take on a deeper yellow stain from tobacco spit. However, he pressed the argument no further and the Fourth of July celebration did not materialize. There was considerable disappointment over the matter, because some of the advocates of the move had prematurely arranged and had printed a program. It consisted of a song by the quartette from the literary society, "Tenting Tonight on the Old Camp Ground"; a reading by Mrs. Reeves, "The Blue and the Gray"; and a recitation to be given by one of the young ladies entitled "Somebody's Darling"--the prize piece from "Southern Lyrics." Years later, I myself, was accorded the privilege of appearing on the resin-scented new pine platform in the open air under

the blue heaven of Dakota sunshine, to declaim "The Man With the Musket Is Mine." So, I can appreciate the disgruntled feelings of those who had been invited to participate when they heard that the celebration had been called off.

The harvest came with no marring incident. We worked two shifts of big Percheron horses and were in the field from daylight to dark. Thrashing went off successfully--wheat averaged twenty-two bushels to the acre and brought seventy cents at the Redstone elevators. All other crops were bountiful. Money circulated again among the hard-up Dakota sod-busters, and there were high praises for the great "new country" which made man independent with one season's crop. One afternoon, in September, George M. Stratton and Captain Palmer came into the Redstone Mercantile Establishment and proposed that some sort of a harvest home jubilation should be had. Judge Baldwin said, at once, that he had heard that there had been an old settlers' picnic in Brown County and that he would suggest a similar event to be held soon near Forestburg on the Jim River, the county seat of Miner County. There was enthusiastic approval, and plans were immediately made to secure the use of Wixon's Grove, a beautiful grove of cottonwood trees. My father telegraphed to Will Sterling, Dakota's silver-tongued orator, asking when he could be present to make the address to the pioneers, and received word that September 21 would suit him. Mighty preparations went forward for the event. Al Barbour's all-family baseball team was matched against the Forestburg semi-professionals who engaged Art Hildebrand, the Spink County rancher, to pitch for them. Mr. Hildebrand was as famous in his way in Dakota and Minnesota town baseball circles as Clark Griffiths later became in Chicago. He had won laurels as a college pitcher in the Ivy League, come to Sioux Falls as a semi-professional and bought a section of Dakota dirt and started ranching. His name was enough to insure a crowd of baseball fans.

The matter of lunch and dinner was given serious consideration. The danger of fire to the beautiful cottonwood grove had brought forth a regulation that no fires even for cooking could be set inside the forty acres of cottonwoods. This created something of a dilemma as the loyal Dakotans could not be deprived of hot coffee. Arrangements were made to have Jim Madsen drive his dray to the public highway, outside the tree claim. Two gasoline stoves were installed and on each a wash-boiler of coffee was made, one boiler having as its base Arbuckle's coffee, in five-pound, cheese-cloth bags, and the other being founded on Lion's celebrated coffee mixture. The agreeable fumes were enjoyed a quarter of a mile from the grove. Since it was necessary for many of the settlers to leave home at daybreak for the long drive to the Jim River, it was agreed

that lunch would be served at 10:30, and the Women's Relief Corps, an auxiliary of the Grand Army, undertook this pleasant function.

They served a lunch modeled on military rations: baked beans, hard-tack, fried bacon, and all the coffee you could drink--the whole for a dime. However, the great eating event was the dinner to be served at 2:00 in the afternoon, by the Catholic ladies, a privilege which was granted to them to aid the building fund of Sacred Heart Church in Redstone. They served dinner for quarter, including ice cream, cake and coffee. Mighty forty-pound hams with a beautiful layer of white fat stuffed with cloves

were set out on tables consisting of loose pine boards set on saw horses. There was a big rare roast beef of prime ribs, whole roasted chickens, but no turkeys, since it was an unwritten Dakota adage that turkeys should be served for the first time of the season on Thanksgiving Day. There were capacious dishes of potato salad, pleasantly aromatic of what the poet called the "onion fruit." These were garnished plenteously with sliced hard-boiled eggs. Watermelon rind preserves and preserved yellow tomatoes were popularly present and the desert consisted of lemon pie, chocolate cake and deep dish dried-apple pie, well-spiced with cinnamon and nutmeg--this last being the most popular dish.

The morning of the great day dawned clear and bright and we drove out of Redstone, shortly after daybreak, in the democrat spring wagon, headed for the Jim River. There was a golden haze of fall in the air, as we drove by the acres which in June had been covered with the blossoms of the prairie wild rose. Now the flowers which were in bloom were the lemon-colored goldenrod and the lordly sunflower fifteen feet high--its flowers had a diameter of fourteen inches and the yellow burnished petals had a flaming tinge in the glorious Dakota sunrise. We drove past many abandoned sod houses; the gophers had dug holes in the side of walls and at one place the sharp-eyed weasel was on watch sunning himself and waiting for his prey. When we reached the site of the grove, my father stopped the team, to view an amateur exhibition of Dakota vegetables. There was a pile of early Goodrich potatoes weighing a pound and a half apiece, squash and pumpkins with a circumference of six feet each--some of the settlers claimed they had bigger ones at home; they hadn't brought them because they couldn't get them in the lumber wagon-box. There were great piles of golden corn, watermelons, citrons, beets twenty inches in circumference and cucumbers sixteen inches long, winter cabbage that weighed twenty pounds apiece were on display. Gooseberries, Dakota currants and pieplant gave promise of future confections. We did not eat the full ration of the ten cent lunch, but contented ourselves with hardtack and coffee for a nickel, as we desired to reserve our appetites to do proper execution on the great dinner.

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Mr. Sterling was introduced promptly at 11:00 and undoubtedly made a beautiful address. He was not yet thirty and was famous in three states as a lawyer and orator. When he concluded, I heard Judge Baldwin say to my father that Will Sterling can be the first United States Senator when Dakota is admitted to statehood. But Mr. Sterling, in the midst of his early fame, went to his long home under Dakota sod, before he was thirty-five years of age.

The songs and recitations came to an end, and the great important business of dinner occupied the entire attention of the picnic from 12:30 to 2:00. At that hour the ball game was called. Al Barbour's team was made up entirely of the Barbour family, nine brothers and first cousins, who were all Dakota farmers. Al's sister, Mayme, just as a stunt, would go behind the bat and catch for one inning. This never failed to thrill the crowd. The game was exciting, replete with high fouls and long flies, many of

which were muffed. So both sides made many runs. It was expected that Art Hildebrand's prowess would snow the Barbour team under, but the Forestburg players had great difficulty in holding Art's lightning throws and let in many runs. The Barbour team came out on top. The next and concluding event was the territory-wide foot race, open to all amateurs for a three-hundred dollar prize.

This was won easily by our favorite, Sam Partridge, although there had been rumors of a famous contestant from the Bad Lands, who had the sobriquet of the Bad Lands cowboy. There was some disappointment when he did not appear, although my father told George M. Stratton that he was as well satisfied with his absence as he understood that the Bad Lands cowboy, who claimed the name of Pat O'Brien, was a protégé of "Slick Jim" Sanborn, the owner and operator of the Gold Miners Exchange, a notorious Fort Pierre gambling house. While they were talking there was a buzz of excitement in the crowd, and Mr. Sanborn, himself, walked over and greeted them, saying he was sorry that he arrived late as he had a friend with him, who would have beaten the socks off of Sam Partridge. Mr. Sanborn's plan worked, and Mr. F. B. Ward, the Redstone banker, very shortly put up a bet of a thousand dollars, most of it his own money, against Mr. Sanborn, on the question of the speed of Sam Partridge vs. Pat O'Brien, the Bad Lands cowboy.

When Mr. O'Brien appeared in his running suit, it was very evident that he did not look at all like the ordinary conception of an O'Brien or a cowboy; he was tall, lanky, dark, and his straight legs had not been bowed by saddle work. My father remarked to Judge Baldwin that he looked very much like a half-breed Assinoboine. In any event, he was fleet as a deer and after letting Sam lead for the first half of the race he ran by him and won easily by about a yard. He went immediately to the buckboard in which he had arrived with Mr. Sanborn and drove the team up to the edge of the crowd, awaiting Mr. Sanborn, who in turn was looking for Mr. Stratton, who, as stakeholder, had possession of the \$2,000 bet. Mr. Ward and two other men were in earnest conversation with Mr. Stratton, so finally Mr. Sanborn walked over saying he would like to have his money as he had a long trip ahead of him, and issuing a jovial collective invitation to the group, to come and get revenge at his Fort Pierre gambling house, Mr. Ward finally said that he protested the bet and desired that it be held by the stakeholder until he could investigate the amateur status of the Bad Lands cowboy. Mr. Sanborn then astonished the group by stating that amateur status was not involved, since the cowboy had not raced in the regular contest, but merely in a side race.

