

CHAPTER XIV.

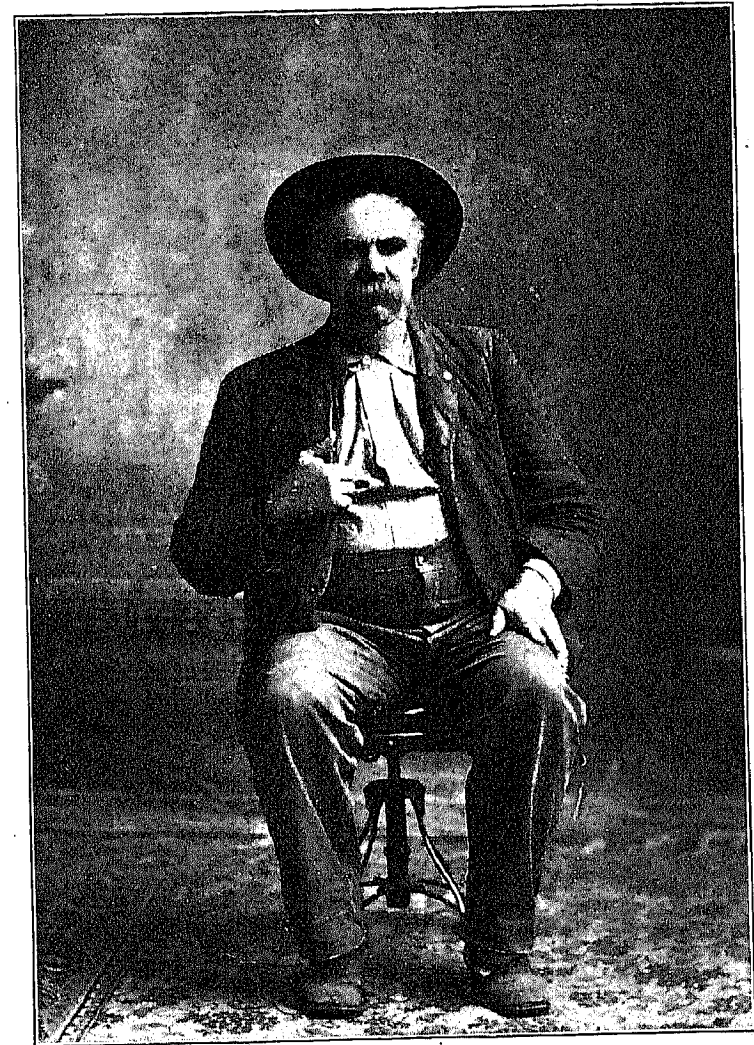
M. V. DAILY,

SOLDIER, INDIAN FIGHTER, BUFFALO-HUNTER, AND HOMESTEADER.

His picture shows the loss of his trigger finger; done by Missouri bushwhackers. Yet he trained the middle finger to pull trigger, and told the author, in 1907, that he could shoot just as well as ever.

When the wild plains Indians, armed with lances, bows and arrows, attacked a stage-coach, in 1865, on the Arkansas river, this man Daily was driving the six mules drawing the coach, which had sixty arrows imbedded in it; and a lance that was thrust at him by a big Kiowa, went between his right arm and body, passing through into the coach. He got his coach into Larned, and himself unhurt.

He homesteaded in Thomas county, Kansas; hunted buffalo; built sod houses; broke prairie; went through the drought era; saw the country nearly depopulated on account of successive failures of crops; witnessed the change in climatic conditions; the hot winds abate; the coming of rainfall; and the return of starved-out settlers, bringing with them people and capital. And to-day the country is well settled with a happy, prosperous people.



MART DALEY.

MISCELLANEOUS STORIES

OF

BUFFALO LAND.

MISCELLANEOUS STORIES.

STAMPEDE OF THE WHEEL-OXEN.

The month of February, 1875, when I was in the employ of Charles Hart, skinning buffaloes, I had an experience which was both amusing and embarrassing.

