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California Joe

A check of available material does not disclose that Moses E. Milner (California Joe) served any definite time at Fort Robinson. Like many scouts attached to a command, he was in and out of the various military posts. *on any other Nebraska post.*

It is extremely difficult to amass reliable information about California Joe, so much of what has been printed is more or less pure fiction. This Society has in its files a typescript entitled, "California Joe" compiled by Charles Daniel Randolph "Buckskin Bill". This was apparently designed to be a book but we have no information as to its publication in any form. It contains biographies of California Joe by Col. Prentiss Ingraham and Raymond W. Thorpe, and a number of letters and reminiscences concerning the famous scout.

undoubtedly
The Ingraham biography is ~~probably~~ mostly fiction and is written in the approved dime novel style. The Thorpe biography, although written in a more restrained manner is probably also unreliable. But the manuscript contains other material which gives what seems, at least, more authentic information on California Joe.

Joseph E. Milner, a grandson of California Joe is quoted as writing: "California Joe" was my grandfather on my father's side and his ~~name~~ real name was Moses Embree Milner. He was born near Stanford, Kentucky, May 8, 1829. He was foully murdered at Fort Robinson, Nebraska, on October 29, 1876, and was buried in the post cemetery."

The following letter is quoted as having been received by Joseph E. Milner:

WAR DEPARTMENT, OFFICE OF THE QUARTERMASTER GENERAL
Washington, D. C.

In reply refer to QM 293-A-C-Milner, Moses E.

November 24, 1924

Mr. Joe E. Milner
410 Fifth Street, Apt. 51
Portland, Oregon

Dear Sir:

In reply to your letter of November 4, 1924, relative to the location of the grave of your grandfather, Moses E. Milner (California Joe), the Quartermaster General desires you to be

advised that the records show that Scout Milner is buried in Grave 14, Post Cemetery, Fort Robinson, Nebraska. A small headstone bearing the following inscription marks the grave:

Moses Milner
Scout

Very truly yours,

R. P. Harbold
Major Q.M.C.
Assistant

According to accounts by Luther H. North, Dr. V. T. McGillycuddy and Joseph E. Milner (who received his information from his two uncles) California Joe was shot in the back by one Thomas ~~Harbold~~ Newcomb, a young man who had come to the Black Hills in 1875. The two men had had some trouble at Fort Robinson and got into a row the evening before California Joe was killed. But they shook hands afterwards and called the row settled.

Newcomb

~~Newcomb~~ was put in the guardhouse, but since Milner was a civilian scout the army had no jurisdiction and he was released after 14 days according to McGillycuddy's account. It is uncertain what became of him afterward. Joseph E. Milner says he was pursued and shot to death presumably by George or Charley Milner, California Joe's sons. But no ~~authentic~~ authentic information on this was found.

Dr. V. P. McGillicuddy writing in 1922 to a friend (as quoted in the Randolph Manuscript) had this to say of California Joe explaining his presence at Fort Robinson in October 1876.

"In the spring of 1876 he joined the expedition sent out to round up the hostiles under Sitting Bull, serving under the command of General Crook. He rendered good service to the end of the campaign. In this expedition I was surgeon of the Second and Third Cavalry, and I was known as the Surgeon Scout.

"Early in October, 1876, the expedition broke up at Fort Robinson in the far northwest corner of Nebraska, and the troops were distributed to various winter quarters. A new expedition was organized under General Mackenzie of the Fourth Cavalry, to push into the Big Horn country and round up scattered bands of Northern Cheyennes and Sioux, who were still active in that section, and California Joe was selected as chief of scouts."

The most complete account of California Joe is contained in the biography, *California Joe*, by Joe E. Milner and Earle R. Horvath (Caxton Printers, Caldwell, Idaho 1935). This book should be obtainable from many libraries.

Milner, Moses Embree

CALIFORNIA JOE

One of the Greatest Scouts and Guides of the Old Frontier

Fort Robinson, Nebraska, in 1877

The Old Red Cloud Agency

California Joe, Custer's Favorite Scout

California Joe

The Famous Hunter, Guide and Scout

Photo taken in Nevada one time when

California Joe was "dressed up" and "trimmed up."

Picture was presented by Joe Milner,

his grandson.

California Joe's real name was

Moses Embree Milner.

"California Joe"
The Mysterious Plainsman
By
Colonel Prentiss Ingraham

Chapter 1

The Forest Phantom

"Who was California Joe?" Kind reader, that question I can not answer any more than can I the queries: "Who was the man of the Iron Mask?" "Who wrote the 'Junius Letters?'" But from the time he entered upon the eventful career of a border boy, when he was in his seventeenth year, I can write of him, and many a thrilling tale of his adventures can be told.

But go beyond that night when he first appeared to a wagon train of emigrants and became their guide, and all is a mystery, as though a veil had been drawn between him and the years that had gone before, for of himself this strange man would never speak.

One night nearly a century ago a train westward bound was encamped just where the prairie met the woodland and hills. It consisted of a score of white tilted wagons drawn by oxen, half as many stoutly built carryalls to which were hitched serviceable horses, and the stock of the emigrants comprising horses, cattle, sheep and hogs. Perhaps half a hundred souls were in the train, half of them being hardy, fearless men, and the remainder their wives and children, seeking homes in the border land.

When the camp had been pitched for the night an hour before sunset, for the train traveled slowly, retarded as it was with their stock, a few of the younger men took their rifles for a stroll through

the woodland above, hoping to knock over a few wild turkeys and squirrels for the evening meal. They were quite successful and, lured on by the sport, they penetrated the hills for a couple of miles and only thought of returning when the evening shadows warned them that night was at hand.

"Heaven above! Look there!" The cry came from the lips of one of the party, and all were thrilled with the sudden exclamation, which told of something more worthy of attention than a wild turkey or even a bear. All glanced in the direction in which the one who had made some startling discovery was gazing, and every eye became riveted at once in a manner that proved the thrilling cry of their comrade had not been uncalled for. There, some hundred paces distant from where they stood, was what appeared to be a horse and rider. The animal was snow-white, and stood as motionless as though carved from marble. The rider was dressed in deep black from boots to hat and sat silent and still. Even in the gathering gloom his face, seemingly very pale, was visible and it was beardless. Across his lap lay a rifle, also seemingly painted black, and a belt of arms of the same somber hue was about his waist. The horse was saddle and bridleless and stood with head erect gazing upon the party. This much all of the young emigrants saw. But who was this strange being and his ghostlike horse? One remembered he had heard their guide tell the story of how a phantom horse and rider had been seen by old hunters and trappers in that forest of late months, and none knew aught of him. All then recalled the story and felt that they beheld the same mysterious being.

The guide had died a few days before and been buried by the roadside. The train was continuing its way upon the indistinct memory of one of the wagoners who had before been over the trail, rather than

delay for weeks until another plainsman could be found to lead them. They, therefore, could not ask the guide, upon their return to camp, to describe again the Phantom of the Forest which he and others had seen; but that this must be the horse and rider that had won such fame, there could be no doubt in the minds of the young emigrants.

The guide had said, they remembered, that the Phantom allowed no one to approach him and of this they would now learn the truth. After a moment of hesitation, passed in low, earnest conversation, they decided to hail the seeming Phantom. "Ho, stranger!" called out one of the number. But no reply came, and neither horse nor rider moved.

"Stranger, who are you?" Again was the call unanswered. "Ho, stranger, we are lost; our train is on the prairie under the red bank cliff and we would thank you to show us back to camp." One of the arms of the mysterious horseman was raised and beckoned to them as though to follow, and the white horse turned and walked slowly away though no reply came from the rider.

"Come, boys, let us follow him," cried one, and taking up their game, they did. Arriving at the spot where they had just beheld the seeming Phantom standing, they halted suddenly. And no wonder, for they stood in the midst of a dozen graves. The grass had not yet covered them, which proved they had not long held their occupants, and no head-boards marked them. But a well-worn path led from the spot sacred to the dead up the hillside. However, this path was not the one the mysterious horseman had taken, as he had turned short off down the hillside. As he saw the party of emigrants halt among the graves, he again beckoned them on, and once more they followed him silent and wondering. Slowly the shadows deepened around them, and night came on; but as though to still allow them to keep him in sight, the silent horseman dropped back until the white steed could be seen winding his

way through the timber. At last he halted and allowed them to approach almost up to him, and then the white horse bounded away and disappeared in the gloom. They called to him, yet no answer came back, and soon the fall of the hoof strokes were no longer heard. Reaching the spot where they had last seen him, a cry broke from the lips of all, for there right below them they beheld the cheerful glimmer of their camp fires. He had guided them truly, and five minutes after, they were in camp telling over and over again the strange story of the Forest Phantom.

Chapter 2

The Unseen Guide

When the dawn broke upon the camp, the emigrants were somewhat startled to discover a stick in front of the center fire, sticking up in the ground, and with a piece of paper fastened to it. The captain of the train read what was written thereon aloud, and it was as follows: "Warning. If this train is bound for Sunset Settlement, it is on the wrong trail. If they do not fear to trust the one who writes this, let them follow the staked trail." This was all, but it set the entire train of emigrants to thinking. They had little confidence in their amateur guide, for the simple reason he had less in himself and had only guaranteed to go the way he thought was right. Now he said that he might be wrong and he advised the captain to follow the "staked trail." But who was their unknown informer? He had passed the guards, that was evident, and had entered the camp unseen, for who else had put the stake there with its warning? Then some one came in with the information that a large number of small sprigs had been cut from a tree near by, and another reported that one was staked out just beyond the camp. Instantly the captain went to this stake, and it had evidently been placed there under cover of the night just passed. Afar off a

close scrutiny showed that another stake had been placed, and then it was decided to follow the trail they marked out. The order to move was given, and the train pulled slowly out of its camping-place. Following the stakes, which were placed about a mile apart with a bunch of prairie grass upon the top of each, that they might be the better seen, the train continued on its way until the noon halt. Then the mysterious affair was talked over and the fact made known that the trail of a single horse had been left from stake to stake. Could it be the Forest Phantom? Such was the question asked by all. It must be, many thought, for had he not faithfully guided the hunters back to their camp the night before?

After an hour's halt the train again moved and passed through a valley that divided the range of hills out upon the prairie beyond. Not caring to go away from a good camping ground to perhaps make a "dry camp" out upon the prairie, the captain of the train called a halt just in the shelter of the hills, although there had been but about fifteen miles made that day. As soon as night came on, and all gathered around the camp fire, the subject of conversation was about their unseen guide.

Placing the guards the camp again sank to rest, and no sound disturbed them through the night. The guards neither heard nor saw anything of a suspicious nature to alarm them. But strange to say, when the dawn came, there in front of the captain's tent was the stake driven into the ground under the shadow of the night, and upon it was a piece of paper, evidently torn, as had the other pieces been, from an old letter, and written in pencil. The writing was legible, but by no means written by a scribe. This second note read, "You are doing right! Follow the staked trail." And all through the day the train did follow

the staked trail, for the stakes were still placed to guide them, though they were farther apart than the day before.

At dark the train reached a small stream and in the shelter of the few willows and cottonwoods upon its banks went into camp. Hardly had the fires been lighted when far off upon the prairie a light was visible. That it came from a camp fire was evident and the emigrants gazed at it long and earnestly, for who could have built it unless it was their unseen guide? Some wished to go and see, but this the train captain would not allow, as he knew well he was in a dangerous country, for both train robbers and Indians were to be dreaded in that border land. After blazing for half an hour the distant fire died out, and then all was blackness upon the prairie.

At an early hour the train again pulled out and the staked trail led directly over the spot where had been seen the fire the night before. A few charred sticks were visible right on the bank of a tiny stream, and there were only a dozen cottonwoods near to form a shelter for a camp. But there, evidently, had their unseen guide camped, for they could see where blankets had pressed down the grass beneath the trees and where a horse had fed about the lonely camp. On through the day pulled the train until they came to a spot that was an excellent camping ground, and there they halted. Again were fires built, and after supper the emigrants assembled around them for a talk, the one topic of conversation being about their unseen guide.

Then there were creakers in the party, for some said if he were honest he would show himself. Others feared he was leading them into a trap, until at last the general opinion was against the unseen guide. But his staunch friends were the hunting party, whom he had guided back to camp. They all maintained that he was true, whatever he was, or it was, ghost or man. Some, too, believed they were being led by a spook,

for superstition held a great sway over the minds of people two-score years ago, and even now many believe in the supernatural. At last, after a warm discussion upon the subject, it was decided not to follow the staked trail the following day, but to take their bearings as well as they were able and endeavor to find their way to Sunset Settlement as best they could. Hardly had they come to this conclusion, and were about to separate for the night to go to their respective quarters, when suddenly into their midst came a white horse and upon his back was the rider in black. A few of the women screamed, men sprang to their feet, and at once all was a scene of excitement as they gazed upon the snow-white steed and his sable-clad rider.

Chapter 3

"Joe"

That the four guards had been stationed about the camp, the number nightly placed on duty, all the emigrants knew, and yet through the line, apparently unseen by them, the white horse and sable-clad rider had come. All gazed upon him an instant in silence, and he at them as though waiting for them to speak. They beheld a snow-white steed of perfect symmetry, his mouth unrestrained by a bit and his back not weighted by a saddle. Instead of the former was a long lariat about his neck, and in place of the latter were several blankets fastened on with a surcingle. The rider was a youth of seventeen, perhaps, strange to say, clad in a suit of black broadcloth that looked as though it might have done service for his father's Sunday wear, or upon the form of some itinerant parson. The coat was buttoned up close, as though to hide the absence of a shirt, and the boots, into the tops of which the pants were stuck, were four sizes too large for the wearer. The hat was a black felt and it, too, seemed never to have been intended to

fit the head upon which it rested. He carried a rifle large enough for a man of full size, and a pair of revolvers, knife and hatchet in a horse-hair belt.

To the emigrants he appeared like one who had found his clothing and arms separately, and his appearance seemed to tell the story in connection with the graves in the forest where the party of hunters had first seen him, of one who might be the only survivor of some fearful massacre of some little settlement or wagon train, and had gone back, after flying for his life, to find all the loved ones dead, and had picked up for himself just what he could find. So it seemed to those who saw him, and his pale face rather added to this surmise being true. It was a bold, fearless face, a trifle reckless, with earnest black eyes, full of fire, that seemed to look straight into one's soul. His form was well built, sinewy and supple, and yet he looked like one who had been ill or else met with some great sorrow.

Seeing that the emigrants were too much surprised at his unexpected appearance to speak, the strange youth said bluntly, "Good evening, folks."

"Good evening, my young friend," returned the captain pleasantly, while the others nodded at the salutation, and then the train boss continued, "May I ask your name, my friend?"

"Joe."

"Joe?"

"Yes, Joe."

"But you have another name?"

"Isn't Joe name enough?"

"Certainly, if you do not care to be known by any other."

"I don't," was the frank reply.

Captain Reynolds was both surprised and interested in the young

stranger, so he said, "I believe we are to thank you for staking a trail out for us the past two days."

"Yes, for you were going wrong if you were heading for Sunset Settlement."

"There's where we are going."

"Well, you were going wrong, so I put you right."

"You are sure you are right, are you?"

"I know," was the quiet rejoinder.

"Well, we do not, for our guide took sick and died some days ago, and we were going by guess, aided by one of the teamsters who had been over the trail before."

"Guess is a bad trail to follow in these parts, stranger, and, as it is, you are in danger."

"Ha! Do you know of any danger threatening us?" quickly asked Captain Reynolds.

"Yes."

"You will, of course, tell us what it is?"

"That is what I came here for."

"You are very kind and I am remiss in not offering the hospitalities of our camp. Dismount and let us give you some supper."

"I have been to supper, sir, but I'll tell you that the redskins have laid an ambush for you."

"Ha! That is news, indeed! But how know you this?"

"I rode upon their camp tonight."

"Tonight!"

"Yes, they are about ten miles from here, and their spies have been watching you all day. They would have come nearer, but are afraid of me."

"Afraid of you?"

"Yes. They think I am a speak, or what they call an Evil Spirit!"

It was on the tip of Captain Reynolds' tongue to say, "I don't blame them, for we half thought so too." But he said instead, "What makes them think so?"

"Because I live alone on the prairies and in the forests and hills."

"Have you no home?"

"No."

"Where are your parents?"

"I have no parents," was the reply, in the same tone in which he had before spoken.

"But you have friends."

"I have no friends."

"And you live in this wild land alone?"

"Yes."

"But the Indians--"

"They don't harm me. I harm them," was the laconic response.

Captain Reynolds saw that he had a strange character to deal with, but was anxious to find out more about him, so asked, "How long have you--"

"Say, stranger, I didn't come here to be asked questions, but to tell you that your train is in danger," abruptly said the youth, and he continued: "My name, as I told you, is Joe, and I wander about the prairies, and that is all you need know about me; but I know that old Bad Blood and two hundred warriors are laying for your train. If you go on tomorrow, you run right into their ambush, but if you stay here, they will come tomorrow night and attack you."

"How do you know this, my young friend Joe?"

"I know Injuns' ways, and Bad Blood is on the war path. If you went right on he would wait for you, but if you did not, he'd think you stopped for rest and attack you."

"And what would you advise?"

"My advice would be to lay a trap for Bad Blood."

"But how, Joe?"

"A mile farther on is a stream with the prairie on one side and a bluff on the other. On the bluff is a thicket, and the hills rise beyond. You can camp on the prairie, making a corral of your wagons; make dummies about the fires, and put all the women and children in a dugout you can make, while you and your men can take the bluff and shoot down every Indian that comes into camp."

"Well, Joe, you advise like a general and we will follow your advice. When would you say move?"

"Now, and I will guide you to the spot, and then when the Indians attack you, I'll be around some where," was the very significant reply of the strange youth.

Chapter 4

Preparing For The Worst

Somehow, all in the emigrant train, once they looked into the honest face of the mysterious youth who answered only to the appellation of "Joe," trusted him. The grumblers became silent, and the entire train was anxious to follow his advice. He sat upon his horse watching the emigrants get ready for the march and then rode on ahead as they pulled out of camp. Captain Reynolds rode forward with him and, more and more interested in the strange youth, tried to draw him out to speak more of himself, but in vain, for Joe was reticent in a wonderful degree about himself and made no account of why he was there in that wild region, the reason for his coming, or whom he had come with. In referring to the graves in the forest, by which he had been seen seated on his horse when first discovered by the hunters, he made no

reply.

"Whose graves are they, Joe?" asked Captain Reynolds, kindly. Joe made no response. "Poor boy, I fear those you loved are in them and that they were victims of some massacre," said Captain Reynolds.

"How many fighting men have you got, Cap'n?" asked Joe, as though he had not heard the foregoing remarks of his companion.

"Twenty-seven men and boys that can handle a rifle well."

"Couldn't you drum up a few more?"

"There are several more boys that might be made useful."