Mr. Stratton did not accept this logic and became very hesitant about delivering the money. Sanborn, who was something of a bully and as known to be quick on the trigger, finally said, "It's my money and I'm going to have it." He threw back his vest and displayed a pearl-handled pistol. A short man, a stranger, had stepped into the crowd, just opposite Sanborn. He said quietly, "Gunplays don't go here." There was something, in his quiet voice that intimidated Sanborn somewhat, but he snarled, "Who in the Hell are you! A tall, slender man, who had stepped up to Sanborn's side touched him lightly on the arm and said "Jimmy, that's my new deputy, just fresh from Wyoming; we have warrants for you and Slim LaFleche *alias* Pat O'Brien. The last Dakota legislature made the footrace badger game a felony." My

father stepped forward and shook hands with the tall man, guessing him as Captain Seth Bullock, the United States Marshal.

That night, we rode back through the splendors of the Dakota moon, and saw the glories of the northern lights. My father said, "I would rather own a section of Dakota land than a bank in Omaha."

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## Pembina

### "Where the red Missouri bring- eth rich tribute from the West."

**ONE BLUSTERY** February day, in the early nineties, the great hard-coal heater in the Redstone Mercantile Company's pioneer dry goods and groceries emporium threw the grateful heat on a knot of earnest stockmen and grain-raisers who were debating a much mooted question. George M. Stratton, who was something of an amateur soil expert, had just voiced his favorite dictum that "Dakota would never be a corn country." In response to one of Postmaster Jim Douglass's arguments that the Sioux River valley raised fine corn, Mr. Stratton said, "Yes, the river valleys will grow both corn and trees, but the real prairies will not grow either--they were made to raise wheat and grass. After all, wheat is just a variety of grass."

Jim Douglass then said, "Well, George, you are a great expert of fine and expensive horses, as Sultan Saladin proves."

"Enough of that," said George M. And Jim Douglass continued, "Richard Lyons is going to demonstrate, this year, that the Big Place will raise corn." "Well, I wish him luck," said George Stratton, "but seeing is believing."

My father had always been enthusiastic over the possibilities of Dakota as a corn country, but his efforts to raise the great maize plant had been unsuccessful. The Iowa seed corn grew a fine stalk and sometimes produced roasting ears, but the September frost which came in Dakota usually before September 10, made it valueless except as a fodder crop. My father had taken up the problem very seriously with Mr. Archer of Archer & Rowe, the great grain commission merchants of Saint Paul, with the result that at the very time of the discussion there was *en route* from Buffalo, New York, a carload of Chief Brant seed corn, a prize winner in the great Mohawk Valley. Legend

claimed that the ancestor of this corn was raised by Sir John Johnson, the British Indian Agent, on land which the Chief had presented to him on occasion of Sir John's marriage to his beautiful Mohawk wife, the Chief's daughter. The legend tactfully omitted the matter of Sir John's other subsisting marriages; as well it might since the marriage was for Sir John a diplomatic necessity to conciliate the friendship of his Britannic Majesty's allies of the Five Nations.

In due time the car of corn arrived at Redstone, was shoveled into wagon boxes, hauled out the Big Place and listed in on the section (640 acres) east of the "tree-claim." On May 22 the green shoots of the "Mondamin," as it was called in Dakota out of deference to the Sioux language, made a pleasant sight for anyone

driving along the public highway. My father drove the Hambletonians clear around the section and extolled the merits of the new seed corn to Jim Douglass, who likewise boasted of it in the Redstone Mercantile forum after distributing the mail.

But June 4 demonstrated that "man was made to mourn." The *Sioux Falls Press* carried the headline of the great June freeze which had killed all the corn--although the hardy wheat plants survived. My father and Jim Douglass rode out from Redstone on the gallop. My father poked his forefinger into the roots of half a dozen hills of corn and shook his head sadly toward Jim Douglass, who agreed that the roots were blighted and dead. By the time my father had reached "the machine-shed" on the Big Place, the strong will of the pioneer had become as aroused as if the frost were some individual opposition to his making a success of the corn-growing venture. He summoned all hands and told George Davidson to have thirty teams equipped for corn listing by noon. There was still enough of the seed corn in the "flat-house" at Redstone to seed the 640 acres of land. He arranged with Charlie Ochsner, the wholesale implement dealer, to lease him twenty John Deere corn-listers, and within a week the section was replanted to corn.

George M. Stratton said, "Richard, you remind me of the Irishman in Abe Lincoln's story. 'I admire your pluck but damn your judgment.' Your great Mohawk Valley corn will freeze about September 7, when the stalks have nothing but nubbins on them." However, to the surprise of everyone including my father, September 15 came without a frost and we had magnificent roasting ears. There were two to three long ears on every stalk. My father announced in the Redstone Mercantile Company's place that the venture was a success--although he expected, of course, that every night an inevitable frost would terminate the ripening process so prematurely as to make the crop merely an experiment.

However, the frost held off, and on September 27 my father exhibited ears of corn seventeen inches long with big yellow kernels perfectly ripened and gloriously mature. George M. Stratton paid homage to the success of the venture and came to the Big Place to pick a wagonload of the big ears for next year's seed.

The next day he told my father that he thought the crop would go sixty bushels to the acre, which would mean a total crop of almost 40,000 bushels. My father then was confronted with another problem. The price of corn was low, and we had no storage facilities for such an enormous yield. However, he was equal to the situation, and by the end of October George Davidson returned from the Belle Fourche country with a thousand head of grass-fed "critters." My father leased the Nels Jensen place adjoining the Northwestern Stockyards and we began hauling four hundred bushels of the great yellow ears of corn in from the Big Place every day.

By December 10 a fine lace curtain of snow had fallen on the corn field and the job of husking became somewhat severe. Several big coveys of prairie chickens made their home in the corn field, so Steve Archimbault got to carrying his pistol to the corn field and almost every day he brought down two or three big roosters. They were too tough for frying, and since George Davidson had just butchered a fine fat shoat, Steve gave us a sample of what he called a "Bad Lands" delicacy. He stewed the big prairie chickens with hog's liver, rutabagas, and onions, and all agreed that it made a fine

winter night's supper.

The days had become very short. Sunrise was after eight in the morning, and often at night we were on the road late with a load of corn and saw the flashes of the northern lights. The stars shone in the frozen sky with a steely glitter and late at night there was the "long glory of the winter moon." My father had set January 7 for shipping the train load of cattle, which had been given a diet of chopped millet, bran and shorts, and sorghum as well as the mighty ears of corn. Will Sterling, Dakota's silver-tongued orator, at that time chief counsel for the Northwestern at Omaha, aided my father in having a cattle train and an extra switch engine set out at Redstone and telegraphed to say that he was coming in person with a "brass-collar" assistant general manager to see that the railroad facilities were at the highest state of efficiency.

He advised that he would arrive at 3:30 A. M., and would come immediately to the Redstone Mercantile Company for a visit. My father notified General Sheafe, who was a great admirer of Will's, and although the hour was somewhat nonconventional, a pleasant company was assembled for the visit. The talk naturally drifted to the statehood period, and Will Sterling reminded General Sheafe that he had opposed the division Dakota territory into two states and favored a single great state which should have the glory of bearing the famed Dakota name.

My father remarked that probably neither of them knew that a proposition had been suggested to carve three states out of the territory. To their surprise Olaf produced from the files two letters to my father written shortly after his election as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention in the spring of 1889.

One was a brief letter of congratulation from the "greatest private citizen of the country"--the Honorable Grover Cleveland,--who the month previous had retired from the presidency. He recalled briefly the pleasant chats with my father and others who had come to Washington to urge the claims of Dakota to admission as a state. That letter closed with a little homily in Mr. Cleveland's oracular style warning against the "heresy of sumptuary laws." This referred to the question of constitutional prohibition, but the warning was ineffectual insofar as the majority of the delegates was concerned. As to my father, it was absolutely unnecessary. But it was the other letter that attracted attention and excited interest.