As we were *en route* down from the Panhandle of Texas to the Brazos hunting-grounds, we passed by an abandoned Government wagon. It was on a sandy stretch of ground between South Pease river and a prong of the Salt Fork of the Brazos. After we had arrived where we did our principal hunting that winter and spring, Hadley, the freighter (he who afterwards proved to be a disappointment) said to me one evening that he could skin as many buffalo as I could, and that if I would take his yoke of wheel-oxen, go back and bring in that wagon we had seen on our way down, he would skin the buffaloes in my stead, and have the number of hides accredited to me. I told him I would sleep over the proposition. I went to bed, and reasoned the matter out thus:

That it was not over fifteen miles back to where the wagon was. It had a good tongue in it. It stood up on four good wheels. When we passed it it looked as if it had been in that one place as much as a year. I could make the round trip in two days. Those oxen were large, very strong, in good flesh, well broken, and perfectly gentle. In view of all the facts, I decided to make the trip. Accordingly, the next morning I told Hadley to yoke up his

oxen, give me a log-chain and a box of Frazer's axle-grease, and I would make the trip; would start as soon as breakfast was over.

I took three blankets and a wagon-sheet and folded them soldier-fashion, and placed a hatchet and frying-pan on the fold; also took a bag of salt, some ground coffee, about four pounds of bacon, three ponies of bread, baked in a Dutch oven, a tin cup, a few extra cartridges; rolled the whole outfit up in the blankets, laid this roll on top of the yoke between the bows, wrapped the chain around the bundle, yoke and all; then with a lariat securely bound everything fast, tied on a coffee-pot, and was off to bring in that abandoned wagon.

Now there was not a settler's home within eighty miles of the camp I just left, except what was known as the Mathews Ranch, on California creek, sixty miles south-east of our camp. The morning being quite chilly, I wore a heavy short coat. I was leaving camp just as the sun appeared above the horizon.

As the early forenoon wore away, it became quite warm. I stopped the oxen, took off my coat, and fastened it to the pack on the yoke. Starting again, I walked behind the patient, plodding old oxen for an hour or more, when we approached some breaks. At this time I judged I was much more than half the distance from camp to where I was going. Presently the oxen raised their heads, sniffing the air; they turned a little to the left and increased their speed. I knew at once they had winded water. I followed after them, but upon going a few rods farther the oxen broke into a trot, and about the time they did so we were on the brink of a downward slope, and close to a large pool of water, just west of us, with a bald low butte on the west side of the water. As the oxen trotted

faster, I decreased my gait to a slow walk. I saw the oxen rush into the water, belly-deep, stop, and commence drinking. I was nearly 200 yards behind them. My cartridge-belt was chafing my hips. I stopped to buckle the belt another hole tighter, when all at once about 100 buffaloes came thundering down the slope from the north-east, in a mad rush for the water. Seemingly I was not noticed at all by them, but before they got fairly into the water the old "whoa-haws" (as the Indians called oxen) bolted and whirled to the southwest,—and away they went, out of the water, up the steep slope which joined onto the butte jutting down to the water. It seemed that at the same instant the oxen stampeded, the buffalo whirled around towards a northwest direction; and off they went, up the slope, on the north end of the square bluff butte, but not until I had noticed that the velocity of motion of the rear of the herd, by their sudden impact, had knocked down several of their number at the edge of the water. I stood looking at this spectacular scene in amused wonderment. It all occurred so suddenly that I remember laughing outright.

But the fun was gone almost as soon as oxen and buffaloes. I hurried to the top of the slope, up which the oxen ran, and saw they were fully three-quarters of a mile away, still running, and headed toward a band of buffaloes that were feeding about a mile beyond them. I followed the oxen, and soon got into a depression of the ground where I could see out but a short distance. When I came out upon higher ground, I saw the oxen and three separate small herds of buffalo all running west,—by which time the oxen were fully two miles ahead of me.

I slowed down to a moderately good walking gait, and set in for a siege. I was very thirsty, and hungry, too.

To my left about one-fourth mile were some stunted brush and two cottonwood trees, in the head of a draw that put into the creek our camp was on. I went to this in hopes of finding water. Upon arriving there I found a little seepage spring. Using my hands, I dug the mud and trash all out until I had a hole some eight or ten inches deep and a foot in diameter. I then sat down with my back against one of the cottonwood trees and rested a few moments. When I saw the water-hole was full of water, I took a good long draught at it, such as it was, and started on after the oxen.