"Boys are as good as men often I guess," was the laconic response, and looking at Joe, Captain Reynolds felt that he at least was.

"Well, then, I can make the force thirty-one."

"No women what know how to shoot a rifle?" asked Joe, with utter disregard for the proprieties of the Queen's English.

"Yes, but I wouldn't have them risk danger."

"Better risk it than make it certain."

"How do you mean, Joe?"

"I mean that if you've got any women folks that can shoot, take 'em on the hill with you and pour in a heavy fire the first time. Then, if you have any extra rifles and shot guns, load 'em and lay 'em by the men to use, and the women can reload the other weapons. I tell you, Cap'n, that Bad Blood is an old soldier for fighting and he has got two hundred braves. But if you can knock about fifty under the first two volleys and then pour the music in pretty lively, you'll see those Injuns dig out in style."

"You seem to be an old soldier, too, Joe, for your advice is good, and I will follow it."

"I've seen some fighting," was the cool reply, and then Joe rode up to the stream and said, "Now, here is camp, and you can't find a

better place."

So it seemed, for the stream made a bend just there, and the point ran in toward the bluff which formed the other bank. This presented a space of about an acre for a camp, and the wagons were stationed right across from the stream on one side to the other, forming thereby a breast work. The cattle were corraled in a circle formed by the vehicles, and the camp fires were built near the bank beneath the bluff and under the shelter of a few trees that grew upon the point of land. As the stream was not thirty feet in width, a tree was felled that made a bridge across it, and standing upon this, Joe very skillfully threw his lasso and caught the noose upon the branch of the tree growing upon the bluff forty feet above. Up this he went with the agility of a sailor and soon hauled up a rope ladder hastily constructed, which he made fast to a tree stump.

"That's called Cable Bluff, and there's no way to get on top excepting you go up as I did, by fastening your lasso on some tree growing near the edge. It's only a few acres in size and the banks are steep all round, so it would be a good place to hide the children and women," said Joe.

Then he gave advice about not having the guards set the following night, but to keep the stock feeding all the next day near by upon the prairie, but to fasten them securely in their corrals or wagons at sunset.

"And the dummies you spoke of, Joe?" asked Captain Reynolds.

"Oh, yes. You must keep your camp fire burning brightly and dress up plenty of clothes to look like men lying under blankets, for they will be what the reds will go for. Now, I must go, but I guess I'll be round near when the Injuns come," and without another word Joe was turning away to mount his patiently waiting white horse, which had stood

unhitched near, when Captain Reynolds' little girl of five years old came up to him and said:

"You doin' away?"

"Yes," and Joe looked down upon the pretty little golden-haired girl with a smile that lighted up his pale face and made it really handsome.

"Kiss Maddy dood-by," she lisped.

He bent over, raised her in his arms and, kissing her, set her down once more. Then springing upon his horse with the ease of a circus rider he rode out of camp at a sweeping gallop, unhearing or unheeding the request of Captain Reynolds for him to remain with them as their guest.

Chapter 5

Joe Makes a Grand Capture

From Captain Reynolds down to the smallest child in the train, all were pleased with their camp when daylight came to show them its natural strength of position. The appearances of having sealed the bluff were all removed before dawn, so that any Indian's watchful eye that might be upon them could not detect that any extraordinary efforts for caution and defense had been made by the emigrants, and during the day the hunters went off as far as they dared in pursuit of game. Yet there was a feeling of anxiety resting upon all, for none knew what the night would bring forth.

One young hunter had detected afar off over a roll of the prairie a head peering at him, apparently, and he had noticed that it was a redskin and reported it to Captain Reynolds upon his return to camp, but this was all that was seen in the slightest degree suspicious. As for Joe, he was nowhere visible during the day, but the Captain had perfect confidence in the strange youth and felt that he was somewhere

about and on the watch.

At last the shadows of night began to fall. The cattle were driven into the corral of wagons, and nearly all the force set to work with a will preparing for the work before them. The wagons were ditched so that they could not be easily moved, and dirt and boxes were piled against them, as much as possible to shield the animals from the shots, and to prevent their breaking out of the inclosure in their fright when the fight began.

Dummies representing human beings were scattered here and there about the fires, having the appearance of men asleep, and the rope ladder being placed so that the trees kept the fire light from revealing it, the women and children were taken up to the bluff and placed in a secure retreat a few yards back in the timber. By degrees the men, acting for the benefit of any watching redskin eye that might be upon them, would throw themselves down upon the blanket beds about the fires and then crawl away in the darkness to gain the rope ladder leading to the bluff. At last Captain Reynolds and a few others, not wishing to delay longer, threw more wood upon the fires and retired to the tents, to crawl out from the rear of them and seek safety upon the bluff. Then not an eye other than those of the smaller children was closed in sleep. The boys of twelve, even, had been brought forward to aid in the first volley, and so had a number of the women. All the firearms, and there was a large supply in the train, had been laid along upon the edge of the bluff ready for use. Soon all was as quiet as the grave in the camp, and none would have believed but that peaceful slumber reigned supreme.

Slowly the hours dragged along, and then the watchers upon the bluff saw a dark form glide through the line of wagons into the inclosure. Then another and another, until several dogs, aroused by

their presence and which none of the emigrants had thought to carry upon the bluff with them, began to bark furiously and to fly at the intruders. Then arose a wild, thrilling war cry, and a hundred savage threats answered it as the redskins sent a cloud of arrows flying into camp at the supposed sleepers and into the tents and rushed forward to begin the red work for which they had come.

The burning fires showed their buckskin-clad forms, painted faces, and gaudily bedecked heads, and as they reached the first line of blankets, yelling like demons, Captain Reynolds shouted, "All together, fire!" Two-score rifles were discharged as one weapon, almost, and full half as many redskins dropped dead in their tracks. Then the line of the bluff seemed to be on fire, so constant were the rattling of the emigrants' rifles and revolvers, and the women and boys reloading, there was kept up a continual discharge upon the surprised redskins, who, meeting no foe to grapple with and falling by the dozen under the merciless bullets of the palefaces, broke and ran at all quarters.

"You men follow me!" cried Captain Reynolds as he descended the rope ladder and crossed the fallen-tree bridge to the camp. Quickly he was obeyed and, dashing over the dead and dying Indians lying here and there, he gained the wagon line of breastworks and poured a hot fire upon these flying foes, who seemed utterly panic-stricken at the terrific punishment they had met with where they had expected an easy victory, plenty of scalps, and quantities of booty.

But far off on the prairie was seen the flash of a rifle, then other flashes and reports as though coming from revolvers, and then came to the ears of the emigrants a rumbling sound like distant thunder. The flying redskins heard it, too, and there were wild yells of fury that proved something had gone wrong, and the next instant, along the trail leading by the camp, dashed a large drove of mustangs, saddled and bridled but riderless, and in their rear rushed a snow-white steed

with a rider upon his back hooting and yelling like mad as he sped along. Away past the camp rushed the drove, and as the single rider in their midst went by he shouted: "I'm Joe, and I've captured their whole outfit of ponies. Look sharp, for they may be back on you, and I'll return in a couple of days to guide you to Sunset Settlement." And on he passed out of sight, driving the mustangs at full speed and having by his grand capture dismounted old Bad Blood and his entire band.

Chapter 6

Joe's Little Game

Joe, whatever time he had been upon the border or whatever scenes he had passed through before meeting the Reynolds' emigrant train, had certainly been able to become a thorough prairieman. He could match Indian cunning any time, was able to take care of himself, and seemed rather to enjoy the thought that he was regarded as a spook or evil spirit. Though wholly uncommunicative regarding the past, and one, young as he was, who certainly had some mysterious history, some strange story to tell would he but tell it, he was yet not taciturn, for once his lips were unlocked upon ordinary matters he had plenty to say. After having warned the train of their threatened danger and guided them to a place of safety at the bluff camp, he had ridden off at a gallop as though the kiss given him by little Maggie Reynolds had reopened wounds he had thought were healed.

He had not gone very far from the camp before he saw a dark form suddenly spring from the grass before him. Then another and another, until two mustangs, which had been lying down by the side of their masters, were flying away at full speed and upon their backs were their riders. Joe did not hesitate at sight of them, but, on the contrary, let his horse increase his speed. "They are Bad Blood's spies and they

know just who I am," he muttered. After a while, as he gained rapidly upon the flying redskins, he said, "If I was anybody else, I'd have got an arrow in me, but they're afraid of me." Urging his white horse to a still greater speed, which the splendid animal seemed readily capable of, he soon drew within close pistol range of the two redskins. "It don't seem exactly right to shoot 'em when they won't shoot back, thinking I'm a spook; but they'll report mighty soon that I was coming from the paleface camp and then they won't believe I'm an evil spirit, so I guess I'd better kill 'em." With this, Joe threw his hand forward quickly and it held a revolver, a weapon at that time almost unknown upon the prairie and on the plains. Instantly followed two sharp reports, and the two riders fell from their saddles without a cry, for Joe's aim was deadly. Although relieved of their weight the ponies were no match for the white animal Joe rode, who was alongside of them in a minute's time, and both were quickly caught. Then back to where the Indians lay went the boy and he found them just as he knew he would, dead. It was but the work of a few minutes to place them upon the backs of their mustangs and make them fast, after which Joe started off on the course he had been going when he saw the redskins.

A ride of several miles brought him to a range of hills, and through them ran a swift stream with high banks. Here the boy halted, turned his own horse loose with perfect confidence that he would not leave him, and, staking out the ponies, relieved them of their ghostly loads. To remove the two scalp locks, with a dexterity that showed he was practiced in the art of scalping, was but an instant's work with Joe, after which he took their weapons and robes and threw the bodies into the stream. The current carried them swiftly away. Then the strange boy built a small fire in a ravine, cooked some dried meat upon the coals, and, spreading the robes of his slain foes down upon the ground, rolled his blankets

around him, and was almost instantly asleep. The coming of dawn did not seem to disturb him in the least, but when the sun rose he got up, cooked his breakfast, and, leading his two captured ponies, started on up into the hills.

At last he gained a point of observation from whence he could see the distant bluff and camp of the emigrants and, after a close observation of the surrounding country, he again settled himself down to rest. When the sun drew near the western horizon he mounted his horse and, leading the ponies, started to descend to the prairie once more. It was dark when he gained the level lands and, as though resolved upon his course, he went off at a lope in the direction of the emigrant camp. A ride of several miles brought him in sight of the camp fires, and then he went along at a slower pace.

Drawing nearer, he at length came to a halt and looked ahead of him for a long time in silence. "They're coming!" He uttered the words in a matter-of-fact kind of tone and dismounted at once, ordering his horse to lie down. The intelligent and faithful animal at once obeyed, and then Joe went to one of the ponies and ordered him down too. Whatever the brute might have done for his redskin master, he certainly would not for his paleface captor. But in an instant he was hobbled and thrown upon his side in a manner that proved to him he had a master in this youth. Then Joe took something from a pouch and besmeared his face with it and next put upon his head the feather bonnet of one of the dead Indians and about his shoulders a blanket. "We'll go now, pony," he said, at the same time throwing himself upon the back of the other mustang.

Leaving his own horse lying flat down in the long, prairie grass and the mustang hobbled, Joe rode on directly towards the emigrant camp, the fires of which were burning brightly not two miles distant. After

riding considerably nearer, he halted and waited. With the same patience that would have been shown by an Indian Joe sat upon the mustang, watching and waiting. Suddenly he saw forms pass between him and the light of the fires and he knew that Bad Blood and his warriors were preparing for the attack. Slowly he drew nearer. He saw that the warriors had dismounted and, as he had felt assured, were approaching the camp on foot. Then Joe turned to the right-about and went rapidly back to where he had left his horse and the hobbled mustang. Quickly he got them both up and, hiding the white animal under robes and blankets, he mounted him and rode toward the camp once more. Passing the spot where he had before halted, he continued on until he could hear the snorting and stamping of the redskins' mustangs; again he stopped and staked out the three horses.

At a run on foot he approached the herd and gained their midst without attracting the attention of any of the guards, who were little dreaming of danger from that point and were taken up wholly in watching and waiting for the attack of their comrades, which was to bring them scalps and plunder. From horse to horse Joe glided, his sharp knife severing the lariat near their necks. In a few moments' time he had set free the lot excepting the few near the guards, who, five in number, were grouped together waiting to hear the sound of conflict begin. The Indians had left their horses over a mile from the camp so that no neigh or sound should alarm the guards, and this distance they had to go on foot and move with the greatest caution. It gave Joe nearly an hour in which to perfect his little game.

At last the ringing war cry for the charge upon the emigrants' camp broke on the air, and immediately after came the terrific yells of the red fiends as they rushed upon what they supposed were their victims. Then, like a deer, Joe ran back toward his horses, threw

the robes and blankets off his own animal and, leading the two mustangs by long lariats, dashed toward the ponies of the redskins. Firing his pistol, yelling, and at full speed he charged the herd, and at once, as he had foreseen, began a wild stampede. The guards in vain tried to check their flight, and over them the frightened animals dashed, driven straight toward the camp.

As he neared it, by the flaming up of the fires, Joe saw that the redskins had been badly hurt and were flying too, and he increased the racket behind the charging mustangs. Not for an instant believing that their own animals were stampeded and fearing that they were charging soldiery, the redskins fled from their ponies at first until too late they discovered their mistake. And on by the camp rushed the frightened ponies, held at their speed by Joe, to disappear in the darkness beyond, though the thunder of their hoofs were long heard by the emigrants in the camp and the enraged and skulking Indians as they fell back on foot towards their own village, too utterly demoralized for their savage chief to bring them again to the attack.

Chapter 7

Joe Strikes a Bargain

The sentinel at "the Fort" was considerably surprised the next morning after the attack on the emigrant train, while waiting to be relieved from duty, to see what he at first supposed was a regiment of cavalry coming toward him. A closer look, however, showed him that though the equine portion of a regiment was there, the bipeds were wanting. In other words, the horses were riderless. At a slow, weary trot they came on over a distant roll of the prairie, nearly two hundred in number, and they were heading directly for the fort. The sentinel sang out for the corporal of the guard and made his report, and that worthy reported to the sergeant, and so to the officer of the

day, which sent the news flying through the fortress that a drove of wild horses was coming.

Officers at once ordered out their swiftest steeds, seized their lassoes, and scouts and hunters joined them. All dashed out from the stockade inclosure to suddenly descry that the herd had a driver. What could it mean? There was but one man behind them and he was waving his hat as though for those at the fort to head them off. A line was quickly formed, and the herd was headed straight for the corral and at once secured, while all seemed anxious to see the single driver of so many ponies that had upon them bridles and saddles they knew belonged to redskin masters. As this person rode up he saluted the officers and said bluntly:

"Them are Injun ponies."

"So I see, my young friend; but who are you?" asked the general in command of the fort; a thorough sportsman he had come out for a wild horse chase, as he supposed.

"Oh, I'm Joe," was the quaint reply.

"Joe who, or Joe what?" asked the general with a smile, looking fixedly at the strange youth before him.

"Either one or t'other, for it's all the same to me. But no matter about me, for I've brought you some ponies I'll sell to you for the sopers, if you wants to buy 'em and, if you don't, I guess I'll give 'em to you."

"I think it would be cheaper for me to say I don't care to buy," answered the general.

"Guess it would, so you can have 'em, all but my white here," was the cool response.

"No, my young friend, I will buy them of you, for we are sadly in need of stock just now. How many have you?"

"I tried to count 'em as I was driving 'em, but one time I made a thousand, next time only seventy, and then I run 'em up to eight hundred, so I don't know. But I guess there are about two hundred, more or less."

"Well, I'll give you thirty dollars a head for them."

"I'll like it," was the frank response.

"But where did you get them, my young friend?"

"I captured them from old Bad Blood and his braves."

"Ha! that old fiend is then on the war path? When and where did this happen?" and it was evident that the words of Joe created great excitement.

"Fifty miles from here at Cable Bluff, and last night several hours before daybreak."

"And you dismounted old Bad Blood and his warriors, you say!"

"No, they dismounted themselves, and I drove their ponies off while they were attacking a train."

"This grows most interesting, young man. Come, tell me all about it as we ride toward my quarters."

Joe told his story as it had happened, but not a word regarding himself could the general get from him, that is, of his antecedents. He refused all hospitality extended to him by the generous and kind-hearted general. And telling him to keep his money for the ponies for him until he called for it, he mounted his white horse and rode away from the fort, leaving the impression with all who had seen him that he was a very mysterious person. But the services he had rendered in dismounting Bad Blood and his band made him a hero, and the general at once ordered a squadron of cavalry off on the trail of the old chief and his braves, for Joe had told them how to go to head them off on their way to their village, which he knew that they would at once make

for to get a remount, as an Indian who is a good horseman feels as though he had lost a part of himself in losing his pony.

(The Comanches and several other tribes are most cowardly when dismounted, but the bravest of the brave on horseback. - The Author.)

Chapter 8

The Broken Promise

The morning following their successful battle with the Indians, the emigrants were greatly elated over their victory and yet most anxious for the future, as they knew not what was in store for them. Every trace of their foes, excepting those who lay dead in and about the camp, had disappeared. But those who had fallen, and they lay from the camp fires back to the wagon line, lay as ghastly reminders of the night's red work. There were nearly half a hundred of them, for the emigrants had fired with true aim, and the redskins had been massed together for full a minute in the full blaze of the fires. An arrow wound or two was all to report upon the side of the palefaces, excepting a few stock killed by stray bullets and injured in their fright and desperate efforts to escape. "And all this we owe to that noble boy," said Captain Reynolds with feeling, and there was no dissenting voice, though many were anxious regarding his safety.

The dead braves were quickly buried on the river bank, and the camp placed in order, after which the works were strengthened to meet another attack should one be intended. The cattle were driven out upon the prairie to feed and securely guarded against receiving a surprise, and those in camp looked to their arms, which had served them so well.

Thus the day passed away and Joe did not return to camp, but he had promised to do so and none doubted that promise. Night coming on, the women and children were taken upon the bluff once more, and the men nearly all stood guard. Excepting the howl of a wolf upon the prairie,

no sound broke the stillness of the night, and dawn came once more, greatly to the relief of the emigrants. But Joe came not with it, and all began to feel anxious about him.

"Do you think he intended coming back?" asked one.

"He promised to do so, and to guide us to the settlement; if he is alive, he will keep that promise," said Captain Reynolds, firmly.

Again the day was drawing to a close and still Joe's promise had not been kept. Suddenly a cry was heard from one of the men driving in the cattle, "He is coming!" All eyes looked across the prairie, and far off, just over a roll of the prairie, was visible a white horse and rider. A shout of joy at once went up from every voice in camp at this joyful sight. But almost instantly it was changed to cries of terror and a scene of excitement. "Indians." "Redskins." "To your posts - all!" Such were the cries, as following the horseman were visible scores of other riders. They were coming on at an easy pace and heading directly for the camp. Quickly the women and children ascended to the bluff, and the fighting members of the train arranged themselves to resist attack.