The writer was a lady newspaper correspondent who had spent three weeks of the preceding summer at the Palmer House in Redstone enjoying the prairie chicken season. The letterhead set forth that she was the secretary of the New York and New England Society for the Preservation of Indian Place Names. A part of the letter, after courteous congratulations, read,

*"Now, Mr. Lyons, I have read with absolute horror that the seamless garment of the great name of Dakota is to be divided and that we are to have North Dakota and South Dakota. What folly and what incongruity. It would be more in accordance with fact to name the two states Arctic Dakota and Less Arctic Dakota. Let me propose something sensible, natural and beautiful. You should have three states, the region between the Missouri and the Big Sioux should be given the name of Dakota and its capitol should be your own county seat of*

*DeSmet, named for the famous missionary Jesuit the friend of the Indian, and the able unofficial diplomat. The region 'West of the River', of the Territory west of the Missouri should be the historic name of Mandan, which the fur traders and frontiersmen baptized it with when Minnesota was a territory. Its capitol of course should bear the beautiful name of Belle Fourche. The region remaining, lying between the Missouri and the Red River of the North, should bear the great historic name of Pembina which it bore before Dakota territory was thought of. Its capitol of course should be Grand Forks, but the name should be written 'Grand Forks of the Red River.'*"

The letter ended with the quotation from a poem,

*"Tis where Ontario's billow like Ocean's surge is curled,  
Where strong Niagara's thunders wake the echo of the world,  
Where the red Missouri bringeth rich tribute from the West  
And Rappahannock sweetly sleeps on green Virginia's breast."*

"Well," said Will Sterling, "although the lady gave you quite a large order, Uncle Dick, in the matter of states and capitols she did quote some fine verses."

"I intend to incorporate them in my lecture on the Missouri River, which I have been invited to deliver at Kansas City, on Washington's birthday."

General Sheafe said that he believed that the letter showed good common sense as well as literary skill; he had always favored separate statehood, but if there was to be a division he believed that the one suggested by the letter was preferable to what we have got. He gave a little history of the Pembina country which he had visited before he became a trooper in Sheridan's cavalry. He said that the Pembina settlements were the oldest in the Dakota region, that Lord Selkirk had mistaken the international boundary line and originally established a settlement at Pembina which he later moved to Fort Garry, the site of Winnipeg. He told of the days when the mail came by dog team on sleds from Saint Paul and of the great two-wheeled carts drawn by oxen or buffalo which the descendants of the French and the Ojibways used as their sole means of transportation.

"Pembina," he said, "is indeed a name almost as famous as Dakota itself, and North Dakota in my judgment would do well if it had taken the name of Pembina and left Dakota to the southern neighbor."

At this juncture Olaf Norstrom, the manager of the Redstone Mercantile Company, announced that he smelled the aroma of boiling coffee, and sure enough a big "granite" three gallon coffee pot exuding fragrant steam made its appearance. There were big sandwiches, cheese and pickles and many other delicacies from the Redstone shelves. About the time fresh cigars had been lighted, Olaf announced that the "north-bound," which stopped at Redstone at 7:10 A.M., was due in fifteen minutes and General Sheafe and Will Sterling took a reluctant farewell.

The tale of the cattle loading must await another chapter. My father rode to Chicago, in the caboose on a "shipper's pass," and made a very satisfactory deal with

the Sinnott Commission Company, who were then the big buyers at the stockyards. On the day when we expected his return, we were all up before 3:30, much excited over the occasion and the expected presents which he always brought from a journey on a stock deal. The train turned out to be an hour and a half late, we had a big breakfast at 5:30 and at 6:00 my father pushed back his chair, waved aside my mother's protest that "he ought to get some rest" and started for the Redstone Mercantile's establishment "to take up matters with Olaf."

At about eight o'clock, he was showing Cap Palmer and Mr. Cyrus Clark a clipping from the *American Miller* extolling the virtues of cornmeal ground from the famous Chief Brant Corn "originated in the famed Mohawk Valley of New York and grown on the Beautiful prairies of South Dakota," the article stated. In his enthusiasm, my father did not at first observe that Frank Albright, the depot agent, had come in with a telegram, or a "message" as it was always called in Dakota. Assuming that the message was some word from the Chicago Commission House relative to the cattle deal he took it very casually and opened it slowly. Then he gave a muffled exclamation, turned his back on his auditors and automatically lit a match as if to relight his cigar which already had a good glowing fire.

When he turned it was very slowly and his face was drawn. He said, "This telegram is from Sioux Falls," and he read, "Will Sterling died this morning, will advise concerning funeral. R. F. Pettigrew."

Then my father said, gently, "Poor Will--his family needed the salary." Then he said again "Dear Will--" and then something in the memory of the old wagon-train master's experience flashed into his speech, "Poor Will--but--no more rivers to cross."

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## Pukwana

**"The peace-pipe, the smoke,  
the breath, the spirit."**

**MY LAST JANUARY** "West of the River" was mild and balmy as ordinary April weather. Luchaire had gone with Uncle Cardinelle to visit Baptiste Pourriere, who was also well and favorably known as "Big Bat," and was said to have been the frontiersman who did such famous execution at the wagonbox fight near Fort Fetterman, when the little company of thirty odd soldiers with the aid of the famous plainsman stood off Red Cloud's army in the greatest exhibition of coolness and bravery known in the West.

I had traveled from my claim to Sentinel Butte northeast of Custer City to meet them and journey on to White Swan. Uncle Cardinelle said that the weather reminded him of what the Sioux called *Maja Oka Iawa*, which meant "goose-laying month" and corresponded to our April. When night came the mustangs were very tired and as we saw some log buildings--a log shack and a stable--we stopped for the night and put up the teams. There was a good big clump of cotton-woods nearby and Luchaire soon had an ample supply of firewood and a good fire going in the big fireplace.

Uncle Cardinelle explained that the improvements which we were occupying had once been a stage station on the route from the Missouri River to Fort Laramie and that the Belle Fourche Livestock Company still kept it in repair for the use of roundup crews. Belated travelers were welcome to its use and it had served as a haven of refuge for those who were on the road when a blizzard struck. In a chest in the corner Luchaire found coffee and oatmeal and this with our own supplies furnished a good supper. A sign on the chest advised, "You are welcome to everything. If you leave dirty dishes, we will know that you were horse thieves or some other brand of stinkers."

Uncle Cardinelle reminded us that the epithet "stinker" derived from the time of the great drowning of the tremendous buffalo herd that went through the soft ice of the Missouri. Some enterprising gentlemen skinned the drowned buffalo and the smell of the hide suggested a term of contempt for those guilty of such malpractice. Uncle Cardinelle's host "Big Bat" was a famous buffalo hunter as well as a scout of wide experience. He had told Uncle Cardinelle of his visit with Colonel F. W. Benteen, shortly after the disaster at the Little Big Horn fight. All who have any knowledge of that event recognize that Benteen was the hero of the fray and that it was his coolness as well as courage that saved the united command under Major Reno after the disastrous retreat across the river. Big Bat gave it as his opinion that this retreat was

responsible for the failure of the entire attack, including the destruction of Custer and his troops. He explained that this was due to the peculiar psychology of the Indian--as long as the army was attacking and had the jump on the Sioux they were almost certain of success, but as soon as they retreated the Indians regarded this as an acknowledgment of defeat and became ten times as formidable. Charlie Reynolds, described in the official report as "guide and hunter," endeavored to prevent the making of the retreat and stood his ground until he was cut off by a hundred shrieking braves. He made a single-handed charge against them and went down under a fusillade of Sioux bullets from first-class Springfield rifles issued by the Agency for "hunting purposes." Bat asked Benteen about Custer's unpopularity with some of the officers, including Benteen and Reno, and learned that Custer offended them by his custom of consulting only the scouts like California Joe and Charlie Reynolds and ignoring his subordinate officers. Before the Little Big Horn the only individual he talked plans over with was Bloody Knife, the famous Crow scout, for whom Custer always expressed deep affection. It was Custer's habit when he returned from a visit in New York with Lawrence Barrett, the actor, to bring back a box of presents for Bloody Knife. In the retreat across the river, Bloody Knife rode next to Major Reno and when a Sioux bullet or tomahawk knocked out his brains, they splattered on Major Reno. This incident was said to have temporarily demoralized that commander.

Bat asked Benteen what was the hardest thing to contend with when the command was besieged by the Indian army, made up of warriors from ten Indian nations and thought to number almost five thousand braves. Benteen answered, "The filth, stench and lies were a greater hardship than the Indian attacks. However, the pain and agony of the men who had arrow wounds was heart-rending especially when the poor fellows were calling out for water, which we were unable to procure. Later on a detail volunteered to bring water from the river and was successful. Things weren't so bad after that; but the trouble about an arrow wound is that the arrow cannot be pulled out; unless the surgeon can cut it out, it must go on through. The arrow wounds were nearly always fatal and the wounded men died in lingering agony."