Wanting a chew of tobacco, it suddenly occurred to me that that hunter's luxury was in one of my coat pockets. I kept on west, heading for a hill in the direction the oxen had gone. When I reached the top of the hill the oxen were nowhere in sight. Here I had a good view of the country in general for several miles around. But there were many dips, spurs and ravines. I could neither see into nor behind them. I sat down to rest and range the country over with my eyes, hoping to catch a glimpse of the old oxen. I remained there until the sun was low.

Just southeast of this hill was the extreme head of the creek our camp was on, and its course was to the southeast, and, as I judged, about ten miles down. About three miles down the stream was quite a clump of cottonwood trees.

My thoughts were now to look for the oxen's trail, and judging from where I then was and where I had last seen the "whoa-haws," I thought I could go to near the place. I then started back that way, and after going a mile and a half or thereabouts, I commenced to describe a large circle, intently looking for the trail. But upon coming around to the starting-point I failed to find any sign of a trail.

By this time the sun was setting. Then I thought, "Down the creek our camp is on I will go." Accordingly, I started to the creek in a southeasterly direction from where I then was. I came to the creek almost a mile above the clump of cottonwoods before mentioned. It was then as dark as it would get, that beautiful February night. The sky was as clear as a bell, and the moon had just full. On my near approach to the trees I could hear the last quiet "quit" and flutter of wild turkeys settling themselves for the night's roost. Cautiously slipping up, with the roost between myself and the moon, I lay down and peered up at trees full of wild turkeys. The evening was calm and still. After watching them some little time I rose up and walked under some of the trees they were roosting upon. I could and would have shot one and broiled it, only for the reason that we had tried one in the very camp on this same creek that my companions were now camped upon, a few miles below. But that turkey was so bitter from eating china-berries that it was unpalatable; and I supposed that all turkeys were alike in that region. I disturbed them as I passed under the trees, for they started the alarm, and kept up that excited "quit! quit! quit!" uttering it more rapidly until it was answered back from one end of the roost to the other.

I passed on down the creek about a mile below the roost, on my way to camp and companions, whom I left the morning before, and was now pretty tired and hungry, and feeling very cheap to be compelled to go back and report that I did not find the wagon but lost the yoke of oxen. Suddenly I heard a noise to my right between myself and the creek. Upon stooping down I saw five buffaloes, not more than seventy-five yards from me. Three

were lying down, the other two were standing, one just behind the other. The rear-most one was the smaller of the two. I sat flat upon the ground, pointed the gun at the hind one, and tried to draw a bead. But, bright as the night was, there was no accuracy. I would raise and lower the gun, and finally I fired. At this time I was west of them. They all broke and ran east down the creek. I rose up and pointed the gun in the direction they were going, and fired again. I then trotted on after them some 100 yards, stooped down and skylighted them, and saw, off to the right of the others and in their rear, that one had halted. I lay down flat, and soon the buffalo started to move off, but after reeling and staggering for a few rods it fell over; and then I was sure I had given it a mortal shot. Waiting some minutes, I crawled up close, with the carcass between the moon and myself, when I observed it was dead.

It must have been between 8 and 9 o'clock p. m. by this time. Now, I thought, I have good meat and will have a roast. So, laying my Sharp's 44 on the short buffalo-grass and taking my butcher-knife from the scabbard on the cartridge-belt, I cut out the hump that lay uppermost, and started for the creek. After coming to the stream proper, which stood in shallow pools, I followed down some distance and came to some stunted cottonwoods and hackberry. Here, too, was a wild-turkey roost. I stalked boldly along and came to a fallen dead cottonwood, laid the buffalo hump on the small log, and proceeded to build a fire. All the matches I left camp with were in a match-box in my inside coat pocket with the oxen. But I had a gun. Taking the bullet out of a shell with my teeth, I emptied all but a little of the powder out of the shell, and after cutting out a piece of my cotton

handkerchief I proceeded to gather dry tinder from the lower side of the log. Then, after getting some dry twigs and putting all in shape of a rat's nest against the butt end of the log on the ground, I held the muzzle of the gun close to the cotton rag that lay in this tinder nest, and fired the charge. I got down on my knees, and soon I had fanned the ignited cotton into a blaze, and in a short time I had a fine fire to cook my buffalo-steak by.