"They are soldiers." This cry from one of the men quickly relieved all fears, and a closer look now revealed the fact that they were indeed not Indians, but gallant troopers. It was just sunset as they rode up to the camp, and Captain Reynolds met the officer in command. It was Major-General Earl Van Dorn, the same officer who had purchased from Joe the herd of Indian ponies.

"I am glad to see you, sir; and, as you may observe, we were prepared to give you a different welcome, believing you to be Indians. Dismount, please, with your men, and accept the hospitalities of our camp," said Captain Reynolds, pleasantly.

"Thank you, sir; I shall accept your invitation with pleasure as

it is camping time. Let the men go into camp, Captain Stewart," said the commander, and dismounting he continued: "I am Major-General Earl Van Dorn, sir, commander of Fort Hawkins, and learning of the attack upon you through a mysterious youngster, I went in pursuit of Old Bad Blood and his dismounted warriors and gave them a severe whipping.

"Yes, sir, we owe it to that mysterious boy."

"Joe."

"Yes, Joe is what he calls himself, and we owe it to him that we were not all massacred," and Captain Reynolds gave General Van Dorn the story of their being guided and warned by Joe.

"But who is he?" asked the General.

"I can not tell you, sir, more than having heard our late guide speak of a mysterious horse and rider often seen back upon the trail, and whom they called the Forest Phantom."

"I, too, have heard camp fire yarns about such a person and am glad to know that it turns out to be real flesh and bone. But you say the boy has not returned!"

"No, sir, he has not, although he promised to do so and to act as our guide on to Sunset Settlement."

"I will give you an escort then, sir, for there are other bands of redskins roving about; but I hope no harm has befallen the youth."

Captain Reynolds then learned of the visit Joe had made the Fort and that he had left there to return to the train. "This looks bad, for this boy would not have broken his promise unless harm had befallen him," said Captain Reynolds. But the night passed away, and under escort of the soldiers the train pulled out for its destination, for Joe had not returned.

"When I reach the Fort I will put my best scouts upon his trail and search for the boy," was the General's remark to Captain Reynolds, as he

left the train well on its way to the settlement and under a good guide to conduct it there.

Chapter 9

A Leap For Life

When Joe left the Fort he headed directly for the camp of the emigrants, for he was anxious to get back and guide them out of the dangerous country into which their being without a guide had led them. He had gone but a few miles when he crossed a trail that he was convinced was made by Indians. The tracks showed that it was a large force, and the trail was so fresh he determined to follow it and see just who had made it, as he knew, from the direction in which it led, it would head off the emigrants' train on its way to Sunset Settlement. If he could discover that the Indians, hearing in some way of the coming train, had determined to lay in wait for its coming by a certain point, by knowing where they would place their ambush he could flank them and thus put them at fault. It was with such determination that he struck the trail and cautiously followed it.

He had not proceeded very far before he knew that there were fully a hundred horses that had left their trail, but whether or not all of these were mounted he could not discover until he saw them. He saw the trail led toward a high range of hills and into a most wild country, but he unhesitatingly pressed on until darkness hid every trace from view and he was compelled to camp. In darkness and silence he ate his frugal supper and then lay down upon the open prairie to sleep, his horse, to which he had given no name whatever, feeding around him and not held by the lariat, for the boy knew that the faithful animal would not leave him.

With the first peep of day he was up and on the trail once more and two hours after had reached the foothills. There he came upon the camp of those he followed, and a glance was sufficient to show him that

they were redskins, as one at all familiar with encampments can readily detect the difference between a paleface and Indian halting place for the night. He knew by the still burning fires that the enemy could not be far in advance and, acquainted with the nature of the country, he determined to seek a high hill which would give him a view for miles around. From the position he had in view he knew that he could see whether the redskins took a trail that would enable them to head off the emigrants' train, or crossed the prairie beyond to the mountains miles away where they had their village.

Turning short off the beaten track, Joe began to climb the hillside, and for once his keen eyes failed to detect half a dozen horsemen coming back upon the track, with heads bent down as though they were searching for something that had been lost, and which he had, for it was the sacred pipe of a chief and his necklace of bear claws which the youth had picked up in the deserted camp, though attaching little value to them. Back to their night camping ground went the warriors. Not finding the pipe and necklace, they started upon their return, still searching the trail, when the eyes of one of them fell upon something that attracted his attention. A call brought his five comrades to his side, and after a few words they left the trail and marched off up the hill. It was Joe's trail that they had discovered and were following. Up the hill they went until they came to a narrow ridge; along this Joe had gone and they followed.

As for that mysterious youth, he was standing upon the edge of a cliff, the point of lookout which he had sought, gazing down into the valley below and across the lower range of hills to the prairie beyond. Far down the valley his quiet glance had caught sight of the Indians filing along and directing their way across, and not up it as he had feared. He saw now, too, that they numbered but fifty warriors and that the other ponies were laden down with game, showing that they were

a party of hunters returning to their village. Satisfied that the emigrant train was not their object, but that they were making a flank movement to await any soldiers that might be out scouting for the fort, Joe mounted his horse and started to retrace his way.

Hardly had he ridden a hundred yards before he beheld before him the six warriors. They halted at sight of him, and he drew rein upon seeing them. How many more were behind him he knew not, but he did know that there were just six more than he cared to see at that time and in such a locality. He knew well that the ridge ended in a sheer precipice sixty feet high. Far below was a pool of water surrounded by willows and cottonwoods, but the depth of which he did not know. Upon either side of the ridge, he knew a man on foot could not ascend or descend, and to think of attempting such a thing upon horseback would be madness. To charge upon the six warriors and attempt to break through their ranks would be next to seeking death, for the ridge was not a hundred yards wide at its best, and where they had halted was in the narrowest part and in the roughest, which would prevent his horse going at full speed.

They were ready for him, he could see, and had evidently followed him, knowing that he had gone into a trap. To make matters worse for him, Joe had in his hand the sacred pipe he had picked up and about his neck the bear claw necklace, and the keen eyes of the redskins detected this. Joe's rifle lay across his horse in front of him. He had quickly thrust the pipe into a pocket in his blanket and had got ready for the death struggle. The Indians were armed with bows and arrows excepting one who carried a musket. Joe took in the chances against him at a glance, and they did the same. If it had been night and they had been redskins who had heard of him or knew him as an evil spirit, he would have played the spook business upon them, but it was in the broad glare of day, and they could see that he was fully armed and well

mounted, though his horse did look ghostly and wore no bridle.

"I've got to take the chances of the leap over the cliff," said Joe coolly to himself and then added in the same tone, "But I guess all of that gang won't live to see if it kills me." He threw his rifle forward as he had made up his mind as to his course, determined no longer to delay, and with the crack of his rifle a warrior dropped from his horse and bit the dust. A shot from the musket and a shower of arrows were sent in response, accompanied by wild yells, but they fell short or failed in their aim, and Joe hastily began reloading his rifle. This the redskins discovered, and knowing the deadly aim of their foe and that their chance lay in charging directly upon him they urged their ponies into a run. Joe had not finished reloading his rifle when they started, but he coolly did so, threw it to his shoulder after adjusting the cap with a hand that did not tremble, and again its sharp report was heard, and down fell a second brave. To draw his revolvers and meet them Joe knew would end in his death, even though he might kill a couple more, for they would send their arrows through him at close range. So he wheeled about quickly, and a yell sent his horse into a swift run.

On he bounded, straight for the cliff, and to urge him to the leap Joe pricked the noble animal with the point of his knife. Right upon his heels came the redskins, determined to force him over and then ride around the ridge and secure his scalp, but their reins were held firmly in hand to check their own ponies before they went too near. As he drew near the precipice, Joe slung his rifle upon his back, settled himself well upon the back of his horse, and drew a revolver. His face was calm and fearless, and it was evident that having taken the chances of the leap, he intended meeting his fate boldly, even should it be death. With a yell to his horse he went over, and when the now

frightened, maddened animal shot away from the brink, Joe turned quickly, dropped his revolver upon a redskin and drew trigger, as he cried, "Take that bullet as my parting present, redskins!" The shot, in spite of the situation of peril to Joe, was sent to kill and struck a brave fairly in the heart as he reined his horse upon the brink. Up went his arms, and from his lips broke forth the death cry, and Joe shot downward out of sight.

Chapter 10

Searching for Joe's Scalp

It must be admitted that poor Joe had the idea in his mind that death was certain when he glanced below him at about the spot he would fall. As I have said, there was a pool at the base of the cliff, and its depth Joe did not know, but judged that it was over the head of his horse. Around the pool grew a number of willows and cottonwoods, and they almost met in the center. Here is where Joe had aimed to go through, feeling assured if his horse did not turn over in his downward flight, he would strike the water fairly and, if not killed or crippled, would soon bear him to safety.

But the white had not struck the cliff at the exact point where Joe had intended he should, and the result was that he went crashing through the tops of the cottonwoods, making the splinters fly and tearing the limbs and foliage to atoms, and at the same time having his snowy sides pierced deeply at half a dozen different points. Once he half turned over, yet Joe still kept his seat, and then a limb caught him under the neck and checked the turn, so that he went down feet foremost into the pool. Joe was still seated upon his back and sank with him, while the splash sounded like the explosion of a heavy gun. As the horse did not rise, Joe pushed himself quickly to the surface, and a couple of strokes of his strong arms sent him to the shore, where he

sat amazed, dazed and considerably shaken up by his fall. His horse was killed, he knew, and that he himself had not been, surprised him greatly. As it was his feet and legs had been scratched up pretty badly, but he was yet whole, with no bones broken, and in such condition felt himself equal to at least a couple of redskins.

He glanced up through the foliage and saw three heads peeping over the cliff and looking and wondering while they talked. They had heard the crashing branches, and even Indian nature had not the heart and nerve to look down then, nor until half a minute after the plunge. Then they did so and they felt assured the horse and boy were both dead. Joe understood enough of their language to hear one of them say, "Pony and paleface both dead." The two others grunted assent.

"I guess not," muttered Joe, who could see them, though they could not see him.

"Get paleface scalp," said the first speaker. The two others gave a kind of war whoop, so tickled were they at this.

"I'll be there when I'm scalped," muttered Joe, grimly.

Then the heads disappeared, and Joe set to work to look at his weapons. The rifle had only powder in it, for he had not had the time to put in the bullet, and this he knew he would have to clean out well, as the rifle had got a ducking. Then Joe examined his revolvers and smiled. He had over the cylinder of each, from the barrel back to the stock behind the hammer, a hood of oil-silk with elastic at each end that held it in place, thus preventing the caps and powder from getting wet, for those were not the days of metallic cartridges.

"These are dry, and I guess I'll wait and see them Injuns take my scalp," said Joe, for he had become revengeful on account of his noble horse. He could easily have got away before the redskins appeared, but he concluded to wait; hence he made his preparations accordingly.

His first act was to leave his firearms upon the bank and dive down in the pool, knife in hand. He soon reappeared with his blankets, to which were attached his haversack of provisions and ammunition pouch, the latter being also enveloped tightly in oil-skin. "Good!" said Joe, as he saw that the ammunition was dry. Then he cleaned his rifle, dried it as thoroughly as he could under the circumstances and loaded it. "Now, I'm ready to receive company," he muttered, as he took up a position that would command the approach to the pool around the cliff. And his company soon appeared in sight, three in number. "They've buried the others, but I kilt 'em," he said, as coolly as though he did not expect the slightest trouble.

Indians are by nature as cautious as coyotes, and these three came on with wary advance, though they felt sure that the youth was dead. As they got within easy range, Joe drew a bead upon the one in advance with his rifle, selected his head as his point of aim and pulled the trigger. The cap snapped, the weapon failing to explode. But it checked the advance of the redskins and sent them back to cover with ludicrous suddenness. "Holy smoke! my rifle's failed me!" cried Joe, and as troubles seldom come singly, at that moment he beheld a score of mounted Indians coming up the valley not half a mile away. Evidently they were some of the same band coming to see what delayed their comrades so long.

Joe thought quickly and he came to the conclusion that that was no place for him. Seizing his wet blankets, he threw them across one shoulder and, with his rifle in his hand, bounded around the edge of the pool and, keeping the clump of cottonwoods and willows between him and his foes, ran with the speed of a deer along the base of the cliff. He heard no yell indicative of his flight being discovered, but did not tarry on this account in his rapid run until he had placed the point

of the ridge between him and his foes. Seeing a ravine a short distance before him, he turned into this and was soon brought to a halt by its terminating abruptly. He was about to retrace his way when the ringing war cries from the direction of the pool told him that his flight was discovered, and he knew then that his situation was desperate.

Chapter 11

Joe at Bay

Though matters certainly did look desperate for Joe, he did not lose his presence of mind. His eyes scanned the sides of the cliff in front, but he saw that a squirrel could not scale them. Then he caught sight of what appeared to be a break in the solid wall and toward this he bounded. It was where the ravine turned, but the walls were so alike that Joe had believed he was at the end of the canyon or gulch. Now he saw that it went beyond where he stood several hundred feet, but there certainly did end, though the yawning mouth of a cavern extended on beneath the hill. It took Joe but an instant to reach the cavern and dart into it. Once within its dark shelter he turned to look back over his track to see if his foes were in sight, and to his delight he discovered that they were not, though he could hear them coming upon his trail like a pack of hounds.

Before reconnoitering his quarters, Joe set to work upon his rifle. He knew he had no time to draw the charge, so he began to pour powder into the nipple, beating it down into the barrel by thumping it with his fists. Steadily he worked at this, although a loud, echoing shout told him the redskins were close upon him. The next moment they appeared around the bend of the canyon and came to a halt, pointing at the cavern and gesticulating wildly. But Joe kept on with his priming until the tube would hold no more, and then he placed a cap

upon it and laying it down took up his revolvers. From each nipple the cap was removed and a close examination made, and in several a few grains of powder were placed. "Now, I guess I'm ready," said the plucky boy, as he laid his weapons down ready for use, and, rising, unfolded his blankets and hung them upon the cavern walls to let the water drip from them.

In the meantime his foes, a score in number, had all appeared in sight and Joe recognized those he had seen upon the cliff, who seemed to be now the ringleaders of the others. They seemed to be urging the others to make a rush upon the cavern, for they had followed the boy's trail and knew he could be nowhere else. "Guess that fellow on the spotted pony is wanted in the Happy Hunting Grounds," said Joe to himself, and stooped for his rifle. Hardly had he done so when a perfect shower of arrows came flying into the cavern, the Indians having cunningly fitted them to their bows unseen by Joe, and at a word from their leader, fired them. Had the boy not stooped for his rifle as he did, which was laid upon one side of the cavern, he would have been pierced by half a dozen arrows. But, as it was, not one touched him, though several came dangerously near.

With this volley of arrows the redskins started upon a charge for the cavern. Instantly the boy's rifle went to his shoulder, his eyes caught the sights, and his finger drew on the trigger. This time there was no misfire, and the warrior on the spotted mustang went down. "I knew they wanted him," said Joe, as he whipped up his revolvers and began to fire away. One, two, three shots; no more were necessary, for the redskins knew not then what the deadly revolver was and imagined they had run upon other foes than the brave boy whom they had brought to bay. A mustang killed, another with a broken leg, and a brave wounded, Joe saw were the results of his pistol practice. He could not restrain a burst of mocking laughter as the redskins ran helter-skelter for the

bend in the ravine. They sent a revengeful volley of arrows back into the cavern, then disappeared; but Joe knew that they had by no means given him up.

"They'll not come back right off, I guess, so I'll look around and see where I am," muttered Joe, as he reloaded his rifle and then looked about him. A short distance back from the entrance all was darkness, but Joe was provided with a tin box full of matches and he quickly gathered up the arrows, heaped them together, whittled off splinters to kindle with, and behind a jutting point of the cavern lighted his fire to have a look around him. In spite of Joe's free-and-easy air in danger and his great nerve, what he beheld by the aid of the firelight caused a cry of horror to break from his lips.

"California Joe"

By Col. Charles D. Randolph
("Buckskin Bill")

He rode the early pony express,
He scouted Blackfoot, Flathead, Sioux,
He hunted with "Buffalo Bill" and "Texas Jack,"
And "Wild Bill" Hickok too.

He was a guide for wagon trains,
He fought Apache, Pawnee, Crow.
He was "Chief of Scouts" for General Custer,
Was "California Joe."

He scouted in the Black Hills
In the last great Sioux campaign,
And met General Crooks scout,
The famous "Calamity Jane."

He also knew "The Poet Scout,"
John Wallace Crawford, "Captain Jack."
They scouted together and hunted
In the good old days way back.

Chapter 12

The Death Cavern

After his first cry of horror at what he saw in the cavern, when his little fire blazed up, Joe uttered a light laugh, for he was not one to be nonplused for any length of time. "Holy smoke! but the dead folks did scare me for a minute," he said, then coolly glanced around upon what had so suddenly and unexpectedly met his gaze and disturbed his equanimity for once. What he saw were rows of corpses in an almost mummy state of dryness ranged along upon a scaffolding on either side of the cavern. He knew he was in an Indian burying ground, and from what he understood of those redskins in the canyon he was aware that it did not belong to their tribe, even if they knew aught of its existence, which was doubtful.

"I'd like to give 'em a scare that would last 'em," said Joe, and he at once became lost in thought, a sure sign with him that he was plotting mischief. At last he laughed, and that settled it that he had decided what to do. The air of the charnel house was loathsome in the extreme, but for this Joe did not then care. Looking up the ravine to see that the Indians were not in sight, he swung his blanket before him to catch the arrows they might fire at him and at once set to work. Throwing his lasso up over a pole of the scaffolding, he clambered up alongside of the dead Indians and took a quiet survey of them by the light of his fire. He saw that they were ranged in rows upon each side of the cavern, the platform of poles upon which they were placed beginning about fifteen feet back from the entrance. Selecting a dozen of the worst-looking corpses, those from which the flesh had fallen from their skulls, leaving the bony faces bare and white, Joe lowered them to the floor of the cavern with his lasso, one end of which he then made fast to the pole on one side nearest the entrance and, descending himself, fastened the

lariat to the opposite side. With strips of buckskin and blankets, the belongings of the redskins, he then began to tie the corpses upon the lariat so that they seemed to be standing up. Here and there he placed a pole at the back of a corpse to keep the lariat from sagging too much and soon had his ghastly row of dead bodies extending across the cavern. It certainly was a hideous sight, but it amused Joe immensely, and he then gathered enough wood from the scaffold poles to make a large fire. This he built in a niche of the cavern in such a way that he could wholly shut out the light with his blankets, to the bottom of which he attached lines made of buckskin and carried them to the scaffolding overhead, where he took up his position with his rifle and revolvers ready.