In spite of Luchaire's generous replenishings of cottonwood chunks, the log shack seemed to be growing colder and the wind began to whistle dismally around the corners. When Luchaire pulled open the door we were surprised to find that there was a brisk snow storm on and a pretty strong northwest wind. We took an extra ration of oats to the broncos and pitched in plenty of oat straw. Then we pulled off the halters so that if the storm became a blizzard the animals would be loose and could crowd together for warmth. When we were back inside the shack, Uncle Cardinelle plugged all holes and spaces in and around the door so that no draft or snow came through. The roaring fire began to be felt and the room was soon snug. Uncle Cardinelle told the tale of some Chicago railway officials who had gone on a Buffalo hunt in the "Bad Lands" with Big Bat and Napoleon Jack and Colonel Cody. A storm somewhat similar to the one we were enjoying came up and there was a good deal of snow-fall and a high wind. The Eastern visitors were convinced that they were undergoing a blizzard--an experience which they more or less relished (as long as they were in safety) as an experience to be narrated in Chicago, with of course some reasonable embellishment.

They asked Buffalo Bill several times if the storm wasn't a blizzard. He brusquely answered, "No," in a tone which indicated a degree of contempt for the notion. Later the wind got pretty high and some icy pellets drifted in through a small chink in the cabin door. A small mat of white snow was formed on the floor. One of the visitors pointed to this and said, "Colonel Cody, if this isn't a blizzard, tell us just what would be a blizzard." "Glad to accommodate," replied Buffalo Bill. "When six men can't hold this North Star blanket against a gimlet hole in that cabin door, you'll know that something like a blizzard is coming your way."

Next morning the late dawn was clear and brilliant. When the sun came up it was accompanied by the sun-dogs. Just before the first rays of the sun struck the Missouri River bluffs with their white carpet of snow, there was a beautiful rosy light that lingered on the hills for about a quarter of an hour, then changed to brilliant orange and then to ivory color. After sunrise the dazzling light on the perfectly white snow surface was almost blinding. When we reached the Missouri, we found to our surprise that the ferry was not running and that the thermometer had gone down to 31 degrees below zero. We stayed for an hour or two with an old friend of Uncle Cardinelle's who had the sobriquet of "Chief Smutty Bear," although he was not of the family of the great Yankton Chief of that name and of famous memory, but instead was distantly related to the great Brule family of Spotted Tail. About one p.m. our host told Uncle Cardinelle that there was a good safe bridge of ice clear across the Missouri, and we made ready to set out. We were greatly mystified at hearing him say that the day before in the fine weather he had heard the meadow-lark tell in his song that there would soon be a bridge of ice across the great river. As we drove over the ice we questioned the old river pilot who likewise had Sioux blood as to the meaning of the old Indian's story about the meadowlark. He assured us that the meadowlark gives warning concerning the future to the Sioux and that he himself heard the meadowlark sing, "Throwing Arrow is going to die. Throwing Arrow will not see two more suns." He explained that to white ears the song seemed to be merely the sweet plaintive melody of the beautiful songster of the prairie, but to Throwing Arrow it was a death knell. He immediately made ready for death according to the Sioux ritual, called all his family around him and began the death chant--within twenty-four hours he was slain by a party of Crow horse thieves.

We finally made our way to White Swan where we saw the ruins of the old flouring mill, six stories high. In the terrible flood when the Missouri was practically an inland sea fifteen miles in width, seventy people took refuge in the top story of the mill. Four stories were under water, but the skilled and energetic steamboat captains from Yankton finally came with a rescue party and brought them all to safety. When I took leave of my friends, the next day, Uncle Cardinelle was greatly interested to learn that I intended to take up the study of law. He approved the idea and said, "Now that the country is all fences and farms, something of that kind is good. We did not need it when I first saw Dakota, although it then did not have that name. We had no courts, instead every man had to look out for himself. This way of today is no doubt better for most people, but it is no good to me. I enjoyed the buffalo hunt, the gold expedition and the trips up the Missouri on the steamboat. I heard too in those days of still nobler

days that were gone, the days of the fur traders, the voyageurs, and the French coureurs. The men of that time thought that the days I saw in youth were tame, just as I think these days are. Perhaps it is all just like the great prairie mirage which you can never come up with but always seems miles ahead of you."

When the spring vacation came, I went back to visit Luchaire at White Swan. He had written to me that Uncle Cardinelle had died, but when I saw him he told me the full story. Chief Smutty Bear had told Uncle Cardinelle a part of the meadowlark song which he did not reveal to us. He had said that according to the song Uncle Cardinelle would soon take another trip on the "canoe with the great pinions" (the steamboat). He would go up the Missouri and then turn up the Yellowstone River far beyond any known head of navigation and finally he would reach a great camp of hunters, including Charlie Reynolds and Buffalo Bill. But this time the big hunt was only for a peculiar animal--the White Buffalo.

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## The Sick Mare

**"And the look of the bay mare  
Drives all the silliness out of me."**

**Walt Whitman**

**AT** my father's Big Place, twenty miles southwest of DeSmet when we finished "cutting" with the headers, there was small space allowed for jubilation. On the occasion I remember best, we wound up in an eighty-acre field not far from "the improvements," as farm buildings were then called. I still remember the pleasant click of the sickle as the header ran empty from the field to the machine shed. We no sooner got the horses unhitched from the header and the header boxes than my father said:

"Well, boys, you might as well hook up your teams to the racks and start hauling in barley bundles for stacking in the yard near the shed."

We each got in a big load of bundles of barley before noon. Bundle-stacking had been a great art, especially in the days when all the wheat was cut with the binder. It had deteriorated somewhat since the headers had come in. But Uncle John Rei's "turnip stacks" were still famous. The turnip stack was, of course, merely a bundle stack of wheat bundles--in the present instance made in the shape of a turnip. The diameter of the stack at the bottom was approximately ten feet, and at the "bulge" the diameter was twenty to twenty-two feet. Then the stack was gradually drawn in, in the form of a cone, with the apex thirty feet high. Uncle John's stacks would shed rain like a shingle roof. In one season when an early snow had cut short thrashing operations, one of Uncle John's settings remained unthrashed until the next season in October, and the insides of the bundles were perfectly dry in spite of all the rain and snowstorms, and the grain was absolutely sound. The outer layer of straw had rotted off, but the stacks were in perfect condition. Of course, we did not have a bundle stacker who could cope with Uncle John's masterpieces, but this was not necessary since we thrashed barley and oats almost immediately, and ran the straw into a giant straw-stack in the shed and in the yard, for the livestock to run to in the cold blizzard days of the ensuing January and February.

Stacking oats and barley bundles was not such a fierce, oppressive labor as was the wheat harvest in which we usually wore out two shifts of horses and one shift of men. Of course, we did not dare to pause for any available moment, since a wind-storm, a rain-storm, or a hail-storm might destroy a whole crop of standing wheat. The oats and barley bundles were well protected in shocks, with caps which would shed moisture and the stacking was considered a really pleasant interlude.

George Davidson and Steve Archimbault did not take any part in the stacking, but each got out with a gang-plow pulled by five big Percheron horses and started fall plowing. However, their first duties consisted of the plowing of fire-breaks around the settings of the headed wheat, and they complained that they could not turn over the customary seven acres a day which it was the ambition of a good plowman to achieve with the big gang-plow.

My father had had about five hundred bushels of old barley and seven hundred bushels of corn ground and mixed, at the Redstone mill; and in hauling it out for hog-feed, a near-tragedy occurred. Very late the night before, the driver of one load got out to the Big Place and since the night was clear he felt that it was safe to defer shoveling off the load into the bin, until the following morning. In some way our prized pet mare, Old Lil, got loose during the night, got to the load, and, of course, after the gluttonous fashion of the horse, over-ate the ground mixture, drank plentifully at the water tank, and to my father's intense anxiety was seen, when we arrived, lying in the yard, badly swollen up. He immediately said:

"We have a very sick mare on our hands, she is badly foundered. It is no use to talk about blame; we have got to try to do something for her."

Old Lil was a Cleveland bay. She stood about fifteen hands high, weighed about fourteen hundred pounds, and was a beautiful, intelligent animal and a wonderful pet. A pedigree of the Cleveland bay went back at least a hundred years, and a famous breeder lived in Dakota and kept a fine stable of mares and stallions. Old Lil had come from this breeder, and was the greatest pet of all our horses. Most of our horses were Norman-Percherons, having the weight and strength of the big Percheron horses, with some of the fire of the Arab cross. We also had some Clydesdale and Shire horses; they were big and powerful, but slightly awkward, and were not so popular as the Percherons. We had only one span of Cleveland bays, Old Lil and her mate, May.