As I approached the place I had waked up the turkeys, and when I began breaking the twigs and dead limbs they flew in every direction. They did all of their noisy "quit, quit, quit," and sputtering, before they flew, but after they left their perches all one could hear was the flapping of their wings. Then all was silence so far as the turkeys were concerned.

I now sharpened some long green sticks, and slicing the meat across the grain, I took those long slices and impaled them on the sticks, as one would take up long stitches, Then pushing the other end of the stick into the ground at an angle of about 45 degrees, close to the heat of the fire, I let the meat broil. When the main fire burned down, I gathered the hot embers in little heaps and placed slices of meat upon them to broil also; and had I been fortunate enough to have a little salt, 'twould have been a feast for a congressman,—yea, a President. As it was, the rich juicy broil and roast were simply delicious, ver palatable and strengthening.

After eating I lay down and slept soundly at first, *froze out* as the common expression is sometimes used. Then I got up and started on down the creek. I had gone over a mile, until in front of me and on my right I noticed a peculiar-looking object. Lying down to light it, to my great surprise and delight I saw it w

two old work-oxen. They were as innocent, docile and contented as if they were in some barnyard in eastern Kansas instead of sly old runaways. As I walked up to them they arose and stretched themselves just as if they had had an all-night's rest. They had turned in towards this creek east of the circle I had made the evening before, and I had walked over their trail the day before when going west towards the hill spoken of while I was going from where I scooped the mud out of the seepy spring. All of which accounts for my not finding them the previous day. Their animal instinct taught them where our camp was, and after getting over their stampede fright and terror they calmed down and turned for camp. And when in the early morning I accidentally ran across them, my surprise was great. I first untied my coat and put it on, and took a chew of tobacco. The pack on the yoke was yet taut and safe—thanks to my little experience in learning both the diamond and Texas hitch in the mountains of New Mexico. The only thing missing was the coffee-pot. It had been tied with a whang-string to the outside of the pack, and had come loose and lost off somewhere.

I drove the oxen down to the creek, where there was a china-wood grove, unpacked my outfit, tied one end of the lariat around the near ox's horns, and snubbed them up to a china-wood tree. I then proceeded to build a fire and cook breakfast. By this time it was broad daylight. Unrolling my pack, I took out the bacon, sliced off some, took the frying-pan, went down to the bank of the creek to a water pool, scooped the pan full of water, came back to camp, and after filling the tin cup I put the slices of bacon in the pan and placed it on the fire to parboil. I now went to the water again and washed my face and hands thoroughly. When the bacon was parboiled and fried,

I split open one of the cakes of bread laid the slices of meat on one half and poured the meat-fryings on the other. Then, heating the frying-pan very hot, I poured the cold water from the tin cup into the pan, and rinsed it out. Then filling the pan again with water from the pool, I soon had me some good strong coffee.

After eating my breakfast, I lay down a while on my bedding, and by the time the sun was an hour high was again on my way after the abandoned wagon. Looking down the creek our camp was on, after I had left the creek, and getting on a rise in the land, I could see very plainly a gypsum bluff near our camp, and not more than three miles down the creek. I now reasoned that from where I was it was twelve or fourteen miles to the wagon, and I would have to take a little east by north course, which I now did, and traveled until the sun had passed the meridian. When I finally came in sight of the wagon, about two miles off to the northwest of the way I was then going, there was a bunch of china-wood, straight north, and some water-holes by them, where we had nooned the day we passed the lone wagon. To this spot I went. Now I was little less than half a mile from the wagon. I took off the pack from the yoke, unyoked the oxen, watered them, lariated the near ox near by, and got some dinner. I had killed a cottontail rabbit about the middle of the forenoon. This I stewed in the frying-pan, with some thin slices of bacon added.