It was now dark outside and Joe knew that his foes only awaited its gloom to creep upon him. He understood Indian cunning enough to see that they meant for him to believe that they had gone, as they did not show themselves again, but he knew that they would not depart leaving their dead comrades in the ravine for him to scalp when they had left the canyon. Lighting his fire and seeing that its blaze was wholly concealed by the blankets, Joe drew himself upon the scaffold and perched there, his weapons lying before him ready for use, one hand holding the lines attached to the bottom of the blankets, and the other grasping the lariat which, by pulling upon it, would make the ghastly corpses seem to dance. With patience the boy waited, watched and listened. Without he could see that it was light enough for him to discover any one approaching the cavern, and there he kept his eyes.

Presently a dark form came before his gaze, and then another and another. Each tread as softly as a panther creeping upon its prey, and soon a score or more stood in silence before the cavern entrance. Their bodies were bent, their heads pressed forward in the act of listening,

and as still as bronze statues they stood. That was Joe's moment to begin his performance, and a strong pull with one hand upon the lariat set the row of corpses swaying and nodding, while with a quick jerk upon the lines he sent a blaze of light into the cavern, revealing the ghastly sight to the gaze of the redskins just as they were about to spring into the dark cavern with their knives in hand to meet whatever foe they there might find. But that which their eyes fell upon, illumined by the red glare of the firelight, was more than their superstitious natures could stand and they darted from the place with howls of terror and fled with the speed of the wind down the canyon, each redskin striving to lead in the mad race from the death cavern.

"California Joe"

By Col. Charles D. Randolph
("Buckskin Bill")

With his long hair, and dressed
In buckskins,
You would surely know
That this was the noted scout
"California Joe."

A real borderman, brave and true.
In his fringed buckskin outfit
And his high boots
He looked like a Sioux,
"California Joe."

He was a man of mystery,
His real name no one seemed to know.
He was a fearless, famous scout,
"California Joe."

He was killed out in Nebraska
By an unknown foe;
General George A. Custer's scout,
"California Joe."

Chapter 13

A Reconnoissance

The sudden scampering of the frightened redskins tickled Joe immensely and half in enjoyment of the fun, half to urge them on to greater speed and not to stop, he set up a series of most unearthly yells, as though to make the savages believe that they had invaded the funeral regions. "If they only knew who I was, that the Injuns below on the river call me a spook, this would help me tip-top, for I even am scared myself," said Joe. To keep his foes still going, Joe ran after them, yelling as he went, and reaching the abrupt bend in the canyon, found that they had not tarried there; but at the entrance of the ravine they had, and Joe discovered that they had been reinforced by the entire band of hunters, who had doubtless been sent for. They were building camp fires with evident intentions of stopping for the remainder of the night, and here and there in the firelight Joe beheld knots of redskins discussing the fearful sight they had witnessed and telling their comrades. "They'll not come again until morning and then they'll come with a rush or roll logs before 'em, which I can't shoot through. They have camped for business and I've got to do something mighty quick if I wants to keep my hair, and I do."

Cautiously Joe left his place of reconnoissance and proceeded back to the cavern, for he saw the utter impossibility of getting out of the canyon. One thing gave him hope and that was that the wind came through the canyon, and the smoke from his fire had been blown back into it and in some way disappeared. If it did this, there must be another opening, and he must find it. His blankets had dried by the heat of the fire, and he rolled them up and strapped them, with his other belongings, upon his back. Securing his lariat, he left the mummy-like corpses where they fell, lying in rows across the cavern

entrance. Then with a torch he had manufactured, he set out upon his reconnoissance.

He followed the cloud of smoke through several winding passages and discovered that the cavern was indeed a perfect charnel house or huge tomb, for hundreds of bodies were there. "Holy smoke! hain't I scared," he said to himself, as he glanced upon the grim lines of dead Indians, yet he certainly did not act as though he was very much frightened. After walking full a hundred yards, he came to a large chamber or rotunda and here he halted, holding the torch over his head, to have a look around him. "Whew! this is the high mucky muck of all, and it looks as if the whole tribe had died sudden-like and been buried here. Wonder if 'twas smallpox they had. If it was, I'm in for it. Well, well, I've seen old Injuns and squaws, young Injuns and pappoose Injuns along the sides, but this is where the high-toned bucks camp out. Guess they are all big warriors in here," and in spite of his assumed fright, he glanced coolly around upon the scaffolds with their weight of dead and saw by the robes, necklaces, feathers, bonnets and weapons that there the head men only had found burial, such burial as it was. "I guess this must be where Kit Carson buries his dead Injuns," said Joe, and then he added grimly, "I've started in pretty well myself in the killin' line and I may have a grave yard as big as Kit's when I get to be away in years. But if I don't get out of this, I'll have only a grave."

He saw that the smoke went up over his head just where he was standing and a crevice was visible in the vaulted roof. Placing his torch some distance off, he then returned and looked upward. To his delight he saw the stars and he knew that there was an opening there large enough for him to pass through. It seemed round and about the size of a well and could not be less than a hundred feet to the top.

But how was he to get there? That he soon decided upon, for he set to work building a fire and soon had a bright blaze. By its light he saw that there was a natural chimney-like opening in the roof, and remembering the height of the hill, he knew that it must be many feet to the top. Measuring the width with his eye, he saw that it was just wide enough for him to reach each side by stretching his legs far apart, and his hands too.

"I've been down a well and up again and I guess I can make it if the sides ain't smooth as glass," he said. "Now, to make something I can climb upon. Injuns, I'm sorry to disturb your rest, but I think more of myself living than I do of you all dead. So here goes!" He jerked one of the scaffolding poles out as he spoke, and with a crash and heavy thuds a score of dead bodies came down to the rocky flooring. Joe sprang aside to escape being buried, while he cried, "It's raining corpses, hard." But the bodies were not exactly what he was after, though he made use of some of them for props for the poles. Selecting three of the longest poles, he tied the tops together and then stood them up like Gipsy camp sticks, the center being directly in the opening in the vaulted roof, which they just reached. The bodies at the base kept the poles from slipping. Throwing aside the pack on his back, he climbed up one of the uprights as nimbly as a cat could have done. Standing on the tops, he glanced upward and when his eyes became accustomed to the darkness, he saw to his delight that the well-like opening continued about the same size all the way through and that its sides were so uneven and rough that he could manage to make his way to the surface by stretching his feet and hands across it and thus working his way along.

Descending once more, he tied his lariat to his rifle and belt of arms and then attached to that a longer line made from strips he cut

from the buffalo and bear robes he found with the dead warriors. Two long lines he thus made, one for his weapons, the other for his blankets and traps, and then he fastened them to his waist. But he did not intend to help the redskins find him, and about the base of each pole he built a large pile which met in the center so that it would make one grand fire when he got ready to ignite it. Taking some light sticks for kindling, he fastened them to his pack and then started upon his ascent of the poles, having divested himself of his huge boots, as he knew he could not climb with them on.

Reaching the top of the poles, he spread himself so as to reach across the well-like opening and found that he could cling there. "It's going to be a tough job," he said, realizing fully the great strain it would be upon him and that a false step would hurl him back to death. He knew, too, should his strength fail him, back he must fall. But the Indians would visit upon him a worse fate, he well knew, so up he started slowly, first one hand and then a foot, and so on he went.

The strain now began to tell on him, and in places he had only the rough, rocky side for a footing or hold instead of a slight projection as in other places, and in each instance it took all his strength to keep from falling. The smoke, too came up about him, nearly blinding him, and that, with the foul air of the huge tomb, was suffocating in the extreme. But on he went, slowly, surely, the sweat dropping from him in great beads, his feet and hands blistering and the nails of his toes tearing to the quick as he clung to the rough rocks. Nearer and nearer the top he drew, yet the way seemed interminable. No resting place, his muscles strained, raw, sore, his blistered hands and feet wearing and bloody, his weight seemed to be hundreds of pounds. But Joe had a will of iron and a nerve not to be subdued. With shut teeth and blinded eyes, for the smoke made it impossible for him to see, he struggled on upward.

At last he put his hand out as usual and he nearly fell, for it met no resistance. Quickly he felt around him and knew that he was at the top. Then he made a violent effort and drew himself over the ledge. He was safe, but so worn out that he could not move and lay where he had dragged himself. He was so blinded that he could not see, but he was content to wait. The cool air soon revived him, the smoke-blinded eyes were soon able to look about, and he found himself upon a high ridge overgrown with dwarfed trees. The stars were shining brightly, and the air was chill after his experience in the cavern.

He shook himself together, and seizing the line that was fastened to his arms, lay down upon the rock and glanced below. The foul air and smoke almost stifled him, and he wondered how he had lived through it. Slowly he drew on the line and up came his weapons to the top. He could hardly repress a shout of joy when he grasped them. Then the blanket-pack was drawn up and laid beside the rifle. Joe gathered the fagots, which were like tinder, lighted them and lowered them quickly to the pile below. Instantly they blazed up and a hot, roaring fire was the result. "Rather hard on the dead Injuns, I guess," he said, with some sympathy for those in the tomb. Ever and anon he looked down and saw that the fire was creeping up the poles and that they would soon be consumed and all below present no appearance of how an escape had been made from the cavern.

Joe was foot-sore, weary, in fact utterly worn out, but he felt it incumbent upon him to place as much distance as possible between him and his foes by morning, so he drew on his over-large boots, wincing with the pain it gave him, and then started upon his way. But each step was agony to him, and at last he knew he must rest, be the consequences what they might to him.

Chapter 14

Joe's Revenge

A few moment's rest served to make Joe feel so much better that he decided to move on. Shouldering his pack and rifle once more, he did so, but the effort was most painful, and he soon came to a halt. It was evident that some bright idea had flashed through his mind, for he stood an instant in deep thought. Then he said, "I guess I might as well ride, for there are a hundred ponies over yonder," and he nodded in the direction of the Indian camp which was about a mile from where he then stood. Whether the pain was forgotten in the thought of carrying out his plot, he hardly knew himself, but he managed to hobble down the ridge, gain the valley and make round to the timber in front of the canyon where he had so nearly lost his life. He had been forced to rest several times, but he smiled grimly when he came in sight of the camp fires. It was almost dawn, he knew, and he was anxious to lose no time, as darkness was his only hope.

His knowledge of Indian life made him pitch at once upon the locality where they would be most likely to leave their ponies, and thither he went. It was upon the side of a hill, where the grass was plentiful, and not a hundred yards from the camp fires, around which he could see groups of warriors squatted, some of them too anxious about what had been seen in the cavern to go to bed. It was evident that they did not suspect danger nor believe that there were any foes near, other than the one, or those in the cavern, for they could not account for the several rapid shots fired, unless there were more men than Joe there.

Joe reconnoitered carefully, and he selected in his own mind just about where the Indian guards were stationed over the ponies. He saw that the vale in which they were, had steep sides and narrowed toward a canyon, which he knew led out upon the prairie some few miles beyond, for once before he had passed through that way. The guards, therefore,

would naturally be toward the canyon, as none were needed on the steep sides of the vale or toward the camp. "This helps me immense, and I guess if my legs hold out, I'll just revenge myself a little," he said in a whisper to himself.

Taking from his pack a buckskin bag of red paint, he smeared it over his face. Then he drew out a war bonnet of feathers, quite a gorgeous affair, and dropping a blanket about his shoulders, most cautiously began to go down the steep side of the hill. He came near the first pony and saw by him the saddle of packed meat. To what he needed he coolly helped himself. Then he cut the lariat that held him to the stake and passed on to the next, repeating the same trick he had with the herd upon the prairie. The ponies did not know they were free, and in this was his safety. From mustang to mustang he went until he drew near the end of the herd; he dared not go farther, as he was aware the guards were near, asleep though they might be. Then he crept back to the upper end and saw that dawn would be upon him in less than half an hour.

Selecting the pony of the herd which in the darkness suited him best, he put upon it the Indian saddle and bridle that was near, and mounting began to slowly drive those that were nearest him down the valley toward the canyon. Slowly they went at first, then in a trot until, feeling that the stampede was started, Joe whipped out his revolvers, uttered wild yells, and fired several shots. As one horse the freed mustangs sprang forward and at once began a wild race. Into their midst Joe rode, lying low upon the back of his horse, not to be seen by the Indian guards, and like the roll of thunder resounded the hoofs upon the hard ground.

In vain did the guards strive to check their advance and turn them back, for they could not stem the mad current and were forced to

fly up the sides of the vale for their lives. In wild alarm the camp arose behind the equine torrent, and fleet-footed braves rushed in pursuit; but in vain. The stampede had begun well, and the stakes of those animals which Joe had not freed were drawn up by the pressure; the whole herd almost was set going. Past the guards they swept, Joe in their midst and lying low to escape any arrows; unseen by the redskins, they could not understand the cause of the sudden stampede. They had heard the few shots and terrific yells that set the herd going; then no sound followed to betray the presence of an enemy. And away dashed the herd with Joe in their rear chuckling at his triumph and his revenge upon his foes.

Chapter 15

The Fatal Chase

Joe knew well that he had not got every pony of the herd and he only wondered that he had got so many, while he readily understood that as soon as the Indians recovered from their amazement they would mount those mustangs that remained and come in chase. Should he at once, upon reaching the prairie, desert the herd and save himself upon his own horse, or rather the one he had selected for himself. If he did so, would not the whole band, as soon as their ponies were recaptured, give up their game and come hot on his trail to avenge the wrong.

While he was dashing along in the rear of the drove, thinking what was best to be done, in spite of the thunder of the hoofs in front of him he heard the clatter of hoof-falls behind. Instantly he drew rein and listened. "One, two, three." He counted them slowly as he recognized from the sound how many there were. "There may be more behind them, so it won't do any harm if I just give 'em a hint I don't want to be crowded." So saying, he wheeled his mustang behind a small

tree which had slipped down from the bank above, and waited while the herd dashed on. Soon an Indian came in sight, then another and another. They had mounted bareback, as Joe could see in the now breaking dawn, and were pushing their ponies hard. Another thing he discovered was the sound of many feet. "The whole gang is coming on foot, by the Holy Smoke!" he said. Then up went his rifle, as the Indians were almost upon him, and the crack followed. Joe never missed if he had half an aim, and off tumbled a redskin, while the pony dashed on after the herd. The other two Indians quickly attempted to wheel their ponies to the right-about, and one succeeded in doing so, but the other had a hard-mouthed animal and he was anxious to go on after his companions, so before he could stop him Joe darted out of his hiding place upon him. "Injun, I want you," he yelled and his revolver flashed. But the startled pony reared up just then and got the bullet in his brain and falling back heavily upon his rider, pinned him beneath him.

Joe spent no time in looking after his foe, but sped on after the herd just as two-score redskins, running at full speed, came in sight. "Farewell, Injuns," he shouted, waving his hand and looking back. As they came to the single rider left of their band, Joe saw the brave pulled suddenly off his pony and a chief bedecked with feathers spring upon his back. "That's the Raging Chief, I guess, and he is after me hot as blazes," coolly said the boy, as he sped along, loading his rifle as he went. "Yes, it's me he wants," he continued, as the chief, for so his war bonnet proclaimed him, urged the pony in pursuit. "And the others are running a foot race to see the show," continued Joe, as the warriors on foot again bounded forward.

"Come, Injun pony, that feller's got a gun," he cried, urging the mustang on. But the animal on which the chief was mounted seemed the speedier of the two, for he gained steadily. "I guess I'll muss his

feathers for him," and so saying Joe came to a halt, wheeled about and brought up his rifle. The chief saw the act and quickly fired, but without effect, as the bullet flew over the boy's head. Then he threw himself upon the side of his pony, so as to protect himself, and re-loaded his old musket with marvelous skill and quickness, while the animal circled around at a gallop. Watching his chance, Joe was about to fire when a second shot from the chief came, and down dropped his horse just as his finger pressed the trigger of his rifle.

Chapter 16

A Novel Escape

Almost any one under the circumstances in which Joe found himself would have given up for lost, but the boy did not. As he caught himself upon his blistered, bleeding feet, when his mustang fell dead beneath him, he turned his eyes upon his foe to see what the effect of his shot had been. The shout that broke from his lips proved that it had not been amiss; nor had it been a dead-shot. The arm of the chief over the neck of the pony had caught the bullet, and the Indian, no longer able to hold on, had dropped to the ground while his horse had bounded on down the canyon. A shriek of rage broke from the wounded, foiled chief, and wounded though he was he bounded toward Joe. But that worthy youth comprehended his danger fully and he looked to take advantage of anything that might present itself in his favor.

He saw the flying pony and knew that the nature of the ground would bring him within thirty feet of him. To the Indian saddle on the pony he had, was fastened a lariat, and to seize this and get it ready was a second's work. Then, as the chief's horse dashed by, he threw it with such precision that, though the animal shied badly, it settled over his neck. Instantly the mustang was brought to his knees and

almost down. Joe gave another yell of joy. But he noticed that the lasso had torn from its hold, nearly, by the jerk, and that the first bound of the animal would tear it loose. For him to attempt to hold the animal by catching the lariat would be utterly useless, he was well aware, so he bounded toward the mustang to throw himself upon his back. Quick as he was, the pony was quicker and regained his feet and the lariat was torn loose just as Joe reached his haunches. For the flash of a second all seemed lost, for Joe was suffering greatly with his feet, and the chief and his warriors were not far away; but his quick eyes detected the long tail of the mustang, held up with excitement, and instantly he grasped it with a grip that was not to be shaken off.

With a wild snort of rage and fright the mustang bounded away down the canyon. But Joe was with him. With his good left hand he held on like grim death and with his rifle grasped in his right he went along at great bounds. His feet seemed as though they would split open at every bound, his hand that held the tail seemed on fire, but yet he clung for dear life. The redskins sent showers of arrows after him as they ran, and several stuck in the haunches of the mustang, urging him on the faster, and one buried itself in Joe's arm. Still he did not let go and as he bounded along in great leaps, he yelled, "Yell away, you red devils, but here we go and no one to head us off!" Maddened with fright and pain, the mustang ran on, yet still could not shake off the weight behind him. The speed at which he went soon dropped the fastest warriors far behind, greatly to the delight of Joe. At length the mustang overtook the herd and dashed into their midst. Joe had just strength enough to grasp the mane of a small pony, as he came alongside, and drag rather than throw himself upon his back.

The sigh of relief he gave was like an escape of steam from an engine and limp and worn out he sat upon the animal as it ran along in

the rear of the herd. But soon he regained his breath and as the drove struck the prairie, yelled himself hoarse to keep them going. And go they did at a long, sweeping gallop, which put them several miles away upon the prairie when the warriors reached the end of the canyon behind them. Looking back at them Joe said, sympathizingly, "It's a pity they don't know English so that they can cuss, for I know they is that mad to make me sorry for 'em."