It was impossible to get Old Lil on to her feet. Then my father immediately said that he would have to try to get in touch with Mr. Joe Formanack, who was a very excellent amateur veterinarian. Accordingly, he hitched his Hambletonians to the buckboard and drove at once to Redstone, where he fortunately encountered Mr. Formanack hauling in his last load of wheat to the elevator. Mr. Formanack's place was in the Jim River valley and the harvest had been a week or so earlier there. Mr. Formanack immediately turned over his team to a neighbor and came back with my father, in the buckboard. He immediately pointed out the symptoms of poor sick Lil to my father. He observed that the mare pointed with her nose at her flanks and it showed that she had inflammation. Anybody could see that her barrel was swelled and rigid and he said, "Her pulse is high, she has a fever." The normal pulse of a horse of her size, according to Mr. Formanack, should have been about 40 to the minute. He wasted little time, however, in diagnosis, and immediately began his treatment for a foundered animal, which he explained in detail. I was detailed to ride Feather, a bronco, into Redstone, and to send word to Mr. Formanack's home in the Jim River valley that he would be absent from five to fourteen days, depending on the course of Old Lil's malady. Mr. Formanack directed me to get two bottles of a special liniment

from the Redstone drug store. This was a liniment which had been prepared by a famous French veterinarian who was a high medical director to the stud of the French imperial cavalry, under Napoleon the Third. It was a very expensive liniment, and I still recall its pungent odor. It evidently had a strong mixture of chloroform and ether. My father had already returned to Redstone, and when I went with him to Doc Ferris's drug store, we were greatly disappointed to hear that he was just out of the liniment. My father had already sent four quarts of linseed oil from the drug store to the Big Place for Mr. Formanack's use as a drench for the sick animal. However, Mr. Formanack's treatment of a horse that had been foundered involved the rubbing of the flanks and abdomen every hour, with this powerful liniment to stimulate the circulation, overcome the rigidity, and reduce the swelling and inflammation.

He had arranged to have blankets swung with a segment of threshing machine separator-belt, from the ceiling of a big box stall in the stable, so that the mare could be raised, since she had become so sick that she wanted to lie on one side without moving. He had also fixed up some straw and a blanket and practically lived in the adjoining stall himself, sleeping there at night, drinking hot coffee brought out every two hours for him, with a gallon of warm gruel for the mare.

Since his principal treatment consisted of the rubbing with the powerful liniment, the druggist's announcement that he was out of this medicament was a harsh blow to my father. Of course, in those days we had no long-distance telephones, but we did have the telegraph, and my father got word by telegraph to the county seat to send a special messenger on horseback to a junction crossing of the Northwestern Railway and to deliver the package, personally, to the conductor, an old friend of my father's, who would take charge of it and give it to him at the station platform at Redstone.

We were at the station platform at six in the morning, awaiting the north-bound Northwestern train, and after a wait of two hours, the depot agent advised us that there had been a freight train wreck at Hawarden and that the passenger had just passed that point and should arrive at Redstone, about ten or ten-thirty that night. However it was eleven when the train came in; and sure enough, the conductor had the package of liniment for my father, knew all about the sickness of Old Lil, and inquired as solicitously for her condition as if she had been a member of the family. My father, however, in his impatience to get the medicine out to Mr. Formanack, wasted very little time. He broke open the package and made two bundles of it, which I tied around Feather's neck, and started off for the Big Place. My father cautioned me, as I was leaving, to ride slowly, since riding at a gallop might produce a crash that would smash the four bottles of liniment which had been procured at a total cost of twenty-five dollars. Accordingly, I did not ride faster than at a hand-gallop. I did not get away from Redstone until after eleven o'clock, and rode the five miles to the Big Place very carefully and deliberately.

Soon after I rode out of Redstone, the moon began to rise and was silhouetted against a big feed barn, which was on my route. I could observe the size of the moon as compared with the big barn--a matter of great interest to a boy who had frequently heard the lumberjacks from the north woods who came to work as harvest hands

debate in all seriousness as to whether the moon was bigger or smaller than the side of the big barn. It was plain to me, that the moon was bigger. The sky was absolutely clear; the radiance of the moon was so vivid that it obscured the starlight, and I recalled hearing it said that a newspaper could be read by this vivid moonlight; however, I never tested it. In one field the wheat settings had been threshed and the brilliant moon light glistening on the irregular contour of the sprawling yellow straw pile made an impression I have never forgotten. Since then I have read that a poet said such moonlight seemed to be radiance splashed from a brimming golden bowl, and when I read that, I recalled the solemn eerie yellow glow reflected from the golden straw stack against which the black-plowed, fire-break shone dull. The road itself was a winding black gash on the prairie, and I rode by empty deserted buildings now utilized only for granaries, until I finally crossed Rock Creek and came to the millet field where the crop had been cut and raked up into windrows. Then I turned in at the east gate and rode past five acres of sunflowers that stood twelve to fourteen feet high, that in the sunlight, shone with gloriously burnished petals, but now had a discouraged, desolate droop. I finally got up to the water tank where George Davidson was waiting. He always claimed he could hear a horse-tread a mile away, and he certainly heard Feather and me coming eighty rods away.

He immediately untied the liniment from Feather's neck and I dismounted, unsaddled, and turned the pony loose to drink and to browse. Someone was just bringing coffee and gruel out to Mr. Formanack, but he waved that away and enlisted George Davidson and myself, at once, as male nurses, to help administer the liniment application, which was done thoroughly.

I stayed in the stall with him all night, and was very reluctantly awakened every two hours, to assist in further treatment. When my father got out to the Big Place at seven the next morning, Mr. Formanack, who apparently had a gift of getting along without sleep, stated that his patient was on the mend and in another day would be out of danger. George Davidson said that my father and Joe Formanack made a good pair; that when there was any hard work or any crisis on, both of them seemed to get along without any sleep, and they seemed to "hate anybody that needed sleep."

By the next day, after many applications of the imperial French liniment, Old Lil was standing alone; she looked weak, thin and haggard. I had never had any notion before that her head was so bony, but she was, anyway, able to drink gruel; and the following morning, she walked out uncertainly to the water tank and took a drink. She was, of course, not fit to work again that fall.

Mr. Formanack then pronounced his patient practically well. His verdict might have seemed a little harsh and crude to a ladies sewing circle, but after all it was medical language. He said, "This horse is about well"--said the mare's temperature was normal again and "her droppings have the normal smell of horse dung, which is not at all an unpleasant smell, merely a pungent odor of ammonia. When she was really sick, though, they smelled more like a hog's or a human's; and I don't have to explain that. But she's about all right again, and I have only to say that I would far rather nurse a sick horse than a sick hog or a sick human, any day of the year."

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## Dakota Funeral

*He listeneth to the lark:  
He listeneth and he laugheth at the sound  
He writeth in a book like any clerk...  
...Odors of ploughed fields and flowery meads.  
"Chaucer" by Longfellow*

**AFTER** the terrible Dakota Blizzard of January, 1888, thereafter referred to in Dakota as the "Great Blizzard," the entire countryside was covered with heavy, deep snow drifts. Later, heavy snows fell in February and March, but there were no more blizzards. In the last week of March, a warm south wind started blowing and blew constantly day and night, until all the snowdrifts were melted and the entire countryside was covered with water. At night the weather was freezing and in the early morning the prairies were covered with a sheet of ice, but by noon the ice had melted and the creeks and streams were all overflowing with ice water.

In May, when the weather had turned warm, the prairies were covered as far as the eye could see, with a beautiful stand of grass, (the buffalo grass, which was a mat grass, did not grow high,) but the blue joint and the blue stem and the bunch grass grew as high, in the Dakota expression, as "the shoulders of a horse." The sight of the grass-covered prairie stretching off to the horizon for miles in every direction was a delight to the eye.

My father decided that he would have to make a trip from the Big Place southwest of DeSmet, to his section of land near Prairie Queen, in the Sioux River valley. I can see, now, what a wonderful, genial, big-hearted pioneer he was, with his mighty, golden-brown mustache, and his sharp blue eyes as keen as a piece of steel. No man who didn't have perfect physical health and complete good nature would have been bothered taking a five-year-old child such as I was, on a forty-mile trip in a buggy.

However, such were the pleasant customs of the Dakota pioneers; and I perched in the buggy, beside my father, who was driving a retired trotting mare at a very slow gait, not to exceed six miles an hour, which he said would get us over the forty-mile distance sooner than any attempt at fast driving.

Even as a younger boy, I had observed that the furrows of the dirt road on which we traveled were flanked by many familiar grass-grown furrows of abandoned roads; and I learned afterwards that in the 1850s or '60s a military road laid out by the United States engineers had crossed our county from the east, at the Sioux River,

westward to the banks of the Missouri River. When the freighters had worn the ruts in one road too deep for comfort, they merely started another one on the grass sod adjoining the old road.

After about three hours travel, we stopped to water the mare and eat some of the fried chicken and doughnuts that my mother had put in for lunch. About two hours after we had started again, we crossed a half-mile of muddy sun-baked slough, well grown up to rush-grass standing six feet high, and to other sedges. About halfway across there was a small trickle of water; my father explained that this was the bed of the Vermillion River, named in the early days of the Northwest by the French explorers. Later, I learned that the footprints of the French were all about us.