After dinner I rested for an hour or more, then yoked up the oxen, and drove them out to bring the wagon to this place for the night. After getting there and hitching onto the wagon I found it hard to budge. The wheels were nearly all set. They were gummed. But I geed and hawed until I finally got all the wheels to rolling, and

got back to my temporary camp all right. I stopped the wagon on solid ground; then with the hatchet I tapped the taps until I got them loose, and by jumping the wheels I greased the wagon. That night I slept in the wagon-box with one blanket and part of the wagon-sheet under me and the other two blankets and half the wagon-sheet over me, using my coat for a pillow. And there alone in that wild-game land I felt perfectly secure, for as yet we gave no thought to the Indians.

The next morning I made me a wagon-seat of china-wood poles, placed all my bedding upon it for a cushion, and that same evening I had rejoined my companions, with the wagon pulled in at last by my runaway oxen.

FAVORITE HUNTING-GROUNDS.

Many hunters had their favorite hunting-grounds when the killing was at its height; during the years 1876-7. Frequently, when several outfits would chance to meet at some regular camping-ground *en route* to and from the great game park, they would discuss the variety and quantity of game at such-and-such places. But what I saw in what are now Howard and Mitchell counties, in Texas, will ever be indelibly impressed upon my mind.

It was on the Red Fork of the Colorado and its tributaries. The time was the fall and early winter of 1877. For two months a man named Cox and myself hunted together. I did the killing, and roamed around a good deal on horse-back. The first month the buffalo were scattering, and not very plentiful, the first three weeks; but during all this time wild turkeys were so numerous that no attention was paid to them at all. Bear were plentiful. Deer were in bands of from two to fifty. Here were the musk hog, beaver, otter, mink, polecat, coyote, and prairie wolves. Panther were very numerous, and one day I met a hunter with what he called a mountain lion hide. He had killed the animal early that morning in some rough breaks on the north side of the Red Fork. I called it a cougar-hide; and if there is any difference between the two, I never could distinguish it. This hunter told me he saw a large buck antelope kill a rattlesnake that morning. Said he watched the unequal fight from a distance of 150 yards.

He asked me if I had been at the Hackberry holes. I told him no.

"Well," he said, "you go there, and forever afterwards you can tell fish stories."

He told me where to find them after he had described the place to me; on that same day I rode to these holes. They were a wonderful sight—one link after another, like a chain of long, oblong, clear water-holes. Some were thirty feet in depth, as I learned afterwards.

I followed these holes up to the Divide between the Red Fork and North Concho Divide, and there near the summit were the famous Hackberry Springs. They boldly and strongly broke out of the hillside, and rushed down into the flat towards the Colorado river. It was clear cold water, and seemed to me to be non-mineralized. I was charmed with the spot, and wanted the satisfaction and pleasure of once camping upon the Hackberry.

I went back down the stream, passing by some five or six of the deep-blue oblong water-holes, and noticed that every one of them fairly teemed with fish. They were mostly the blue, forked-tail channel catfish.

I hurried to camp, some seven miles away and told a "fish story." Cox had an Irish Catholic brother-in-law with him in camp, who said: "Good! To-morrow is Friday. Let us pull for there and fish and feast."

Early the next morning we were on the route for that place. We reached our destination about 9 A. M., pitched our camp among some chittim-wood trees, and went to fishing,—each fellow fishing from a different water-hole. We used the liver from a large fat deer we had killed on our way to the fishing-grounds. I did not have a timepiece, but I don't think I had fished to exceed ten minutes when I quit and started for camp, about 200 yards away. I had caught five catfish. The smallest weighed $2\frac{1}{2}$ pounds and the largest one 9 pounds.

I dressed the catch and was building the camp-fire, when Cox came in with seven fish ranging from $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 12 pounds each. Soon Dennis Ryan came in with four of a nearly uniform size, weighing at the top notch, all four of them, 24 pounds.

We camped here several days. On the third day after coming to this camp I had ridden west some two miles and sighted a band of buffalo, out of which I killed twelve, —all good robe hides.