Whether Joe was sincere in his pity or not, I can not say, but that he was in earnest in pressing on, there was no doubt, for he kept the herd at a pace that put many a mile behind them before night. The direction in which he had to go, however, was away from the camp of the emigrants' train, and he regretted this, but having captured another herd, he determined to carry them first to the fort, thinking that the train would remain encamped until his return.

Suffering as he was with his hands and feet, the latter especially, alone, exhausted after all he had gone through, Joe knew he had a hard task to watch his herd. He let them come to a walk and picked out an animal which he had observed was the best of the lot and mounted him. Coming to a stream, he allowed them to halt for a rest, while he took advantage of it to bathe his wounds, for the arrow shot in his arm gave him pain also and was swelling. But Joe was as hardy as a pine knot and again rushed on after an hour's rest, and allowing the herd to go at their own gait, managed to snatch a little sleep. Two days after, tied upon his horse, half lying down with a high fever, he drove his ponies up to the fort and was taken from the back of the animal nearer dead than alive. He was most tenderly cared for by Major-General Van Dorn, who had returned only a short while before from his search for the brave boy.

Chapter 17

The Boy Pioneer

It was weeks before Joe came around to be himself again, for he had a severe illness. He had at first raved about his promise to Captain Reynolds, which he had been unable to keep, but General Van Dorn told him that he had sent a guide and escort with them and they had arrived in safety at Sunset Settlement.

"And Maggie?" Joe had asked.

"Who is Maggie, Joe?"

"Little Maggie Reynolds," he answered, referring to the little golden-haired girl that had kissed him good-bye.

Then his mind would wander in delirium, and he would make those who nursed him laugh at the tricks he imagined he was playing upon the Indians. Yet never once did he refer to his past life: from whence he had come, to his parents, or to one act of his boyhood before his life upon the plains. Once did General Van Dorn hear him say in his sleep, "I am going back to the old Kentucky home."

"Joe," he said to him as the boy was getting better, "Joe, are you from Kentucky?"

"I never said so when I was out of my head, did I, General?" was the strange question.

"No, Joe."

"Then I'll not say so now, General," was the calm response. And the General refrained from questioning him further.

At last the boy got on his legs once more. His wounds had healed under the surgeon's care, and he said he was ready to go.

"Go where, Joe?" asked General Van Dorn.

"Anywhere."

"Why not stay here?"

"Why?"

"Well, you have proved yourself a great Indian fighter, Joe, and I would engage you as a scout for the fort and give you good pay."

"What would I do with the money, General?"

"Is there not some one you could give it to?"

"No."

"Well, some day there may be."

"Yes, there may be. I'll keep what I've got, but how much is it?"

"I allowed you the same price for the last ponies, Joe, and sent them to headquarters where they were needed, so I have for you, or the paymaster has, just six thousand and sixty dollars."

"Whew! I'm rich!"

"Yes, quite well off, Joe, but you can accumulate more as a scout."

"No, General; I'm going West."

"Well, Joe, I was under the impression that this was West, and a long way west," said the general with a smile.

"Not west enough for me. I am going to the Rocky Mountains."

"In Heaven's name! What are you going there for, Joe?"

"Trapping, hunting, and looking around," was the cool reply.

"You'll never get there."

"I guess so."

"You'll be killed."

"I guess not."

"Well, you wish to take some money with you."

"No, I have enough."

The general looked at the strange youth in surprise. He could not make him out and the more he saw of him, the more of a mystery he became. He seemed to have an air of refinement about him at times, which he also seemed to endeavor to hide. He spoke naturally one day and in border slang the next. Here was an opportunity for him to remain at

the fort, where he had won the esteem of officers and soldiers alike and was looked upon as a hero. Yet he was going to leave, and though alone, friendless apparently, coolly said his destination was the Rocky Mountains.

"What shall I do with your money, Joe, if you do not return?" asked the general.

"Oh, I'll be back some day," was the confident response.

"But in case of an accident--"

"You mean if I get killed?"

"Yes."

"Give it to Maggie and tell her Joe left it for her."

"Maggie Reynolds."

"Yes."

"She is but a little child!"

"Yes, only four or five years old, but I guess she'll grow."

"No doubt of it, Joe. Well, I'll give it to her if you do not return."

"Now, General, don't be in too big a hurry about it, for I'll come sliding back some day."

"I'll wait three years and if I should be ordered away from the post, I will leave it with the commander who follows me, and so on."

"Better make it five years."

"So be it, Joe."

This financial matter being settled, Joe set about his preparations for departure. He had the pony he had selected from his herd, and the general said that he had shown great speed, as the men had raced him several times while Joe was ill. Then he added: "But Joe, I've got a horse I wish you to accept as a present from me; he shows his heels to anything on the border, so far. Then I have a rifle, a new patent, and a small one I wish you to have. You can use your mustang as a pack

animal, and the men say you shall go well stocked with stores from the commissary and the sutler, so you'll want for nothing."

Joe seemed touched at the kindness shown him, and several days after mounted the splendid animal given him by Major-General Van Dorn, and with his mustang well loaded and in lead, rode out of the fort to a tune from the band and a cheer from the entire garrison. All watched him until he got some distance off and saw him head due west. Many predicted that he would lose his scalp before a week went by, while others confidently asserted that he would yet be back and give a good account of himself.

"He'll dismount a whole Indian tribe yet and be back with the mustangs," said the general with a laugh, and as the youth was yet in hearing he continued, "Now, men, three ringing farewell cheers for Joe, the Boy Pioneer!"

With a yell they were given, and Joe was seen to turn in his saddle and raise his hat in response.

Chapter 18

A Favor Returned

What became of Joe after his departure from the fort, no one knew, for several years passed before those who had known him then, heard of him again. Some said he had indeed gone to the Rocky Mountains and had passed a year or more roaming through its wilds; and others reported that a youth answering to his description had been guiding trains over the Santa Fe trails and had won a name in Upper Mexico as a most daring Indian fighter and a man whom few of the desperadoes of the plains cared to meet.

But one night he came suddenly before several who had known him at the fort when he brought his captured herd in, and it was in this way. Major-General Van Dorn had been pushed farther west with his command,

for the Star of Empire would not allow the border to remain long in one locality, as the march of civilization beat the redskins farther and farther toward the Land of the Setting Sun. About his outpost General Van Dorn had been annoyed a great deal by a gang of desperadoes, who were road agents, horse thieves and all else that was vile, and he had offered a reward for their capture dead or alive.

One night the general had gone over to a small settlement, a few miles from the outpost he commanded, to witness the marriage of a young trapper to a settler's daughter. As a number of his troopers were on a raid, he had been accompanied only by one of his officers and two cavalrymen. The trapper was a handsome young man, but there was that in his face which neither the girl's father nor the general liked; but the maiden had fallen in love with his good looks and plainly told her father that he did not like her lover because he wanted her to marry the old fort sutler, who was rich. The settler gave his consent, however, to the marriage, and the date had been set for the ceremony. Promptly at sunset the young groom arrived accompanied by several wild-looking comrades, who he said had come down from the hills to see him "spliced," as he termed it. The general saw these friends and liked their looks less than he did the groom's. As more of them dropped in, until there were nearly a dozen present, he determined to be on his guard, well knowing it was a locality for characters of a most dangerous kind.

One of the guests attracted the attention of the general in particular, and he was about to walk over to where he stood and ask him where they had met before, when, as though divining his purpose, the young man left the cabin abruptly.

"Did you see that man, Stewart?" asked the general of his brother officer.

"Yes, General, and a dashing looking fellow he was, with an eye

like an eagle," was the reply.

The one to whom they referred was six feet in height, superbly formed, and had a mass of brown curls hanging down his back. His face was full of daring, resolute, and his eyes were black, lustrous, and, in repose, sad, while a slight mustache was just shading his lip. He was dressed in a full suit of buckskin, fringed and beaded, and even in the settler's cabin wore a black sombrero, the broad brim turned up in front. Around his waist was a belt made of a panther skin and in it were a pair of revolvers and a long bowie knife.

"I have met him somewhere before, Stewart."

"So it seems to me, General," and the two officers tried to recall where and when the young man had crossed their paths in the past.

At length the bride came in upon the arm of her father, and her lover and the pards entered from outside the cabin where they had been joking and frolicking with each other in a somewhat rude manner. It was evident that they had been drinking, and the lover, whose name was lost under the border appellation given him of "Bowie Bob," said in an insulting tone as his eyes fell upon the Major-General:

"This hain't no military wedding, and I wants them blue coats and brass buttons to get."

His pards cheered at this, but the settler, Seth Kenton, stepped forward and said, "Bob, these gentlemen are my friends; their being on this border prevents our homes being burned and our families massacred, and I invited them here to see Mollie married."

"Waal, I say no, old man," was the rude reply.

"Pardon me, Mr. Kenton, but I do not wish to be a stumbling block in the way of your daughter's marriage, so I will retire and Captain Stewart will accompany me," said Major-General Van Dorn, quietly.

The old settler evidently feared his intended son-in-law and knew not what to say, but Mollie Kenton spoke up and said, "For shame, Bob,

to insult my father's friends."

"I'll do more than that, gal, if they don't travel quick. Come, git out o' this, and lively too, or I'll make it lively for yer," cried the bully.

Major-General Van Dorn was no man to be driven and facing Bowie Bob he said sternly, "Young man, you are going too far, and I warn you that I will not be bullied by you, nor shall I now leave this house to please you."

The bully winced a little at this bold front shown him, but after a glance at his parás, he said, "You won't go, yer say?"

"I will not, nor can you force me to do so."

"Come, parás, let's clip his spurs," shouted the bully and he moved toward the general.

"I guesses not." A form suddenly bounded forward and confronted the bully, and in each hand he held a revolver. It was the same young man that the general had said he had seen before.

"Look a-heur, Joe, what in thunder's up, that you plays that tricky hand?" whined Bowie Bob, not liking the change affairs had taken.

"It are a leetle game I hes intended springin' onter yer fer some time, yer cussed cutthroat, an' ef yer hands don't fly up like wind-mills durned suddint, yer toes will," was the cool and threatening response.

"Parás, does yer all stand this heur music?" cried the bully.

"I guesses they heurs ther tune I are shriekin' an' hesn't got ther narve ter set another-- Hold on thar, Pant'er Pete!" A ringing report followed as quick as a flash, and the man addressed as Panther Pete fell dead in his tracks, a bullet in his forehead sent from the unerring pistol of the man who so boldly faced the gang of desperadoes

while, with only the interruption of the shot and the fall, he continued in the same cool way: "Yer see, pards, I set another tune, an' none o' yer hed ther narve ter jine in ther chorus, and' it's all well yer didn't, fer I hev every durned gerloot o' yer kivered an' leven more fun'rais in these weapons while you only counts nine."

"Come, Joe, is yer gone mad?" asked the expected bridegroom.

"Nary, but Pant'er Pete hev gone some whar an' you'll foller if yer drops them hands o' yourn. Up with yer throat-cutters and gold-stealers, yer varmints o' Satan, or I'll play the Dead March!" Those he addressed knew to whom he referred and up went the hands of the desperado gang. "Oh, Lordy, anybody lookin' in through the winder wud think we were havin' a pra'er meetin' in heur fer sartin'. Now, General, jist call in yer sojers an' ther gang shell be tuck in slick as grease."

"I care not to arrest them, my fine fellow," said the general.

"Thar yer is all wrong, General, fer yer hev offered a reward fer these very gerloots."

"Ha! Who are they?"

"Bowie Bob are ther captin o' ther gang, an' they is known as-- Look out thar," With the last word a second shot rang through the cabin and another of the men, who had lowered his hand quickly to draw a weapon, fell his length upon the floor. "As I were sayin', coolly went on the young man, "when that dead pilgrim were so onperlite as ter interrupt me, this heur convention o' gerloots is known as ther Midnight Riders."

"Ha! that robber band?" cried the general, now drawing his revolver while Captain Stewart followed his example, and both stepped to the side of the man who made the bold assertion.

"I talks Gospil, General, fer I hes been fer three months with ther gang, layin' fer jist this heur moment o' joy."

"But how did you strike the trail of the Midnight Riders?"

"I were a-ridin' along the trail one day an' comed across your dockiment stuck on a tree."

"What was that, Joe?"

"Tellin' how yer'd give dust fer ther Raider Cap'n an' his gang whether the'r toes were turned up or kickin'. So I jist thoughted I'd like ther job an' I lays round loose, got ther run o' how ter meet 'em, an' then jined ther gang with a tale o' misery I hed been put through thet made 'em weep fer me. Yer knows ther balance, General, an' thet I jist saved thet pretty gal from bein' a outlaw's bride; but wimmin is sish queer folks, I dunno ef she don't cuss me fer it, arter all."

"No, Joe, she said, 'God bless you' many times."

"Waal, I hopes He will, General, but does yer know I hev lost thet horse yer give me?"

"No. How did you do that?" and the general hoped to draw the young man out to tell something about himself.

"And ther mustang, too."

"You lost your mustang, too?"

"Yes."

"But how?"

"They got kilt."

"Indeed! how did it happen?"

"They got shooted."

"In a fight, I suppose?"

"Yas, it were a kind of a scrimmage like. But I were sorry to lose your horse, and yer rifle got tuk from me."

"Tell us how it happened, Joe?"

"I hes been among ther Injuns, an' they hain't over honest," was the significant reply, and with this his hearers were compelled to be satisfied.

The honest settlers present now also stepped forward, and wholly at the mercy of their captors, the band of outlaws offered no resistance and were soon secured beyond all possibility of escape.

"Now, my friend, whom have I to thank for this night's good work?" asked General Van Dorn, as he stepped up to the daring borderman who had been the means of saving his life and also of having captured the very band of outlaws he had tried so hard to hunt down.

"My name are Joe, General," was the quiet reply.

"Joe! By heaven, but I see it now! You are Joe the Stampeder, as the boys called you at the fort."

"I guess I are the one that were that Joe," and Joe grasped the hand warmly that was extended to him and that night accompanied the general and his prisoners back to the fort. However, not one word could they get him to tell them of where he had been and what adventures he had known since three years before he had ridden off alone as the Boy Pioneer bound for the Rocky Mountains.

Chapter 19

The Same Joe

"Well, Joe, why don't you tell us what you have been doing since we saw you last?" asked the general for the twentieth time, as they rode on toward the fort that night, accompanied by Captain Stewart, with the outlaws bringing up the rear guarded by two soldiers.

"I hev been rovin', General."

"But where?"

"About ther kentry."

"Did you get to the Rocky Mountains?"

"Yes."

"And have met with many thrilling adventures, I'll wager."

"Yer'd win yer money, fer I hos been through some leetle advenster in my way," was the quiet reply.

"But you are well mounted and armed now, Joe."

"Yes, this critter hain't slow an' she kin keep movin' as long as any of 'em."

"Well, Joe, the paymaster of the fort hasn't paid over your money yet."

"No, ther time hed not passed."

"And you'll have some to add to it, as you'll get your reward for those outlaws back there."

"General, I trades in horse-flesh; I swaps rifles, revolvers, knives, or buckskin; but I don't take dust for human blood. Yer is welcome ter them pilgrims an' kin hang 'em fer all I cares, but I don't sell 'em ter yer. I heerd yer name spoke as I were passin' through this kentry, an' I seen yer dockiment, an' I sets out to return yer kindness, an' thar is ther gerleets; but don't talk dust ter me fer human flesh and bones."

"Well, Joe, I meant but to give you what is your just due."

"Divide it with the sogers of yer regimint, General."

"And the money I have of yours, Joe?"

"Keep a keepin' on it, General, until your heur from me ter give it away."

"But I expect soon to be ordered away from here, Joe."

"Waal, leave it with ther one who takes yer place, subject ter my call."

By this time they had reached the fort, and when those who had known Joe before heard of his arrival, they pressed about him with warm greetings.

"Joe, you have grown as handsome as a picture," said a young officer.

"So I hes been told," was the innocent reply, and it caused a general laugh.

That night Joe slept in the fort, the guest of the general, and when the two were breakfasting together the next morning and the officers were striving to get the young frontiersman to enlist as a scout, the startling news was brought in that the prisoners had all escaped, having dug out from the guard house and under the stockade wall. Squads of cavalry were at once sent in every direction in pursuit of the fugitives, while Joe mounted his horse and started off alone with the remark, "I guesses I'll strike ther trail myself."

Chapter 20

The Bandit Trailer

When Joe left the fort, he did not attempt to strike the trail of the fugitives, as the soldiers had done. He had heard that the outlaws had killed the guard over the horses and mounting the fleetest animals had separated to each go his own way. There were eight of them, and each one had been pursued by a squad of cavalry led by an officer and a good scout.

Joe, however, took his own way to follow them up. Having been a member of their band, while he was plotting their capture, he at once determined to start for their retreat in the hills. He rightly knew that when Bowie Bob had gone down to the settlement to marry pretty Mollie Kenton, he had left at the retreat a couple of pards and plenty of arms and plunder with a score or more of horses. Though passing as a trapper, Bowie Bob was the captain of the gang of horse thieves and murderers, and his handsome face and dashing way had won poor Mollie's heart, for she suspected not his vile character.

Therefore, Joe, knowing what he did, struck straight for the retreat and did not spare his horse in the least. It was a hard six miles' ride, and the sun was nearing the western horizon when Joe hid his tired horse in a ravine and went to the outlaw cabin.

"Hullo, Joe, whar's the rest o' ther boys?" said one of the two men who came out of the cabin as he approached.

It was a wild, desolate spot and where few soldiers would care to follow a foe. A rudely built but stout cabin, a fenced-in lot for stolen horses, and an outhouse for plunder comprised the outlaws' retreat, over which two villainous-looking men held guard during the absence of the rest of the gang.

"They is comin' as fast as they kin," truthfully answered Joe.

"Did ther Cap get fixed?"

"He did, Tom, durned well fixed."

"Waal, she are a prairie flower o' a gal, but she'll shout ef she ever finds out he are what he be. What is yer lookin' fer?"

"I must hev dropped my flask o' speerit, as I comed up from whar I left my critter."

"I'll go an' git it, Joe," volunteered one, only too anxious to get the opportunity to drink half of it and fill it up with water.

"Waal, my critter are dead beat, so I left him in ther pine canyon. Ef it hain't in my saddle pocket, Tom, I guesses I hev lost it."

Tom started off rapidly in search of the treasured "speerit" and hardly had he got out of sight before Joe said, "Maybe I hev a leetle drop in ther old jug, Jim, so let's see." Jim followed him into the cabin to suddenly find his throat in an iron grasp and to see a revolver shoved into his face. "Get down on yer knees, Jim, fer I intends ter tie yer."

"Don't kill me, Joe," whined the wretch, as the hold on his throat was released.

"I don't want ter sile my hands with yer, but I does intend ter keep yer from doin' no more deviltry."