The Jim River, on which was located Forestburg, the county seat of Miner County, was really the St. Jacques River, named for a beloved French priest. The Congress of the United States had endeavored in the Enabling Act passed in 1861, to change the name of the Dakota River, but the artificial name never did displace the traditional name. The Sioux River to the east of us was, of course, only the contraction of the name which the French applied to the Dakota nations; it was spelled Nadouwessioux, and the last syllable was applied to the Dakota nations, though many think, of course, that "Sioux" is a Dakota Indian word.

At the division of the Territory at statehood, North Dakota certainly out-traded the "Southern Sister" in the matter of the great heritage. (a) North Dakota is called the Sioux State. (b) Its flower is the prairie wild rose; and (c) its state bird is the Western Meadow-lark (*Sturnella Neglecta*), which Audubon discovered at Fort Vermillion, in 1843, and gave its name. Many naturalists say that the sweetest song of this prairie warbler is not surpassed by any other songbird in the world, and its long sustained flute-like notes, sometimes of ravishing sweetness and then of piercing sadness, strike upon the heart. Many times the meadow-lark has been suggested as the national bird of the United States instead of the predacious Bald Eagle.

About two hours after we crossed the bed of the Vermillion River, we reached Lake Badus, a beautiful blue water lake, named by the Swiss immigrants. Then we drove on to Uncle John Rei's home, where we had a pleasant visit, and drove back in a few days to the Big Place.

About two years later, I went again on the same trip with my father, but this time it was late in July. The prairies around the Big Place were turning brown and the wheat crop was short. The rainfall had been insufficient up to about the 20th of June, when an inch of rain saved the crop. The straw was very short, but even so, the heads were good and the crop made fifteen bushels to the acre. The Sioux valley, however, east of Lake Badus, where my father's one-section farm was located, had a bumper crop of Dakota No. 1 hard wheat. For some reason there was a marked difference in the rainfall in that area distant only forty miles from the Big Place.

My father had gone to Lake County to help Uncle Will get three new binders started, as the harvest was earlier there. I looked with wonder at the five big Percheron horses pulling each of the binders, and saw the canvas platform apron elevate the cut swath of ripe wheat into the canvas elevator aprons. These in turn ran the long stalks through the binder, where the knotter tied and cut the twine. The tripper hurled out

mighty bundles onto the stubble, keeping the shockers, as they said, "covered up." I had heard my father tell of the wonders of the machine which bound the bundles with Manila or Sisal twine. In the old days it was necessary for a man to stand on the platform of the original reaping machine and bind the bundle with a wisp of straw. This was a back-breaker, and the modern improvement was highly admired. I walked along with two men who were doing the shocking, for a few rounds, and then got tired and took a nap in the shadow of a shock, from which I was awakened by Aunt Bridget, Uncle John's wife, appearing with a jug of lemonade and a generous lunch of cookies for the harvesters.

That night, around Aunt Bridget's kitchen, there were great tales of days when my father brought the wagon train from eastern Iowa to Prairie Queen, Dakota Territory. My father told how he and his brother Jere broke the sod and planted sod-corn and sod-flax and raised sod potatoes. He remarked that the sloughs and creeks and rivers were running bank full at that time; and what interested me most, he told about the large flock of beautiful Canadian geese that nested in a slough on their land and became so tame that they would march back and forth with the breaking plow crossing the field.

Uncle Jere regarded them as his special pets and would have made short work of any hunter who tried to molest them. Indeed, in those days, my father said, the universal sentiment of the homesteaders was against killing any of the wild fowl. Real hunters went farther west across the Missouri, where the antelope and the elk and the buffalo could still be hunted, and it was rumored that even at that late date a grizzly bear could be encountered on rare occasions in the Bad Lands. An old buffalo hunter had told Uncle John Rei of Hugh Glass's terrible fight with the grizzly bear, seventy years before, at Fort Pierre. John Coalter and Hugh Glass were the great heroes of the buffalo hunters.

At about ten o'clock the visiting came to an end and my father suggested that since Uncle John Rei was housing a crew of harvesters, that he and I would walk over to Uncle Jere's and sleep upstairs in the granary. Uncle Will was living in the house my father had built in the early seventies, and when it was built, (Uncle John reminded my father) it was the only two-story house in a hundred-miles compass, and was referred to by all travelers, as the "Big House." They were greatly impressed by the sight of any wooden dwelling. The ordinary sight was a sod house. A two-story wooden house was a marvel. We walked a mile from Rei's to Uncle Jere's in the bright moonlight, past a magnificent field of tasseled corn, and found Uncle Jere just dousing water on a green hay smudge he had built to keep off the mosquitoes. I slept soundly on a straw tick in one of the upper bins of the granary, until Uncle Jere "hollered the harvest hands to breakfast."

The next afternoon, one of the binders had to shut down, on account of a broken casting. Uncle Will immediately rode his race horse to town and succeeded in getting another casting. He got back late and stopped at Uncle John Rei's, at about nine o'clock at night. He did not speak to me, when he came in, and did not answer my greeting, but I saw that he motioned to my father and Aunt Bridget, to step outside, and then I heard him say,

"Well, Bridget, I have some sad news for you, your little friend, Julia Muenchler, died at one o'clock, today. I heard from Coon Klotzpaugh, that they got the priest just in time. Coon Klotzpaugh drove his best team out there himself." Aunt Bridget was terribly shocked. She had been at Muenchler's only the Sunday before and combed Julia's hair for her, and then the talk went on how bright and sweet and courageous little Julia was. She evidently (as I know now,) was a "consumptive" and had been "given up" for at least a year. But Aunt Bridget said that when she was there on that preceding Sunday, that Anna Muenchler, Julia's mother, took her aside and began to cry. She knew then, of course, that Julia was failing fast. Little Julia, with her sharp eyes, saw her mother crying and said, "Aunt Bridget, can't you tell my mamma, that I am going to get well, so she will stop crying?"

"Well," Uncle Will said, "I think that about ten o'clock, this morning, after Julia had got up and dressed herself, she evidently had a gush of blood from her mouth (a hemorrhage) and, of course, they knew that the end was near."

Aunt Bridget wept softly. My father turned away, and Aunt Bridget said to me, "Julia would have been 11, the 12th of next month, and she was such a bright little thing. When I combed her hair, last Sunday, I couldn't help admiring her great mass of golden red curls. I am going to ask Anna to give me two of them."

Just then, Uncle John called from the yard, "All ready," and my father and Aunt Bridget started to get in the buggy with him. He had hitched up his mules, but I was not permitted to go on the trip to Muenchler's, on account of the lateness of the hour. I heard afterwards that Julia's mother, before giving her little girl's body to the women to "lay out the corpse," (this was in the days before undertakers) had shorn off the beautiful golden curls and placed them in packets for friends and relatives. Aunt Bridget received three of the beautiful curls.

Julia had died on Monday, and the funeral was set for Wednesday, at ten a.m., at the Badus Church. Uncle Will's binders clicked steadily from daylight to dark, on Tuesday, and at 5:30 a.m., Wednesday, Uncle Will and his crew were in the fields, but at nine o'clock, he turned over the lines to one of his hands who was doing the shocking, and came to Rei's to ride with us to the funeral. We traveled all the way to the church, on section lines, two rods wide (good roads, between wonderful crops of wheat and oats and barley and rye). Uncle John did not go with us, but hitched up a fast trotter to a two-wheel cart, to get to the church early, since he was one of the pallbearers. A little before noon, in the bright Dakota sunshine, the small rough box was lowered into the deep grave, in the Badus burying ground, and the sod was immediately shoveled in on the coffin.

The Muenchlers were a prominent Swiss family, and connected with Mr. Jake Mugli, who had fostered the coming of the Swiss Colony from Switzerland to the Sioux Valley in Dakota. Mr. Mugli was a man of strong character and high intelligence, much noted for his goodness of heart.

My father drew back from the mourners standing about the grave, as the sod was being shoveled in, and shook hands with Mr. Mugli and expressed his sympathy.

"Yes," said Mr. Mugli, "it is very sad, but, of course, we must believe that it is better for the poor child, her case was hopeless." Then he whispered, "It is hard on

the mother--Anna Muenchler is of my wife's family."

Then they immediately started to talk of crops and prices and the marvelous rain that had saved the crop at Redstone, "Not a day too soon," said Mr. Mugli, "that rain, I suppose."