On coming into camp I observed the wagon and team gone. My first thought was that Cox and Ryan had heard my shooting, hitched up, and gone out to skin the buffaloes they thought I had killed. I saw the bedding all rolled up and the ammunition-box on top of it, and a piece of paper fastened to the box. Upon looking closely I saw it was a note from Cox saying:

"We cilled threa barr. One old shee and two cubs comin yearlins we gone arter the mete and hides don't be frade.—J. Cox."

I got me some dinner. Took the label off a baking-powder can and wrote on the blank side of it:

"Killed twelve buffaloes. Gone to skin them. Come a due west course."

This note I attached to a fishing-pole and fastened the pole to the ammunition-box, and struck out for my killing. I had skinned nine of the carcasses; the sun was low, and I was nearly four miles from camp, when a man rode up to me and notified me that I was on his range.

I asked him where his camp was.

He said, "At Agua Grande" (the big springs of the Colorado).

I then told him that my camp was on Hackberry. "Now," said I, "I have been to the Big Springs and you

are fully twelve miles from your camp. I am about three and a half or four miles from mine. It doesn't make any difference how long each of us has been encamped at each place; these buffaloes are nearer my camp than yours. Besides, I got to them first."

Then I asked him if that was satisfactory. He was yet on his horse, about twenty feet from me. He ignored my question, but asked me who I was and where I came from. I told him my name and how long I had been on the Range. That I came from the Staked Plains trouble of the summer before to Fort Concho with Captain Nolan, to serve as a witness to Capt. Nolan's report to the War Department.

The man said, "Hold on! Hold on! That's enough. So you are one of the buffalo-hunters that were after the Injuns? Now, pardner, you can have the whole country. Kill 'em right in my own camp if you want to."

He then dismounted and helped me skin the other three, and then went to camp with me and stayed all night. Cox and Ryan were preparing the supper when we came in sight of the camp-fire, for it had now grown dark.

This visitor's home was in eastern Tom Green county, and he was enthusiastic in praising the northern hunters who had come down on the Southern Range and "fit" (as he expressed it) the Indians. He declared that now the Indians were out of the way and the buffalo about gone the country would soon settle up. So General Sheridan was right! The hunters had actually made this possible. This visitor's name was Parker. He told us that a few days before a man in a camp at the Soda Springs had cut an artery in his left arm and would have bled to death, only he managed to tie a strong rawhide string around the arm above the wound, and by using the steel

that he sharpened the knife with made a tourniquet and stopped the flow of the blood. The man, he said, was alone, five miles from camp, skinning buffalo, and was afoot. After the accident he started for camp, and lost his way. When darkness came on he kept wandering around over the prairie and in the breaks until nearly exhausted, when he sat down on the edge of a worn buffalo-trail, and had been sitting there but a short time when he heard a noise, and, peering through the dim starlight, he saw three buffaloes coming down the trail he was sitting in. He pointed his gun in their direction and fired, and by accident killed an old stub-horned bull. The other two bolted, and ran as fast as they could. Some two or three minutes after he had fired at the buffalo he heard a big fifty boom out plainly and distinctly to the eastward, not far off from him. Thinking it to be an answer to a distress signal, he fired his gun in midair, and heard the ever-welcome, "Youpie way ho!" He answered back, and soon in the semi-darkness he was piloted into his own camp.

And this is just simply another of the many remarkable incidents that happened on the Range during the passing of the buffalo.

THE UNSEEN TRAGEDY.

The unseen tragedy occurred near the North Concho, where two brothers were encamped during the last winter of the big slaughter. The surviving brother's story was:

"We were sitting in our camp, loading ammunition. It was about 10 A. M. when my brother said:

"There are two old stub-horned bulls going up the ravine that we found the Indian skeleton in. I'll take my gun and head them off at the top of the Divide, and kill them."

"He cut across, trotting along afoot, about three-quarters of a mile, to intercept them.

"From camp I could not see the place where the report of the gun came from. I first heard one shot, then a short interval, then two shots in as quick succession as could be fired from a Sharp's lever gun. Then all was quiet. My brother not returning, after nearly an hour had elapsed I thought he must have killed both animals and was skinning them; hence I went to work and got dinner. After eating I hitched up the team and drove out after the hides. When I got on top of the hill I saw a dead buffalo in front of me about 200 yards away, and on beyond a little ways further I saw another dead one, and my brother lying on the ground about fifteen feet behind that dead animal. I hurried on to where George was lying, only to find him quite dead."