With that, Joe gagged the outlaw and then shoved him, all securely bound as he was, under one of the beds that occupied the four corners

of the cabin. Going to the door, he saw Tom coming up the hill with the flask in his hand. A look at him was sufficient to see that he had been drinking heavily.

"Did yer take any, Tom?"

"No, Joe, fer yer see it are full."

"Yes, it are full o' water, an' you is full o' rum," and Joe grabbed the man in a grasp which, had he been sober, he could not have shaken off. With a dexterity that was remarkable he bound and gagged him also, and he, too, was rolled under the bed to keep his pard company.

Joe then prepared his supper and just as he sat down to eat it, in stepped Bowie Bob. Seeing who it was he confronted, Bowie Bob hastily drew a revolver and covered him, a weapon he had taken from the soldier he had killed. Joe was evidently taken by surprise, for he had not expected that one of the escaped outlaws would be armed, but not a muscle quivered as the bandit captain cried:

"Ha! you are here, traitor Joe, and I've got the dead drop on you."

"Yes, Bowie Bob, I are here an' I are sorry ter see yer is sich a darned fool ter think I'd come alone. Yer hes ther dead drop on me I 'lows, but thar is some ahind yer that covers yer ugly oarkis fer all it are worth."

The outlaw lowered his weapon and turned quickly to look behind him. That was all Joe wanted, for in an instant he turned the tables and covered Bowie Bob with his weapon, while he said coolly, "Drop that weapin, Bob!" The outlaw obeyed. "Now, I guesses you is tired sufficient ter want ter lie down on yer face. Down yer goes!"

With a curse the outlaw obeyed, and to bind and gag him was but the work of a minute and he, too, was hustled out of sight.

Soon after there came the sound of hoofs without, and a voice cried, "Ho, Tom! Ho, Jim! are you abed?"

"No, come in," gruffly answered Joe.

The bolt was removed from the door, which swung open, and a man stepped in with the remark, "Boys, there has been the devil to pay down in the settlement, for--"

"Ther devil's ter pay up heur in the mountings, Josh," said Joe, stepping from behind the door and dealing the man a blow that sent him reeling to the ground.

But before he could follow up his advantage and bind him, two more of the outlaws entered and seeing him, at a glance took in the situation. One was armed with a knife and the other, seizing a chair, rushed upon Joe.

"Back, pards, fer I'd a heap rather yer'd be hung then hev ter kill yer," he shouted.

"We'll take ther chances, yer cussed traitor," cried one. They were the last words he ever uttered, as he fell dead, shot through the heart.

But before Joe could fire a second shot, the man he had been trying to bind seized his arm, and instantly a desperate struggle began for the mastery, the other outlaw rushing to his aid. Hearing the fracas, Bowie Bob and his two bound and gagged companions rolled out from under the bed and made frantic efforts to speak and free themselves, so that the cabin was turned into a pandemonium for a few moments. Joe, however, had the strength of a giant and was as wiry as a cat and rose to his feet with his two foes clinging to him, and striving with all their might to prevent him from using his weapons. With a herculean effort he shook one off, and at once came the flash and crack of his revolvers.

While one man fell dead, the other sang out lustily, "Don't shoot me, Joe."

"I won't, pard, fer it is better thet yer be hung, but yer'll

excuse me ef I ties yer."

And tie him, he did, after which he turned to Bowie Bob and the two others who had rolled out in a vain endeavor to join in the fight, and said, "Bein' as yer rolled out, just roll back agin." They obeyed with an alacrity that pleased Joe greatly and he said, "Thar is four more due an' they'll be along afore day ef ther sogers hasn't tuk 'em."

Before daybreak, one by one the four dropped into the trap and were made prisoners; after which Joe loaded the stolen horses in the corral with his captives and the two dead bodies and set out on his return to the fort, where he arrived in safety.

"Joe, you shall not leave this fort, for I will make you Chief of Scouts," said the delighted general on beholding him and his prisoners.

But in the morning Joe had gone, and none knew when or whither.

Chapter 21

"California Joe"

In the same mysterious way in which he had before disappeared for several years, Joe again was lost sight of after his departure from the outpost the night of his capture of Bowie Bob and his gang. There were stories told of a white man living among the Indians, and some of the soldiers set this down as Joe. Old trappers were wont to spin tales about a hermit who lived in the Rocky Mountains, and the description of him tallied so well with what Joe was that many believed that it must be he.

Again, reports were circulated along the frontier of the doings of a man who went by the euphonious title of "California Joe." It was said that he had guided one of the first parties of miners into what is now the Golden State and had shown them localities where gold was to be found in a way that proved that he must have been there before, though he would never tell any of his comrades whether such was the case or

not. It was stated also that this Gold Guide had been named California Joe and that he had few equals in strength, was a most desperate man in a fight, and could throw a bullet in the exact spot he meant it to go. Those who told camp fire yarns about the mysterious man said he bore innumerable scars upon his body, legs and arms, but that his face was very handsome and unmarred.

One of the scouts who had been at the fort and afterward at the outpost when Joe was there, was seized with the "gold fever" and made his way to California in company with several others. Hearing of a mining camp in the mountains where "dust" was panning out well, they sought its vicinity and arrived just in time to witness a very exciting scene.

It seems that a man had been shot in his "find" the day before and his brother, a mere boy, knowing who his murderer was, had avenged his death. The murderer happened to be the leader of a desperate lot, and they at once swore to avenge their chief and marched in force to the cabin of his slayer. He had heard of their coming and stood boldly at his door, his pistols in hand.

"We've come to hang ye, youngster, an' yer mou't as well drop them weapons," said one.

"I will defend my life, so I warn you off," was the firm reply.

"Come, boys, let's run on him, fer 'twon't do ter cheat ourselves out o' ther fun o' hangin' him by shootin' him." This advice was about to be followed when a man suddenly stepped between the youth and his foes.

"Waal?" said the leader, savagely.

"Waal?" echoed the man.

"What does yer mean?"

"I mean biz ef yer means ter hurt that boy," was the cool reply.

"Waal, we intends ter hang him."

"I guesses not."

"Yer does?"

"I does fer sartin."

"Does yer mean to go agin us?"

"I means that boy is not ter be hurted, Tom Jones. Yer pard kilt his brother an' ther boy shooted back in square fight, an' now yer says hang him, an' I says no."

"Waal, we'll do it ef we hes ter kill yer ter git ter him," was the stern response.

"I guess not."

With these words the man whipped out two revolvers in the twinkling of an eye and covered the crowd. Some one fired, who no one knew, and that set the ball going, and in six seconds a score of shots were fired and several men lay dead in their tracks, and the man and the youth he defended stood in the door of the cabin unhurt, while their assailants had fallen back before an aim that never failed.

Such was the scene that the scout and his pards witnessed as they entered the mining camp and one asked:

"Who are thet terror on legs, pard?"

"Thar pilgrim what made thet cold meat just now?" inquired the one addressed.

"Yes."

"They was durned fools ter push him ter it."

"But who are he?"

"Ther squarest man in this heur camp, ther man who guided ther boys ter find ther dust heur an' don't care a durn fer diggin' it hisse'f."

"But what are his name?"

"Waal, yer has ter ax me suthin' more easier, pard stranger."

"Don't he hev no name?"

"Yas, but he don't give it away, but we calls him here in ther diggin's California Joe. Mebbe yer hev heerd o' him, stranger pards?"

"Yas, I has heerd o' him an' knows him," and the scout who had turned miner went up and renewed his acquaintance with Joe, who greeted him most cordially, and added:

"I is glad ter see yer agin, an' ther boys will give yer a blow-out ternight. It are a pity them fellers was sich durned fools, fer they'll miss a good time"; and those he referred to as the ones who would "miss a good time" were the men he had killed only a few minutes before in defending his young pard.

Chapter 22

Joe Visits Old Friends

From the time Joe received the prefix of "California" to his name, he began to be known from the Missouri to the Pacific, where at times he was a trapper on the streams of the border, and again a scout and Indian trailer with the advance guard of the army. Then he was heard of in the mines, and again haunted the settlements for awhile with apparently no aim in life.

At length he departed from his favorite haunts one day and several weeks after he rode up to the door of a comfortable cabin in one of the most delightful of the border settlements. It was Sunday afternoon, and before the door sat the settler, a fine-looking man with hair tinged with gray, while near him was his wife, a handsome woman of forty with a sad face. Several children were playing near the door, and altogether the scene was a home-like one.

"Dismount, stranger, and stop with us, for night is coming on soon," cheerily called out the settler as California Joe drew rein a short

distance off.

"Thet are what I hev come for, Pard Reynolds," was the quiet response of Joe, as he dismounted and walked toward the cabin.

The settler saw before him a tall, handsome man with bearded face and long, curling black hair. He was clad in buckskin hunting shirt and leggings stuck in the tops of high boots, while he wore a black sombrero turned up in front.

"You know me then, stranger?" said Mr. Reynolds.

"I does, or most rather did, pard, but thet were long ago."

"And yet, strange to say, I can not recall you, my friend; but you are welcome, and this is my wife, who will give you greeting too."

"I know thet, pard, fer she are as squar' as you is, and thet are shoutin' Gospil; but whar are little Maggie?"

Instantly a shadow fell over the faces of the settler and his wife at this question, and the former said sadly, "She is gone, alas!"

"Dead?" asked California Joe in a whisper.

"No and yes, for we know not what has become of her. One day, as was her wont, she went out hunting with her little rifle, and since then we have never seen her."

"Thar is streams about heur?"

"Yes, but she could swim well."

"Were thar Injuns about?"

"Yes, Indians' signs were seen about that time, and we have heard that the Cheyennes have some captive children among their tribes."

"Waal, it may be so, an' ef it are, I'll find out. I guesses I won't stop ternight, Pard Reynolds, but go on, fer I wants ter find leetle Maggie."

"But, my friend, who are you that takes such a kind interest in our poor, lost, little girl?" asked Mrs. Reynolds, laying her hand upon Joe's

arm and looking up into his honest face with eyes filled with tears.

"I are Joe."

"Joe? Our Joe?"

"Yas, I are Joe; California Joe they calls me now."

Words can not describe the mingled amazement and joy of the poor parents at again meeting the one who, as a boy long years before, had saved them and the train from massacre.

"And you are that famous man, 'California Joe,' of whom we have heard so much?" said Mr. Reynolds.

"Yes, I are California Joe and I hes come nosin' 'round heur ter see yer all an' leetle Maggie, an' I fotched her a leetle present ter wear round her putty neck. It are dust I dug myself out o' ther mines."

He drew out a necklace as he spoke, of nuggets of solid gold, which he had made into a necklace. "Now yer keep it fer her, fer I'll be back with her afore long," And all entreaties to remain longer, California Joe refused, but started at once upon the duty he set himself to perform.

Chapter 23

The Cheyennes' Ransom

In an Indian village - Cheyennes - for one long year had languished poor little Maggie Reynolds. A child of twelve at the time of her capture, she had been made the slave of the squaw of the head chief, Feather Face, and but for her plucky spirit and hope some day of rescue, the girl would have died under the life of drudgery and abuse.

One day she beheld a paleface ride into the village. At that time there was a patched up peace between the Cheyennes and the whites, but Maggie had not seen any of the latter bold enough to come to the Indian camp. She eyed the stranger curiously as he came directly to the tepee of Feather Face, accompanied by several warriors.

"My red brother knows me," said the white man.

"Yes, the Feather Face has seen the paleface brave," was the reply.

"The hatchet is buried now, but the Feather Face would like to kill me." The Indian bowed a ready assent. "He has here a paleface pappoose. Will he sell her to me?"

"The Feather Face will sell her for the ears of the white warrior," was the fiendish reply.

"Good!" was the smiling response. "Let him take his scalping knife and cut off my ears and then give to me the pappoose. If the Feather Face lies, then the soldiers will be ready to come upon him and burn his village."

"The white warrior has spoken. The Feather Face does not speak with a crooked tongue."

"The Feather Face is a natural liar," was the retort, and the stranger stepped up to the chief and bared his head by removing his sombrero, while he added, "But I warn the Cheyenne not to break faith with me."

Poor Maggie heard and saw all and sat crouching in the tepee, not daring to utter a word. But as she saw the cruel chief take his scalping knife and seize the ear of the man to claim his ransom for her, she cried:

"No, no, let me stay here, for I am happy here; I do not wish to go home!"

"That are a screamin' lie, Maggie," said California Joe, for he it was, and turning again to the chief he continued, "Injun, do yer earvin'."

With a satisfied grunt Feather Face took the left ear in his fingers and skillfully sliced the outer rim off clean. California Joe did not wince, but said coolly, while Maggie gave a cry of terror, "Now, t'other one, Injun." The other ear was then cut in like manner, and Joe made a low bow with the remark, "Thankee, Injun. Some day I hopes ter do as

much for you."

"Come, Maggie." He took the weeping girl and placing her upon his horse, sprang into his saddle and rode out of the Indian camp, leaving the chief laughing with fiendish delight over the ransom he had received for the captive girl. Two weeks after his departure from the Reynolds home he returned at night, and Maggie accompanied him.

"Go and knock at ther door, Maggie, while I stake ther critters out," he said.

The young girl obeyed, and great was the joy of her parents when she appeared before them. But in vain was it that they looked for California Joe, for, though he staked the horse, he had given her out upon the prairie, he had mounted his own animal once more and mysteriously disappeared.

Chapter 24

Joe's Fate

Kind reader, it is only necessary to say that California Joe continued his wanderings about the border, daily winning greater fame as a plainsman and Indian fighter, until the promise he made Feather Face to "do as much for him" was faithfully kept and more so, for he took that chief's scalp instead of his ears in a fight he had with him one day after guiding a party of soldiers to his village to punish him for slashing about with "the hatchet" when it was supposed to be buried.

When the Civil War broke out California Joe went with the Union Army as one of a band of border sharpshooters. That his deadly aim did not fail him in army service is proved from the fact that a war correspondent of Harper's Weekly sent a report of his having "picked off" a Confederate sharpshooter at a distance of fifteen hundred yards, when even artillery had failed to dislodge him.

After the war, in which he won the name of a long-range dead-shot, California Joe returned to the border and one day came near losing his life as he was on his way to make a visit to the Reynolds cabin, where he had not been since the night he had carried Maggie back to her parents. He was riding along the river bank, when suddenly he beheld a canoe and an occupant and turned just as a rifle was leveled at him. He spoke just in time to save his life. Since Joe related the story of that meeting with Maggie Reynolds, for she it was, to Captain Jack Crawford, the Poet Scout of the Black Hills, and he has told it in rhyme, I will give my readers a few of the verses in their own pathetic words. John W. Crawford, known as "Captain Jack," was a famous border ranger and the companion of California Joe and Buffalo Bill in many a wild scene of frontier life.

"California Joe"

By Captain Jack Crawford
"The Poet Scout"

"Well, mates, I don't like stories,
Nor am I going to act
A part around the camp fire
That ain't a truthful fact.
So light your pipes and listen;
I'll tell you, let me see,
I believe it was in '44,
From that till '53.
You've all heard tell of Bridger;
I used to run with Jim
And many a hard day scouting
I've had alongside of him.
Well, once near old Fort Reno
A trapper used to dwell;
They called him old Cap Reynolds,
The scouts all knew him well.
One day as we were camping
Way down on Powder River,
We killed a calf of buffalo
And cooked a slice of liver.
While feasting there contented
We heard three shots or four,
Put out the fire and listened
And heard a dozen more.
We knew that old Cap Reynolds
Had moved his traps up there,

So picking up our rifles
 And fixing on our gear
 We mounted quick as lightning;
 To save was our desire.
 Too late, the painted heathen
 Had set the house afire.
 We tied our horses quickly
 And waded up the stream
 And there beside the water
 We heard a muffled scream,
 And down among the bushes
 A little girl did lie.
 I picked her up and whispered,
 'I'll save you or I'll die.'
 Oh, what a ride, Old Bridger
 To cover our retreat.
 Sometimes the child would whisper
 In a voice so low and sweet,
 'Poor papa, God will take him
 To mama up above.
 There's no one left to love me,
 There's no one left to love.'
 The little girl was thirteen
 And I was twenty-two.
 Says I, 'I'll be your father
 And love you just as true.'
 She nestled close beside me,
 Her hazel eyes so bright
 Looked up and made me happy,
 Though close pursued that night.
 A month had come and Maggie,
 We called her Hazel Eye,
 In truth was going to leave us,
 Was going to say good-bye.
 Her Uncle Mad Jack Reynolds,
 Reported long since dead,
 Had come to claim my angel,
 His brother's child he said.
 What could I say; we parted,
 Mad Jack was growing old.
 I handed him a banknote
 And all I had in gold.
 He rode away at sunrise;
 I went a mile or two
 And parting said, 'We'll meet again,
 May God watch over you.'
 Beside a laughing, dancing brook
 A little cabin stood,
 As weary with a long day's scout
 I espied it in the wood.
 The pretty valley fringed beyond,
 The mountains towered above,
 And 'neath the willow bank I heard
 The cooing of a dove.
 It was like one grand panorama,
 The brook was plainly seen
 Like a long thread of silver
 In a cloth of lovely green.

The laughter of the water,
 The cooing of the dove,
 Was like some painted picture,
 Some well-told tale of love.
 While drinking in its grandeur
 And resting in my saddle
 I thought I heard a ripple
 Like the dipping of a paddle,
 And turning toward the eddy,
 A strange sight met my view,
 A maiden with a rifle
 In a little bark canoe.
 She stood up in the center,
 The rifle to her eye,
 I thought just for a moment
 My time had come to die.
 I doffed my hat and told her,
 If it was all the same,
 To drop her little shooter,
 For I was not her game.
 She dropped the deadly weapon
 And jumped from the canoe.
 'I beg your pardon,' she whispered,
 'I thought you were a Sioux.
 Your long hair and your buckskins
 Looked warrior like and rough.
 My bead was spoiled by sunshine
 Or I'd killed you sure enough.'
 'Perhaps it had been better
 You'd dropped me then,' said I,
 'For surely such an angel
 Would bear me to the sky.'
 She blushed and dropped her lashes,
 Her cheeks were crimson red,
 One half-sly glance she gave me
 And then hung down her head.
 I took her little hand in mine,
 She wondered what it meant,
 But then she drew it naught away,
 But rather seemed content.
 We stood beside the mossy bank,
 Her eyes began to fill.
 The brook was rippling at our feet,
 The dove was cooing still.
 I soothed her golden tresses,
 Her eyes looked up in mine,
 She seemed to doubt, but whispered,
 'It was such a long, long time,
 Strong arms were thrown around me,
 I'll save you or I'll die.'
 I clasped her to my bosom,
 My long lost hazel eye.
 The rapture of the moment
 Was almost heaven to me.
 I kissed her mid her teardrops,
 Her innocence and glee.
 Her heart near mine was beating
 When sobbing she said,

'My true, my brave preserver,
 They told me you were dead;
 But how I prayed for you, Joe,
 For you who saved my life,
 That God would send an angel
 To guide you through all strife.
 He who claimed me from you,
 My uncle good and true,
 Now sick in yonder cabin,
 Has talked so much of you.
 "If Joe were living, darling,"
 He said to me last night,
 "He would care for Maggie
 When God puts out my light."
 We found the old man sleeping,
 Hush, Maggie, let him rest.'
 The sun was slowly setting
 In the far-off golden west.
 Although we talked in whispers,
 He opened wide his eyes.
 'A dream, a dream,' he murmured,
 'Alas, a dream of lies.'
 She drifted like a shadow
 To where the old man lay.
 'You had a dream, dear Uncle,
 Another dream today.'
 'Oh, yes, I saw an angel
 As pure as mountain snow
 And near her, at my bedside
 Stood California Joe.'
 'I'm not an angel, dear Uncle,
 That you know;
 My face and hands are black,
 My skin is not like snow.
 But listen while I tell you,
 For I have news to cheer,
 Hazel eye is happy,
 For Joe is truly here.'
 And then a few days after,
 The old man said to me,
 'Joe boy, she are an angel
 And good as angels be;
 For three long months she's watched
 And trapped and nursed me too.
 God bless you, boy, I believe it,
 She's safe along with you.'
 The sun was slowly setting
 When Mag, my wife, and I
 Rode slowly down the valley,
 She'd a tear drop in her eye.
 'One year ago today, Joe,
 I see the mossy grave,
 We laid him 'neath the daisies,
 My uncle, good and brave.'
 Our loves were newly kindled
 While sitting by the stream
 Where two hearts were united
 In love's sweet, happy dream."