On the way back we stopped at one of Uncle Jere's fields where there was a wonderful, sweet odor, and I learned that it was a field of redtop clover, and then my father began talking with Uncle Jere about another field of tame grass called Timothy. I learned afterwards that Timothy was an English native grass, (*phleum pratense*), which some man whose first name was Timothy had distributed in the colonies, prior to the Revolution and hence the name Timothy. Timothy stood up high, and had a fine head of very small, tiny seeds that would thrash out about six bushels to the acre and was considered far superior to millet, as a cattle feed. My father and Uncle Jere talked about the wonderful stand of prairie grass and recalled the great prairie fire of the seventies, which was stopped just in the nick of time, by a backfire. My father pointed off to his fine cottonwood grove and said,

"That grove wouldn't be there, now, if we hadn't got out with gunny sacks and barrels of water, at two in the morning--the sky was red for miles around, with the light of that prairie fire."

A shirring noise attracted my attention, and a beautiful bird flew up in spirals and sang a sweet flute-like oft repeated song. I learned that it was the Meadow-lark, and my father said, "It is a sweet song anytime in the year, but it is wonderful to hear that cheery, plucky note of the Meadow-lark, in the winter, from a snow bank."

That night, around Aunt Bridget's kitchen, the conversation, of course, turned to talk of the funeral and of Julia's death, and Aunt Bridget agreed with Mr. Mugli's statement, "that it was for the best for the poor child," since everybody knew that consumption was incurable, but she said,

"I am afraid poor Anna will be sad and lonely, tonight, and will miss the little bright-haired daughter, more than she would have missed one of the strong, healthy children." "Yes," Uncle Will said, "Julia has been sick for three years and she has been a care to her mother, all that time, and I found out, ten years ago, when my boy, Johnny died of scarlet fever, after months of lingering sickness, that the one you miss most is one that has been `a care' to you. You become more attached to the weak one that is a care, than you are to all the others."

We walked again over to Uncle Jere's granary and climbed the ladder to the second story, to sleep in the bins. The moonlight was bright and I was wakeful. I had been somewhat excited by the events of the day. Finally I fell into a sort of a doze and dreamed that the snow was falling and swirling on little Julia's grave, and that her mother was looking out the window at the swirling snow and thinking of her little golden-haired daughter lying in the grave under the snow bank; and that then the Meadow-lark suddenly rose out of the snow bank, as my father had told, and poured forth a rich flute-like melody above the grave.

Dakota Territory had rich memories for a child; the marvelous grass of summer, the great mirage, the Northern lights, the swirling snows of winter, and the sweet song of the Meadow-lark.





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## **The Lyons Family History Jeremiah & Ellen Lyons**

**By  
Ellen Lyons Smith (Mrs. Frank J.)  
(Daughter of Richard F. Lyons)  
1954**

**These recollections of family history I write from memory. I was fifteen years old when Grandma Lyons died (1889) and twenty when Grandpa (1894) died. I knew them well. Many of these events they have related to me; others are from stories my Father has told. Many dates are accurate; others are estimated by their relation to known facts.**

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Persons of Irish birth have told me that the chief ambition of every Irishman is to be able to trace his ancestry back to a Lord or Prince. Grandpa and Grandma Lyons were both in County Waterford, which is on the southeast coast of Ireland, the largest city of which is Dungarvan, a seaport. In 1947 a San Francisco newspaper issued a St. Patrick's Day Supplement containing a map of Ireland, taken from records dating back several centuries. This map gives the name of Lord Lyons or Lehan, and of Prince Phelan, later Whelan, both families in Waterford County. Little attention is given to the day and month of birth--only the year.

Grandpa Lyons was born in 1819 and Grandma in 1821; they were married in 1841. They had two children, Margaret and Bridget, when they decided to emigrate to America. Bridget was a baby of about one year. Aunt Bridget was born May 12, 1844. The voyage was made in winter, in rough seas--part of the time the ship was off its course--making a journey of many weeks. Sickness broke out, called "ship's fever". Their nursemaid, Patty O'Flynn, died and was buried at sea. In one severe storm, with ship listing badly, orders were given to lighten ship. A chest of solid silver (or sterling now) that was in Grandma's dowry had to be thrown overboard. Then Grandpa came down with the fever. Boston was the first port touched; there all seriously ill passengers, including Grandpa were taken off. Grandma and the children went on to New York, their destination. When landed, Grandpa had \$1,500 sewed in his underwear. Three months later when he prepared to join Grandma in New York, both underwear and money were missing. A period of time was spent in New York City; then the family moved up the Hudson River to Poughkeepsie, N.Y., where Grandpa worked as a farmhand. Here it was that their first son was born, named John, who died in infancy. It was in Poughkeepsie, on August 15, 1848, that their second son,

Richard Francis was born. He was my father. About this time a new railroad was surveyed from New York to Washington, and men were called to build it. The family returned to New York City and Grandpa responded to the call. That rail line, now one of the most heavily traveled in the United States, was built by Irish immigrants with picks and shovels. The Superintendent of Construction made the statement that these husky Irishmen would do more work in a day than the average man would do in two. Grandpa Lyons was one of those Irishmen. I believe Uncle Den was born in New York City. About the time the railroad was completed--1852--the family moved to Chicago, and the other members of the family were born there. My father's boyhood was spent in Chicago. Grandpa bought a farm on the outskirts of the city, on Archer Avenue, or, as Grandpa called it "the Archie Road." The Livestock Pavilion, where the political conventions were held in July, 1952, is on that ground, as I was told the stockyards were built on that farm. Others of the Lyons family settled in downstate Illinois, among them Grandpa's youngest brother, Thomas, and a sister, Ellen, a Mrs. Scanlon. Margaret Lyons, Thomas' daughter, came to Carthage and lived in the Coughlin home for three years. Ellen Scanlon's son came out to visit and look over the country but did not stay long. They lived at a place they called Arlington. It is not shown on the map but it is near Peoria, I think.

Soon after Grandpa and Grandma Lyons and family settled in Chicago, other members of Grandma's family came out from Ireland. The name Whelan was originally Phelan. Grandma's name was Ellen Whelan. Her father was a landlord, and the family enjoyed a comfortable living. Grandma was educated by governesses and she had many opportunities of culture not enjoyed by the average person in Ireland at that time. The Whelan family belonged to the class of Irishmen who show influence of the Danish invasion --the light hair, fair skin, and slender build. Grandma told me the story of her romance--how her father had selected a husband for her, in their own social sphere. She refused and made her own choice. One can understand the slight, fair girl being attracted to the stalwart Jeremiah, the true Irish type with the broad shoulders, deep-set eyes, rosy cheeks, and black hair. She never regretted her decision, though their early life together was not easy from a worldly point of view.

Of the Whelans, Uncle John was the oldest, an aristocrat all through, who wore a silk hat and carried a cane when he went out and walked with great dignity, to the amusement of his young American relatives. The youngest brother, Pearce, called Pearie, a favorite of Grandma's, met a tragic fate. As he left her house one dark, rainy night his path lay along the edge of the Chicago River. He was never seen again and was believed to have drowned. The youngest daughter, Johanna Sinnott, was an invalid for years and died while quite young. Her daughter, Mattie Sinnott, visited Carthage one summer. Another daughter, Sister Marcelline, joined the Sisters of Charity. Marcella Finley was named for her.

Other members of the Whelan family were Richard and Edward, who with

their families went to northeastern Kansas when that country was being settled up. Mary Sinnott Brassel and family went with them. Atchinson was the county seat, but I believe they settled at Effingham, about twenty miles from Atchinson. A friend from here who visited relatives in Atchinson met three nuns, all of the Whelan or Brassel families.

Grandpa Lyons worked his farm, and the boys found work where they could. My father often spoke of working on the canal. It was the custom at that time for people to read aloud, and Grandma, who was a fine reader, frequently read to her children. Their early education was acquired that way. I do not know the date of the Lyons family emigration to Iowa. Many of the children of the family were born in Chicago. As they left the city, two members remained in Chicago--Aunt Margaret, who married Timothy Kane and lived her whole life in Chicago, and aunt Ellen, who stayed and later married James Coughlin there. They joined the Whelan families in going to Kansas, living at Seneca and Centralia, before coming to Carthage to make their home. Aunt Mary Lyons was the member of the family between the older and younger groups. I remember her as we called to say goodbye to Grandpa and Grandma Lyons and their family when we were leaving for Dakota Territory in 1879. Aunt Mary had heart trouble and dropsy. She was sitting propped up in a rocking chair with each foot on a pillow. Her feet were so enlarged as to be nearly beyond recognition. That was just before May 1st and she died in mid-July. Nell Kane was the one who looked so much like Aunt Mary.