How did it happen? No one knows. His neck was broken, and his body badly bruised. Presumably, he, thinking the buffalo dead, or at least dying, walked up to

him, when the old denizen of the plains made his last fight for life,—arose, and dealt George Bryan the blow that broke his neck, and landed him where he lay when found. This seems reasonable, from the fact that his gun was lying quite close to the buffalo when found. He evidently fell dead after snuffing out the life of the hunter. Yet this, like many other tragedies that occurred in the destruction of the great herds that roamed from the Rio Grande river to Manitoba, and then on farther, is a mystery.

BELLFIELD AND THE DRIED APPLES.

During the time that many of the camps banded together for mutual protection, and during the Indian raids of 1877, George Bellfield, of Adobe Walls and Casa Armarella notoriety, was camped upon a tributary of the Colorado river. Joe Hoard, Joe Rutledge and Frank Lewis each joined him. They and George mutually agreed to camp together. None of them having a camp helper at the time, it was agreed among them to take "turn about" in doing the cooking. It must be remembered that George was of Teutonic origin, and talked very brokenly. As they started in, George's was the fourth turn. As the other three were leaving camp one morning for the day's hunt, Frank Lewis called back:

"O, George! Cook some dried apples. We hain't had any for a long time now."

George made no pretensions as a cook, but his main hobby was to have a great plenty. There was a large army camp kettle in camp, that held five gallons, bought at a sale of condemned goods at Fort Elliott. He filled this kettle nearly full of dried apples, poured water on until the kettle was full, and placed it on hot coals to simmer. Soon the apples began to swell and heave up above the top of that camp-kettle. George scraped off a messpan full from the top of the kettle, shoveled some more coals around the bottom, and went ahead with his other duties.

Soon he noticed the kettle was again top-heavy. He grabbed up a frying-pan, filled it, then got a Dutch oven and baled it full. He thought strange of it, stopped, and stood watching them still heaving up.

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He then ran to the wagon nearest the fire, jerked a wagon-sheet from under his bed, drew it up alongside the kettle, and scooped and scraped apples off the top as fast as they would rise, until he had a windrow of partly swelled apples.

Then the swelling stopped, and the apples were cooking in a normal condition when the men came into camp. The first thing he said was:

"By shing! der vas a pig bargain in dem drite apples. Dey swell much as dree dimes. Ven I goes to Charley Rath's I puys me soom more yust like dem."

This is the same George Bellfield who came in to the Adobe Walls, after the Indians raised the siege in 1874, and seeing the prairie strewn with dead horses (for half a mile around were dead horses which the hunters had killed from under mounted warriors), asked the question:

"Vat kind of a disease is der matter mit de horses?"

He was told by Cranky McCabe, "They died of lead poison."

Bellfield was all unconscious that a fierce attack had been made, and a three-days siege had been laid upon a small band of bold buffalo-hunters, and this by as daring a combination of tribes as ever roamed the Southwest. At the time all this happened, Bellfield was in his camp, alone, eight miles up the Canadian river, while there were thousands of Indians roaming at will all over the country. Yet, somehow they missed him; otherwise the author would never have seen honest, whole-souled George Bellfield.

AN INCIDENT OF BEN JACKSON'S EXPERIENCE.

Most all the big-game hunters were men of adventure. They loved the wild, uninhabited region of the great Southwest. Nearly all of them had read of Daniel Boone wandering alone in the wilds of the then uninhabited lands east of the Mississippi. Most of these men had passed through the War of the Rebellion, on one side or the other. They were of necessity self-reliant, and could and did meet every emergency as a matter of course.

Take the incident of Ben Jackson. He left his lonely camp, 200 miles from Fort Worth, with a two-horse load of buffalo-hides. Twelve miles from his starting-point three Indians made a running attack on him. He killed one of them and the other two ran out of range of his gun. He was on the divide between North and South Pease rivers. After traveling a mile or so from the dead Indian, he noticed the other two, paralleling him,—one on each side of him and just out of range. All at once "kerchug!" and down went the left front wheel of the wagon. The sudden drop brought Ben to the ground; also gun, mess-kit, bedding, and ammunition-box.