The blushing young huntress being Maggie Reynolds, dear reader, it need not be said that the romance of her life and that of California Joe ended in the reality of matrimony.

In his book, *My Life on the Plains*, General Custer thus speaks of California Joe:

"In concentrating the cavalry, which had hitherto been operating in small bodies, it was found that each detachment brought with it the scouts who had been serving with them. When I joined the command I found quite a number of these scouts attached to various portions of the cavalry, but each acting separately. For the purpose of organization it was deemed best to unite them in a separate detachment under command of one of their own number. Being unacquainted with the merits of any of them, the selection of a chief had to be made somewhat at random.

"There was one among their number whose appearance would have attracted the notice of even a casual observer. He was a man about forty years of age, perhaps older, over six feet in height, and possessing a well-proportioned frame. His head was covered with a luxuriant crop of almost black hair, strongly inclined to curl, and so long as to fall carelessly over his shoulders. His face, at least so much of it as was not concealed by the long, waving, brown beard and mustache, was full of intelligence and pleasant to look upon. His eye was undoubtedly handsome, black and lustrous, with an expression of kindness and mildness combined. On his head was generally to be seen, whether awake or asleep, a high sombrero or black slouch hat. A soldier's overcoat with its large circular cape, and a pair of trousers with the legs tucked into the tops of his long boots usually constituted the outside make-up of the man whom I selected as chief scout. He was known by the euphonious title of 'California Joe.' No other name seemed ever to have been given him and no other name appeared to be necessary. This was the man whom, upon a short acquaintance, I decided to appoint as chief of the scouts.

"As the four detachments already referred to were to move as soon as it was dark, it was desirable that the scouts should be at once organized and assigned. So, sending for California Joe, I informed him of his promotion and what was expected of him and his men. After this official portion of the interview had been completed, it seemed proper to Joe's mind that a more intimate acquaintance between us should be cultivated, as we had never met before. His first interrogatory, addressed to me in furtherance of this idea, was frankly put as follows:

"See hyer, Ginerel, in order thet we hev no misonderstandin' I'd jist like ter ax ye a few questions. First, are ye an ambulance man er a hoss man?"

"Professing ignorance of his meaning, I requested him to explain.

"I mean," said he, "do yer b'lieve in catchin' Injuns in ambulances or on hossback?"

"Still assuming ignorance, I replied, 'Well, Joe, I believe in catching Indians wherever we can find them, whether they are in ambulances or on horseback.'

"'Thet ain't what I'm a-drivin' at,' he responded. 'S'pose you'er after Injuns and really want to hev a tussel with 'em, would yer start after 'em on hossback, er would yer climb inter a ambulance and be hauled after 'em? Thet's ther p'int I'm a-headin' fer.'

"I answered that I would prefer the method on horseback, provided I really desired to catch the Indians; but if I wished them to catch me, I would adopt the ambulance system of attack.

"'You've hit the nail squar' on the head,' said he. 'I've bin with 'em on the plains whar they started out after Injuns on wheels jist as ef they war goin' to a town funeral in ther States, an' they stood 'bout as much chance uv catchin' Injuns ez a six-mule team would uv catchin' a pack of thievin' coyotes, jist as much. Why, thet sort uv work is only fun fer the Injuns; they don't want anything better. Yer ort to've see'd how they peppered it to us, and we a-doin' o' nuthin' all the time. Sum uv 'em wuz afraid the mules was goin' to stampede and run off with ther train and all our forage an' grub, but thet wuz impossible, fer besides the big loads uv corn an' bacon an' baggage the wagons hed in 'em, thar war from eight to a dozen infantry men piled into 'em besides. Yer ort to hev heard the quartermaster in charge uv the train tryin' to drive infantry men out uv the wagons and git them into ther fight. I 'spect he was a Irishman, by his talk, fer he said to 'em: "Git out uv thim wagons; git out uv thim wagons. Yez'll hev me tried fer disobedience uv orders fer marchin' tin min in a wagon whin I've orders fer but ait."'"

California Joe was a scout for General Custer from 1868 till 1872. He was acquainted and scouted with the following scouts: Colorado Charlie, Texas Jack, Captain Jack, Wild Bill, and Buffalo Bill.

California Joe was killed, as was his friend, Wild Bill, by the hand of an assassin. He was seated in front of his cabin at Red Cloud, Dakota, on December 5, 1876, cleaning his dearly loved weapons, when some foe fired at him from an ambush and shot him through the heart. Who that unseen assassin was, no one ever knew, and the secret will doubtless remain unknown unless the "still, small voice of conscience" drives the murderer to confess the crime some day, for most truly is it said that "murder will out."

By Col. Charles D. Randolph
("Buckskin Bill")

A famous scout, a poet, too,
And a frontier's man
Through and through.

In verse and rhyme, in humorist
 strains
He wrote about his pards o' the
 plains.

Moses Milner was his pard,
you know,
The famous scout,
California Joe.

They trapped and hunted
in the West,
And scouted and guided
with the rest.

From the Black Hills of Dakota,
From the Missouri to the Platte,
They knew every trail,
Canyon, hill and flat.

— — — — —

"California Joe"

(Moses E. Milner, The Mysterious Plainsman)

By Col. Charles D. Randolph
("Buckskin Bill")

Who was the man of mystery,
Out on the western plain,
Who scouted for the government
And guided the wagon train?

Who was the famous plainsman,
Chief of Scouts for Custer, Jenney, Crook,
Who prospected in the Black Hills
And dangerous trips he took?

Who was this frontiersman,
Who fought Cheyenne, Sioux and Crow?
Who was Moses Milner? Why he
Was "California Joe."

"Wild Bill"

(James Butler Hickok,
The Quickest and Best Shot in the West)

By Col. Charles D. Randolph
("Buckskin Bill")

Beneath the cliffs of White Rocks
On Mount Moriah rests Wild Bill,
A famous scout of the early West.
In the Black Hills he was killed.

In a gulch below is Deadwood,
The pines are all around,
And "Bill" is resting, waiting,
In the happy-hunting-ground.

The West is changed and different,
It hardly looks the same.
The Black Hills were wild and wooly
When Wild Bill Hickok won his fame.

"Buffalo Bill"

(William Frederick Cody,
Great Buffalo Hunter, Scout, and Wild West Showman)

By Col. Charles D. Randolph
("Buckskin Bill")

His saddle now is empty -
But his memory is living still.
He was a Colonel in the army
And was known as "Buffalo Bill."

He worked for the Government
And was a noted scout.
He died out in Denver
And rests on Mount Look Out.

He dressed in high boots and buckskin,
Red shirt and broad Stetson hat,
And killed thousands of buffaloes
Down along the Platte.

It was with Miles out scouting
He met Custer and California Joe;
And just a few years later
We find him running
A great Wild West Show.

He was in the theatrical business
 Along with Texas Jack and Wild Bill.
 They called their play "Scouts of the Plains" -
 They had that western thrill.

He later combined with Pawnee Bill,
 They showed the East and West.
 His saddle now is empty
 And the old scout's laid to rest.

"Texas Jack"

(John B. Omohundro, Famous Scout of the Southwest)

By Col. Charles D. Randolph
 ("Buckskin Bill")

I met him in the saddle
 In the days way, way back,
 J. B. Omohundro, "Texas Jack."

He was a scout for Custer,
 Sherman, Sheridan, Miles and Crook.
 He was a brave scout, knew every nook.

He dressed in buckskin,
 A brace of guns he packed,
 J. B. Omohundro, "Texas Jack."

He was out there when it wasn't
 Safe to venture through,
 Unless you were a brave scout
 Through and through.

He came from the Lone Star State,
 His hair was long and black,
 J. B. Omohundro, "Texas Jack."

Wild Bill

Texas Jack

Buffalo Bill

(Newspaper clippings)

During California Joe's residence in the Black Hills country, he met and became quite a pal of Capt. Jack Crawford, known the country over as the "Post-Scout." Capt. Jack was an intimate friend of the writer many years ago, and we corresponded quite regularly. At that time he was on the lecture platform reading his poems and giving entertainments at Chautauquas and on Y. M. C. A. courses. Capt. Jack passed away at his home in New York City, February 28, 1917, of pneumonia. A treasured volume in the writer's library is an autographed copy of Capt. Jack's poems, presented in 1909.

Captain Jack has the following to say about California Joe:

"About the middle of April, 1876, I received a note from California Joe, who then had a fine ranch on Rapid Creek, and was trying to induce newcomers to settle there and build a town. I was then at Deadwood. Joe's letter was written in lead pencil, and barring his bad spelling, ran as follows:

"'Rapid, April 10, 1876.

"'My dear Jack:

"'If you can be spared from Custer, come over and bring Jule and Frank Smith with you. The reds have been raising merry old hell, and after wounding our herder and a miner named Sherwood, got away with eight head of stock - my old Bally with the rest. There are only ten of us here all told, and I think if you can come with the two boys, we can lay for them at the lower falls and gobble them the next time. Answer by bearer if you can't come. And send me fifty rounds of cartridges for the Sharps (big 50). Hoping this will find you with your top-knot still waving, I remain as ever

"'Your pal,

"'Joe.'

"I immediately saw Major Wynkoop, commanding the Rangers, and got his permission to leave, and arrived at Rapid Creek the following night, with four comrades. After two days and nights watching at the lower falls, Jules Seminole, one of my scouts (a Cheyenne), came in at dusk and informed us that there were between twenty and thirty Indians encamped at Box Elder, about twenty miles away, and that they were coming from the direction of the Big Cheyenne and would probably move to Rapid during the night.

"About three o'clock next morning Joe went up to his cabin and there started a big log fire; also two or three other fires in other cabins. These cabins were over a mile from where we were in ambush, while our horses were all picketed a quarter of a mile down the creek, which was narrow at its point of entrance from the prairie, but widened into a beautiful river half a mile up.

"Just as day was breaking, one of the Indians was discovered by Frank Smith wading up the creek. Frank reported to Joe and I, and Joe remarked, 'Let him go; he will soon signal the others to follow.' In fifteen minutes more the shrill bark of a coyote proved Joe's judgment to be correct. Twenty-three well-armed Indians - all Sioux - rode up along the willow bank in Indian file. There were seventeen of us - Bob Swearingen and Ned Baker, two old miners, having joined us the night before. We had six men on one side of the creek near an opening which we believed the Indians would break for on receiving our fire from the opposite side.

"We took aim as best we could in the gray of the morning, and fired nearly together. Then, before they could recover, we gave them another volley, and leaving our cover, followed on foot those who did not stay with us. We were disappointed in their taking the opening, but the boys were in fair range and did good work, killing one, wounding two and unhorsing three others, who took to the woods. We got fifteen ponies. Our first fire never touched a horsehair, but emptied several saddles. Out of the twenty-three Indians, fifteen escaped. Joe killed three himself with his big Sharps rifle, the last one being nearly five hundred yards away when he fired from a rest off Frank Smith's shoulder. Joe had a piece taken out of his left thigh; Franklin was wounded in the left arm; and the writer slightly scratched near the guard of the right arm. Nobody was seriously hurt, and we had eight scalps to crown our victory."

"California Joe!" What a wealth of romance, adventure, mystery, humor and pathos is wrapped up in his well-remembered name!

What stirring tales of the old frontier could be related around a blazing camp fire, if, among the hosts of great frontier characters who have "cashed in" and passed to their reward in the happy hunting grounds of Oblivion, old California Joe could step into the firelight, with his stubby briarwood pipe ablaze, and recount some of the stirring adventures through which he passed; or, if Capt. Jack Crawford, the famous "poet-scout," could arise, and, amid the crackle of the embers, recite his well-known poem, "California Joe!"

Captain Jack Crawford

Colonel Cody in the costume worn at the time
of the great hunt for the Grand Duke Alexis.

I'm Campin' Here in Deadwood

By Col. Charles D. Randolph
("Buckskin Bill")

I'm campin' here in Deadwood,
The resting place o' Wild Bill Hickok
And Crook's scout, Calamity Jane,
The place I used to winter
When I scouted on the plain.

I'm campin' here in Deadwood,
The best town in the hills,
Where Sitting Bull and Camanche Bill
Filled these parts full o' thrills.

I'm campin' here in Deadwood,
The place ain't wild no more.
It's different than it was
In old-time Injun war.

I'm campin' here in Deadwood,
Waitin' for the parade to come,
The boys o' '76 a marchin',
Oh, I hear the fife and drum.

I'm campin' here in Deadwood,
It's an old-time camp, you know,
I used to spend the winter here
With California Joe.

I'm campin' here in Deadwood,
And I remember one time still
When I rode in here late one night
With my old pard, Buffalo Bill.

I'm campin' here in Deadwood,
It's forty years about
Since I camped here with Captain Jack,
The famous "Poet Scout."

I'm campin' here in Deadwood,
Like I did in days way back
When I scouted with "Doc" Carver,
Colorado Charlie and Texas Jack.

I'm campin' here in Deadwood,
Where I used to pack the mail
When I drove stage in the early days;
Now, I'm on the sunset trail.

I'm campin' here in Deadwood,
And I just heard from Diamond Dick;
He's sorry he can't be here,
As he's doctoring up the sick.

I'm campin' here in Deadwood,
With my old pard "Deadwood Dick,"
Who guarded gold and scouted Sioux
When redskins and bordermen were thick.

Colonel Charles D. Randolph

"Buckskin Bill"

The Black Hills

By Col. Charles D. Randolph
("Buckskin Bill")

I've roamed all through the West,
Where wildest nature thrills,
And now I am campin'
In the dreary Black Hills.

Where spruce and oak and cedar
Are growing all around;
Where once old Sitting Bull
Called this his stompin' ground.

Among fir trees and redwood,
I'm campin' in the pine;
I love this place, I tell you,
The Black Hills are sure fine.

I met "Deadwood Dick" at Whitewood,
And at Rapid City I met "Silent Cal."
I'm campin' here in Deadwood
With an old-time pal.

I'm goin' next to Belleforche
And on to the Bear Lodge Breaks,
And visit all the beauty spots
Before I pull up stakes.

I'll not miss a gulch, or stream,
A canyon or a trail,
And I'll take in the Big Deadwood Round Up
And hear the Redskin wail.

And while my camp fire's blazin',
I'll think o' days gone by -
I'll hear the coyotes yelpin'
And I'll hear a panther cry.

(Clipping)

Deadwood's Gold Rush Pageant

Deadwood's annual celebration of the days of '76 was unusually picturesque this year. A duplicate of the mining settlement that existed in the seventies at Deadwood Gulch was constructed, and in it a pageant showing characters and life of the frontier days was staged. The mining settlement had the customary dance halls, saloons, gambling dens, and other resorts of the period. Among the characters participating in the pageant were Wild Bill, Calamity Jane, Colorado Charley, and California Joe. Pioneers of the frontier days assisted the directors of the celebration in making the details accurate.

Additional information regarding the identity and death of

"California Joe" has come to light. The following is taken from a letter which appeared some time ago in "Adventure," and was written by Joe E. Milner, a grandson of California Joe:

"'California Joe' was my grandfather on my father's side of relationship and his true and real name was Moses Embree Milner. He was born near Stanford, Kentucky, on May 3, 1829. He was foully murdered at Fort Robinson, Nebraska, on October 29, 1876, was buried in the post cemetery at Fort Robinson, and his remains still lie there. These are the facts of the case as I received them from the Secretary of the War Department some years ago; also from his two sons, George Milner and Charley Milner of this city, who were in the Black Hills at the time of his death.

"I was fortunate some years ago in meeting a man by the name of Ritchie, who was in Fort Robinson the morning of California Joe's death. He knew California Joe very well and he helped to lay him in his final resting place. My two uncles, Charley and George Milner, were a hundred miles from Fort Robinson when their father, California Joe, was killed. Mr. Ritchie's story of California Joe's death is backed up for the actual truth as to the facts, by my two uncles, who came to Fort Robinson shortly after their father's death.

"California Joe was killed by a young man whose name was Thomas Neukum, who went to the Black Hills in 1875. He was born and reared in Gervais, Oregon, and was in his early twenties when he killed California Joe.

"California Joe knew Neukum in Deadwood and would have killed him there, but he told Neukum he was not worth killing, and spared his life. Neukum belonged to that same gang that killed "Wild Bill" Hickok.

"On October 28, 1876, in the evening, California Joe and Thomas Neukum had a row at Fort Robinson, but they quieted down and shook hands and called the row settled. California Joe, taking Neukum at his word, paid no more attention to him. Several half-breed Indians, who did not like California Joe, went to Neukum and told him that California Joe was going to kill him on sight, which was not the truth.

"The next morning, October 29, 1876, California Joe was standing half bent over, explaining something to two Sioux Indians. Neukum was hid up behind a wood-pile on a bank about fifteen feet high and about thirty feet away, with an army carbine. As California Joe bent over with his back to Neukum, Neukum fired, the ball striking California Joe in the left shoulder and coming out in his right breast. California Joe threw up his hands and hollered to one of the soldiers near there by the name of Pat. 'Pat, I am shot. Who shot me?' These were his last words. He walked one hundred yards to his cabin and fell dead in the doorway.

"Neukum was put into the guardhouse and fourteen days later released. He went to Deadwood and, bragging about it, was again put in jail. By this time California Joe's two sons, Charley and George Milner, had got word of their father's death. Charley Milner got into Deadwood

just one-half hour after Neukum was released from jail.