Priests have used the expression "the pious Irish". That designation fitted Grandma Lyons very well. She was truly pious. My first recollection of her was on Good Friday, 1879, the Lent before we left for Dakota Territory. It was her custom to gather the family together and have them remain kneeling while she led the prayers from 12 to 3 p.m. on Good Friday. Uncle Will was working in the field not far from the house. As she told someone to call him in, Grandpa said, "The spring is late; leave him in the field." But he came in. I was sitting on my father's chair. He remarked to Grandma that I would not be able to kneel. Her reply was, "Let her try." Sleep soon ended that devotion. Grandpa observed many customs of the Irish, too. On Easter Saturday he baked eggs for us children in the hot wood ashes on the hearth. He warned us that we must be up in time to see the sun dance as it rose on Easter Morn. To this day I awaken for the sunrise on Easter. Nowadays, nearly all Christians observe Easter by early devotion.

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## **Galway Bay-Our Family**

**By Florence Finley Kolbach  
(Daughter of Elizabeth J. Lyons Finley)  
1954**

### **Dedicated to Jerry and Ellen**

In behalf of the Lyons, throughout the nation,  
We pay tribute to a past generation.  
Let us go back over a century of years,  
Years of sacrifice, happiness and tears.

It's a beautiful story and true  
Of our family life in Ireland in 1832.  
As aunt Kate Harrington told this story,  
I hope to tell it to you.

### **Characters**

**Great Grandmother and Great Grandfather  
Whelan and daughter Ellen**

**Great Grandmother and Great Grandfather  
Lyons and son Jerry**

**Patty O'Flynn and infant daughter  
Kathaleen.**

Perhaps you have never heard of Patty O'Flynn,  
To the Whelans, he was some kith or kin,  
Who know joy and sorrow early in life,  
With the birth of a daughter and death of his wife.

Great Grandfather Whelan was a man of renown,  
He lived in a castle and mayored the town,  
From fields of flax, manufactured Irish linen,  
He had for his partner one Patty O'Flynn.

Great Grandfather Lyons had fine judgment and  
knowledge,  
His education was limited without high school or  
college,

He had few earthly holdings, no money to burn,  
But made human welfare his lifetime concern.

England ruled Ireland, religion and school  
Seized their property and deprived them home rule.  
Affairs were discussed by Lyons and Whelan,  
To America they often wished they were sailing.

Whelan wished for his family all of the best,  
For his lovely daughter Ellen, joy and happiness.  
Lyons hoped his fine son Jerry, would some day  
own his home  
In a country where he could call his soul his own.

So they made a deal with 'Flynn to care for his  
little daughter,  
If he would take a shipment of linen across the  
water,  
It seems all Irish wares the English was bookin'  
So Pat sailed for America, 'jest to see what was  
cookin'.

They had a meeting when Pat returned,  
They came from near and far.  
The roads were lined for miles and miles  
With Irish jaunting cars.  
He told tall tales of the new world  
Far across the sea,  
Where each one worshipped as he pleased  
And all the land was free.

After a short stay in Ireland, O'Flynn sailed from  
County Cork, With another shipment of linen, he  
landed in New York,  
The Irish luck was with him, riches came galore.  
Ireland's future was filled with suffering and  
despair  
Every Mother's son planned a new life in the new  
world over there.  
Soon hundreds of thousands set out in  
immigration  
Those left behind were facing starvation.  
It was a blessing in disguise when the hand of  
God,

Caused a potato famine in the land of the 'old sod'.  
There were many rules concerning immigration,  
No man without a wife was issued transportation.

Lyons and Whelan together planned  
In marriage to give Jeremiah Ellen's hand,  
This Ellen received most reluctantly,  
She did not wish a bride to be.  
She was so young and gay and free,  
and never had known responsibility.

This brings our story up to 1836.  
They must not have known about Dorothy Dix,  
The young folks took heed of what their parents  
said,

So Jerry and Ellen were wed.  
Immediately placed their application,  
It sometimes took a year to arrange for  
transportation.

Two years passed, ships came and went,  
Twice Ellen and Jerry were left behind awaiting  
'blessed events'.

When the time came to sail Ellen was sad,  
Leaving dear Ireland, her parents and her brother  
just a lad,

She know not when, if ever, she'd see them again,  
But was happy to be taking with her, Kathaleen  
O'Flynn.

They took huge chests of silver, china and gold,  
If left in Ireland the English would order them sold.  
There were no travelers' checks or drafts to  
the bearer

Their money was sewed in the pocket inside Jerry's  
underwear.

They waited until the wind was right,  
To set sail, and for forty days and forty nights  
They battled rough water and elements,  
There were no radios, cables or messages sent,  
Or no way of knowing a story to be,  
For many days they were lost at sea.  
The water supply was low, food was rationed,  
They had little knowledge and no medication.

They were weak and hungry and very cold,  
The angel of death was very bold,  
An epidemic of cholera spread, all cargo was  
    thrown overboard  
To make room for beds.

Ellen was grieved and in desolation  
To see Kathaleen and Jerry put in isolation,  
She stayed on the top deck and prayed  
To the same God we have today, and showed  
His love in the same mysterious way.

The ship was surrounded by hungry sharks  
Every night after dark, they would lower the dead  
    to a grave unseen,  
Death's Angel claimed Kathaleen,  
The ones up on deck did not know  
Who the sick and dying were down below.  
After many days the ship must have been guided  
    by God's hand,  
At day break, they sighted the promised  
    land.  
They were driven from the ship like a human herd  
From the isolated ones they had not a word.  
The patients were not allowed to land, until their  
    illness had been defined,  
Then they were placed in pest houses along the  
    shore line.

Ellen was not met by O'Flynn as planned,  
The ship was given up as lost when past  
    scheduled to land.  
But one day she met Patty on the street,  
He took her to a boarding house, small but neat,  
The landlady was very kind, and told Ellen the  
    children he would mind,  
While they would search for Jerry along the shore  
    line.  
The pest houses were just old shantys and shed,  
Patty was discouraged and thought Jerry dead.  
Ellen insisted on searching every shanty and  
    shack,  
Each evening went home, but in the morning went  
    back,

The autumn days were short, she knew she must  
hurry,  
She would stop and inquire, if they had seen her  
Jerry.  
One day a man said, "Well, yes, but it just couldn't  
be him"

"He was so old, and bearded and thin."  
If she wished she may come in and look,  
There were no records on the book,  
He seemed to be traveling alone,  
His memory was gone, and without name or  
home.  
Thus she found Jerry, lying on a bed of straw,  
His face was drawn in a look of awe,  
What had happened in the past there was no  
telling  
He raised his head and whispered "ELLEN".

That night she went back, but not alone,  
She and Jerry were together, at home,  
A small room, a stove, table, two chairs and bed.  
With their two babies they sat by the candle and  
read.  
Ellen was an artist, her fingers were nimble,  
She made their living with a threaded needle and  
thimble,  
Many nights she would sew all night at her work,  
To finish some Prince Charming's wedding shirt,  
With many tucks and pleats in Irish linen,  
Material was furnished by Patty O'Flynn.

Winter passed, each day grew a little longer,  
And each day Jerry grew a little stronger,  
Spring came and one fine day, Jerry started work  
on the first railway,  
From New York to Chicago.  
Ellen cooked for the men on an open hearth,  
They lived in tents or dug their home in the earth,  
In due time they reached Chicago where many  
years were spent,  
Life seemed so full of 'blessed events'.  
To this union six daughters and six sons were  
born,

The death of two daughters and two sons they  
Were left to mourn.

They moved to Iowa and made their home,  
The family left one by one for homes of their  
own,  
And soon Jerry and Ellen were left alone.  
The older Grandchildren tell how welcome  
They were in their children's homes,  
Grandmother with her kind and gentle ways,  
Grandfather's Irish songs and stories of Galway  
Bay,  
He hoped they would some day go across the sea  
To Ireland,  
And maybe at the closing of the day,  
They would sit and watch the moon rise over  
Cladda,  
Or watch the barefoot garsoons at their play.

With the best of their years laid by,  
They made their last home with Bridget and John  
Rei,  
They helped twist hay, to burn and keep warm,  
On New Year's Eve, in eighteen eighty-nine  
In the midst of a South Dakota snow storm,  
Death's Angel called for Ellen and bade her come.  
Two years later Jerry joined her in their last home.  
If there is a life hereafter, and 'faith'  
I'm sure there is going to be,  
They would ask their God to let them make their  
Heaven,  
In that **DEAR LAND ACROSS THE IRISH  
SEA.**

*The End.*

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**THE REMEMBRANCES** of Jeremiah and Ellen Lyons by Ellen Lyons Smith and Florence Kolbach are taken from a larger collection of Lyons' histories prepared by Bob Maloney, historian, with the assistance of Mary Ann Lyons in 1954.