He was nearly a mile from wood and water. The two Indians saw the predicament he was in, and they circled in between him and the South Pease river. He unhitched his team, hobbled them close to the wagon, laid down flat upon the ground, crawled like a snake towards a break to the right of him, and when 300 yards from his outfit he wriggled himself into a deep buffalo-wallow in the edge of a prairie-dog town. And here he lay, peeping out on the flat and waiting events.

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The hill in the break towards which he had been crawling was less than 200 yards from him. While lying here, his quick, alert ear and steady eye taking everything around him, and his mind busy evolving a way out of his present predicament, a large diamond rattlesnake came crawling obliquely just in front of him from a near-by prairie-dog hole. Not wishing to disclose his position to the Indians by shooting the snake, he suddenly pressed the heavy gun-barrel down on the snake, about six inches back of its head. Pressing the gun down hard with his left hand, he took his wiping-stick in his right hand and played a tattoo on its head until he had killed it. All the time he was doing this the body was wriggling and writhing, while the rattlers kept the ever zee-zee-zzz until death.

All that time two wild plains Indians were seeking Ben's life. The dead Indian's horse was grazing towards his wagon. Ben heard a horse whinny behind the breaks he had started for. Looking intently, he soon saw an Indian crawling around a point in the break towards him. Without being seen, Jackson had got into the wallow. He waited until the Indian's body was in full view. The warrior rose up in a sitting posture, when Ben, seeing this, drew a bead, fired, and sent him to the happy hunting-grounds.

After the Indian had rolled over, Ben, thinking perhaps he was "playing possum" on him, waited some little time, when he heard a loud halloo, the sound coming from the direction of the wagon. Upon looking around he saw "Limpy Jim" Smith. Looking again, and seeing the last Indian he shot still lying where he fell, he got up and walked out upon the flat and hailed the man at the wagon, saying:

"Glad you came, for with Injuns, snakes, and my wagon breaking down, I've got a good deal to do, and I want you to help me set my wagon-tire."

Smith, in relating the affair, said Jackson was cool and deliberate, and acted as if such things were of an everyday occurrence.

Smith was on his way north from the Double Mountain Fork of the Brazos to Fort Elliott. He was on horseback, and, seeing Jackson's outfit from a distance, rode to it from sheer curiosity; for people were few and far apart in that region at that time of the year, this being early in the fall of 1876, and before the general outbreaks of the spring of 1877.

The rest of this story,—how the two men unloaded the hides, got the two dead Indians' ponies, went to the South Pease river, got a keg of water, cut some china-wood poles, brought all to the wagon, cooked and ate a hearty meal, then made false spokes for the wheel, wrapped the felloes with gunny-sacks, heated the tire with a buffalo-chip fire, reset the tire, put on the wheel, loaded everything onto the wagon, and drove that evening and night twenty-five miles, and at daylight next morning were in sight of the Kiowa Peak, where they felt they were perfectly safe,—is only one of the many incidents that happened on the buffalo range which illustrate the correctness of the saying that "truth is stranger than fiction."

MY KANSAS QUEEN.

1. My kingdom is the prairie,
The grasses, and the flowers;
And listening to the summer wind
I while away the hours.
My wealth is but the love of you,
Who are so free from guile;
The only tribute that I ask
Is the sunshine of your smile.

CHORUS.

- My prairie princess,
Give me your heart;
I'll be unhappy if we live apart;
Transform this lonely life of mine
To 'gladsome summer shine;
Be my sunny-haired sweetheart,
Be my Kansas queen.

3. No matter if the winter sky
With clouds is overcast;
Your face holds all the sunshine
Of the happy summer past;
And the morning star of boyhood
Was never half so fair,
As when the tiny snowflakes
Turn to diamonds in your hair.

CHORUS.

JOHN GUERINE, Author.

AT THE SPRING OF THE -
SHINING-ROCK