"Neukum shortly after was shot to death for the foul and cowardly murder of one of the makers of frontier history. He begged for his life when cornered and caught, but his pleadings did no good and he lies in an unmarked grave in the Black Hills.

"California Joe was a great friend of Captain Jack Crawford, Wild Bill Hickok, Buffalo Bill, Texas Jack, and Colorado Charley. I could write a great deal more of him and tell many things that have never yet come into print. I was personally acquainted with Buffalo Bill and he told me he knew California Joe in Hays City, Kansas, several years before he was killed at Fort Robinson.

"At the time of California Joe's death he was 47 years, 5 months, and 21 days old. I think this letter will clear up without a doubt California Joe's death, birthplace and age. As he was my grandfather, I surely ought to know."

"California Joe"

By "Captain Jack" Crawford
(The Poet Scout - of the Black Hills)

The sun sets red on the graves of the dead
Where wilderness once was king.
The jack pines sigh o'er the hero's head
And solace to him bring.

This is the letter Joseph E. Milner, the grandson of Moses E. Milner, better known as California Joe, received from the War Department:

"War Department, Office of the Quartermaster General

"Washington, D. C.

"In reply refer to QM 293-A-C - Milner, Moses E.

"November 24, 1924.

"Mr. Joe E. Milner,

"410 Fifth St., Apartment 51,

"Portland, Oregon.

"Dear Sir:

"In reply to your letter of November 4, 1924, relative to the location of the grave of your grandfather, Moses E. Milner (California Joe), the Quartermaster General desires you to be advised that the records show that Scout Milner is buried in Grave 14, Post Cemetery, Fort Robinson, Nebraska. A small headstone bearing the following inscription marks the grave:

Moses Milner

Scout

"The records show the remains interred in the adjoining graves are those of Sallie Munroe, wife of Sergeant Munroe, Troop A. 9th Cavalry, and Mattie Grayson, wife of Corporal Grayson, Troop E. 9th Cavalry.

"Very truly yours,

"R. P. Harbold

"Major Q.M.C.,

"Assistant."

Calamity Jane Burke, a Woman Gambler
Well-known in the Mining Camps of the
Old West

Calamity Jane, famous frontier character,
was a scout for General George A. Crook, in the
Indian campaigns of the West. She was a great
friend of Texas Jack, Buffalo Bill, Colorado Charley,
Captain Jack, Wild Bill, and California Joe.

**Buffalo Bill Electrifies Audience
By Dashing on Stage with His Old Charger**

"California Joe"

By

Raymond W. Thorp

Far back in that distant age referred to by historians as "the early Sixteen Hundreds," there came to these shores from Yorkshire, England, a family known by the staunch old English name of Milner. This family, fresh from old world scenes, belonged to that adventurous class of people known as "wilderness breakers," numerous clans of which served to blaze the way into the then great wilderness border country of the new eastern section of the United States. The elder Milner men of this Yorkshire clan clove to the fighting tendencies exhibited by those sturdy sons of England who first set foot on the American shores of the broad Atlantic. Therefore we find them in the midst of the two great wars between their adopted country and the land of their birth, the War of the Revolution and the succeeding great battles of the War of 1812, when white man and red of different clans and nations joined in the kindling fires of war and multitudinous hatreds of advancing races.

As in all history of our great country, we find the frontier men advancing ever westward; so did these Milners come, settling first in what is now the mountainous state of West Virginia, later taking up the torch and banner and carrying them, like Daniel Boone and other famous frontiersmen of those days, across the first great borderland into the region that now is Kentucky, the dark and bloody battle ground of the outflung whites and savage nations.

Kentucky was, in the latter part of the eighteenth century and the first part of the nineteenth, considered the mecca of the adventurous, a homeland for the hardy-hearted and courageous, and in Kentucky it was that Milner, senior, finally settled his family amid the towering mountains, singing streams, and whispering forests. It was in Kentucky, near the present city of Stanford, that Moses E. Milner, the later

famous plainsman and Indian fighter with whom this story deals, known far and wide as "California Joe," was born on May 8, 1829.

He had also a brother and a sister born there, George and Eliza, respectively. The date of George Milner's death may never be ascertained, but in the brief genealogy of the family it has been recorded that at an early age he married and later settled in the State of Georgia, where he died, leaving offspring who later married and settled in that section, so that now the Milner name is commonly known throughout the entire South. Eliza, the sister, married a Mr. Stuart, and this lady of great age is now alive and makes her residence in northern California.

As for Moses E. Milner, or "Mose" as he was known, this lad was of a roving disposition. At the early age of fourteen years he slipped away from the parental roof-tree and spent two adventurous years roaming throughout the South, at the end of which time he returned to Standford, finding that he was just in time to leave for Missouri with his family. Milner, senior, had been taken up with the idea of moving farther west, from the viewpoint that all old frontiersmen held that "it don't do to stay in a place after she has become too settled."

In Clay County, Missouri, where the Milners took up their abode, young "Mose" grew to manhood, tall, straight as an arrow, powerfully built, with a love for horses and guns, the woods and the prairies. Romance struck him just as he reached manhood's estate, and at the age of twenty-one he married a belle of Clay County, Miss Nancy Emma Watts, thirteen years of age and formerly of east Tennessee.

Nancy had one sister, Lucy, who later journeyed back to the old homestead in Tennessee and married a gentleman named Ballard. A rare old name that, yet still common in Tennessee, where many branches of the family of California Joe still reside.

Most folks figure on settling down, at least for a time after marriage, but not "Mose." The next day after Miss Nancy Emma Watts

had been made his wife, this adventurous, young westerner started across the plains, infested with hostile Indians, to the fabled land of gold, California. So Moses E. Milner became a "forty-niner," one of the first of the across-the-continent gold-hunters. A desperate yet romantic honeymoon, enhanced by a two-thousand mile pilgrimage with a very young girl wife across the untracked wilderness of the Great American Desert, brought him in the late fall of 1850 to the gold diggings of the famous Sutter's Fort, where a short time before Mr. Marshall had stumbled over and picked up a reddish stone which had afterwards set the world on fire.

But gold-mining was too tame for young Milner. Accordingly, after two years of fairly successful effort, in 1852 he again moved overland, this time to Benton County, Oregon, where he invested his gains in improving 640 acres of land which he and his girl wife homesteaded from the Government. This same tract is yet known as the "Old Milner Homestead," and a part of it is occupied by Wren Station, about nine miles from the present Corvallis, Oregon. It was here that Moses Milner's four sons were born. Besides ranching, he apportioned a part of his time to various money-making, roving expeditions, among which was a freighting operation between Benton County and the mines in the southern section of Oregon and in the northern part of the State of California.

In the spring of 1855 the young man, now a plainsman and mountain man in every sense of the word, hardened to the saddle and the handling of eight-mule teams, practiced and professional with rifle, revolver, and knife, journeyed to San Francisco, California, on the first lap of a journey which was to take him down through Old Mexico and through the Gulf of Mexico to New Orleans and thence up the Mississippi River to Tennessee to bring his wife's sister to Oregon.

In "Frisco" he undertook to augment his modest savings by engaging in a poker game in one of the largest gambling houses of that city. It

was in this place that the first event occurred which was to have so many follow-ups as to make his name known and feared throughout the boundless West as one who "would not take backwater" from any man, be he white or red. Four men were in the poker game, including Moses Milner. One was his "pard", who had accompanied him from Oregon, and the other two were professional gamblers hired by the house to "clean" innocent strangers. "Mose" dealt the cards and won a sitting. The next dealer, one of the city gamblers, undertook to "cold-deck" the two plainsmen by running in another deck, the backs of which did not resemble the former in any particular. "Hold, now, pard! Let me see them kyards afore yer shuffle 'em," spoke the Oregonian. The dealer was indignant. He proffered both his hands to show that he had no deck of cards except the one he was dealing. The others were up his sleeve. One word followed another and the last to the guns. Mose won by a fraction, and two gamblers died, nervous fingers gripping half-drawn derringers. Moses Milner was tried by San Francisco law. Witnesses were produced, among them Milner's friend from Oregon. The Court ruled "self-defense," and Moses Milner was congratulated and sent on his way. Swift justice, but good justice ruled in the city of gold.

From Frisco went Moses Milner by boat to Acapulca, Mexico, with five companions, all Americans. At the latter place they were robbed of nearly all of the money they had, approximately \$15,000, by crooked Mexicans in the customs service. A record was kept of this, and in 1915 Moses Milner's descendants put in a claim to the United States Government through U. S. Senator Chamberlain of Oregon, but it was found that it was impossible to collect, as all claims against Mexico had been settled in the year 1876. From Acapulca the five men made their way to Vera Cruz, where they finally got passage on a boat to New Orleans and thence up the river to Tennessee.

In the spring of 1856, at the head of a long line of prairie schooners, Moses Milner left Saint Joseph, Missouri, on the long trip across the plains to Oregon. With him went his sister-in-law from Tennessee. Trusting to his experience in plains-craft, which was later to excel everything in that line known of man, a volunteer group of emigrants composed of Tennesseans and Missourians, augmented by parties whom they overtook along the road, took the journey to the land of the setting sun. Moses Milner riding at the head of this caravan, bronzed and bearded, face set in determined lines, long, curly hair falling over his shoulders, mounted on a thoroughbred, Kentucky mare from his homeland, belted with dragon pistols and bowie knife, heavy rifle in saddle scabbard, looked the quintessence of the famous character which he was later destined to become. Over mountain, plain and desert, sand dune and snow hummock, through narrow passes and high-walled gulches and canyons the man of the wilderness led the adventurous ones, eyes ever on the lookout for hostile signs in the ever-widening horizon of an untamed land. It is not left for historians to tell with any degree of authenticity the trials and hardships, the perils and misfortunes which befell this, one of the first of the overland marches, led by the brave Kentuckian, adopted Missourian.

There is a unique coincidence! Kentuckians largely founded Missouri. In after years these same Kentuckians and their sons and daughters flowed out from the boundaries of that great border state called by the knowing "the mother of the West." Missouri opened the West to civilization, its stout sons and daughters carried the banner of true worth and sterling integrity into the wilderness. A vast domain, uninhabited except by savage man and beast, the Great American Desert stretched for over two thousand miles from Saint Joseph, the outfitting point of all far-western seekers, to the broad Pacific. Saint Joseph, the queen of the West; the pride of the trappers, the hunters, the

Indian traders; the farthest outfitting post of civilization where scarred, battling men of the forest mingled in their beaded buckskin suits with the elite of the East, the Atlantic seaboard, who had come to see the "uncouthness" of their brothers and sisters who dared the unknown with the whitest courage ever known, the spirit of the all-conquering Anglo-Saxon race!

Say a word for Moses Milner, one of the first men to step fearlessly out into the dust and the mirage of "No Man's Land," guiding and guarding half a hundred souls or more. Wonder at the terrible courage of this man; speak of him as one of America's foremost heroes of the road; picture him as he was, a man not without his vices, but whose better traits threw them far into the background, a man among men. Into the West he rode, facing what no man knew, with trusting ones at his back, weak defenseless ones behind him, and he took them through to Oregon.

In 1857 to Corvallis, Oregon, went Moses Milner with his fine Kentucky mare, "fastest in Kentucky." "I'll race her here and get somethin'," predicted the mountaineer. So he let it be known that not a horse in Oregon was her equal on a stretch. This was quickly denied by men who had "a western horse, by Gab." "Haw, haw! Who ever hearn tell of a yeastern horse beatin' a western stepper?" So a race was arranged which took place in the spring of 1858, with "that Milner mare" and a "real hoss from the uplands." Under cover of night, the day before the race Milner's horse was "salted." The race took place and the famous mare could hardly walk to the post. "Haw, haw," laughed the owner of the other horse. It was his last horselaugh over a horse race. The heavy bullet from Moses Milner's dragon revolver found a home between his eyes, and the first man died from a bullet in Benton County, Oregon. The mare got well again.

The following spring, 1859, Moses Milner went to The Dalles, Oregon, riding the "Milner mare." There he outfitted a mule pack train and made several trips to eastern Oregon and Washington, continuing the supply trips until the winter months, when he called it a job and spent the cold months in the city of Walla Walla, Washington.

In the spring of 1861, joining the new gold rush, the intrepid young adventurer found himself on the way to the rich mines in north central Idaho, where he arrived in due time and set about making a new reputation for himself as a builder, founding the town of Mount Idaho, which he named and which is today a thriving settlement. The first log cabin, as well as the first tavern, in Mount Idaho was built by the labor of Moses Milner, after which he cut and blazed a toll-road from his town into the mines. This toll-road, the result of weeks and months of hard, grueling work, was the first good money-making venture of the transplanted Kentuckian. High prices were charged for horses, men, cattle and even dogs to travel this highway, a blazed trail to and from the place where men toiled for the gleaming metal with pick, shovel and Long-Tom sluice pan. For two years a more or less prosaic life for one accustomed to exciting adventures was led by Moses Milner, and at the end of that time he had amassed a snug little sum of sixty thousand dollars, derived from tolls and boarding men and horses at his tavern and selling supplies to the mines.

Only one incident happened at this place which need be placed in a prominent position in this biography, and is told here for the first time. One evening in 1863, just as the sun was disappearing over the mountainous horizon to the westward, a stranger rode up to the tavern. He was well-dressed, well equipped and his horse was in good condition, with an excellent saddle and blanket roll; he appeared to be of some means. Inquiring for a place to put up for the night, he was informed by Moses Milner that he could be furnished meals for both himself and

horse for the night and breakfast in the morning. Moses Milner was an early riser. On the morning after the stranger's arrival he was up ahead of the daylight as usual. As he rolled over in his rude bunk, preparatory to rising, he happened to glance out of a loophole near which stood his gun. The stranger, who had not yet paid for his score, had sneaked out to the corral in the semi-darkness and was saddling his horse, preparatory to giving his host a French leave. There was need for quick and summary action, as the man had by now mounted his horse and was urging the beast to a dead run from the start. Calmly and without apparent concern or hasty action, Moses Milner raised the heavy rifle and slid it out through the hole in the wall. His keen eye ran out along the barrel, a black streak in the darkness, his finger pressed the trigger, and the gun blazed spitefully. The rider was fully seventy-five yards away and taking a zig-zag course, but the heavy bullet lifted him out of the saddle like a feather. The riderless mount dashed on up the trail.

The tavern-keeper dressed slowly, took up his gun and went out to where lay his former guest. The latter was dead, shot through the heart. Milner, carefully searched the body to see if there was anything which could be found as to his identity, but there was nothing, so he was buried at the side of the trail. It was shortly after this event that Moses Milner sold the rights to the tavern and road mentioned above, to two men for the sum of ten thousand dollars.

With this amount, a fortune in those days, the plainsman struck out for the new gold camps at Adler Gulch and Virginia City, Montana. In those wild mining camps, where for a long time Henry Plummer, hiding under the cloak of Sheriff, and his gang of thirty odd murderers, road agents and cutthroats imperiled the lives of every decent citizen, Moses Milner was at home. There were bad men there, the worst that

ever infested goldbearing regions, as history will show. They were not gunmen, as the term is commonly known. They had not one redeeming trait. They were the blackest of the black, ambushing murderers of the lowest type, were Henry Plummer's cohorts. Ever on the lookout for strangers who appeared well-fixed or in otherwise good conditions, they spied Moses Milner as a vulture spies an ash-heap, from afar, and spotted him for "plucking." Accordingly, two of the most hardened rode up to his tent two days after his arrival. Moses Milner was seated on the ground, his rifle across his knees. They eyed him appraisingly. Here was a man that would fight, they augured, so, therefore, as they were far from being fighters, they affected friendliness and under a diplomatic cloak attempted to draw him out and learn his business.

"Waal, ol' feller, you look like a good un," said the spokesman of the two, a squat, beetle-browed, fishy-eyed personage who leered deprecatingly down at him from under a bushy beard, through bleary orbs of murderous intensity. "Whar mought yer be frum?"

Moses Milner, an inveterate joker from birth, glanced up at them from wary, half-closed eyes. He shifted a quid of tobacco from one cheek to the other; his heavy beard, hiding the twinkle in his eyes, bristled with affected affront at the request. "I reckon I'm frum Californy, where most of the gold is," he replied. "Fer a name, yer kin call me Joe, I spose."

The two exchanged glances. Here was no tenderfoot from the East, no seeker of idle pleasures, no man to be trifled with lightly. It would be best to let this one, evidently an old-time Forty-Niner, go about his business. So with lightning quickness their minds shifted from him as a prospect. They turned their horses to ride away down the gulch. The spokesman, moved probably by fate, turned in his saddle and made an epic remark: "So yer frum Californy an' yer name is Joe," he

said. "Well, pardner, frum now on yer is known in the West as 'Californy Joe.' I names yer!" Then they rode on into the camp.

Moses Milner was Moses Milner no more. From that day on throughout the country he was known as California Joe, for invariably when he was asked his name he would reply: "Oh, just call me Californy Joe, the name they handed me up in Virginia City." Thus was given to America another unique figure in history.

In October, 1868, California Joe was a scout serving with the Seventh Cavalry when General George A. Custer rejoined his regiment near Fort Dodge, Kansas. To show how well Moses Milner kept his identity secret from even his boon companions and army consorts in later years, General Custer wrote in his book, *My Life on the Plains*, the following description; of his Indian scouts he said:

"There was one among their number whose appearance would have attracted the notice of even a casual observer. He was a man about forty years of age, perhaps older, over six feet in height, and possessing a well-proportioned frame. His head was covered with a luxuriant crop of almost black hair, strongly inclined to curl, and so long as to fall carelessly over his shoulders. His face, at least so much of it as was not concealed by the long, waving, brown beard and mustache, was full of intelligence and pleasant to look upon. His eye was undoubtedly handsome, black and lustrous, with an expression of kindness and mildness combined. On his head was generally to be seen, whether awake or asleep, a huge sombrero or black slouch hat. A soldier's overcoat with its large circular cape, and a pair of trousers with the legs tucked into the tops of his long boots usually constituted the outside make-up of the man whom I selected as chief scout. He was known by the euphonious title of 'California Joe.' No other name seemed ever to have been given him and no other name appeared to be necessary. (Note here that not even General Custer knew the name of his chief of scouts.) This was the man whom, upon a short acquaintance, I decided to appoint as chief of the scouts.

"Sending for California Joe, I informed him of his promotion and what was expected of him and his men. After this official portion of the interview had been completed, it seemed proper to Joe's mind that a more intimate acquaintance between us should be cultivated, as we had never met before. His first interrogatory, addressed to me in furtherance of this idea, was frankly put as follows:

"'See Hyer, Ginerel, in order that we hev no misonderstandin' I'd jist like ter ax ye a few questions. First, are ye an ambulance man er a hoss man?'

"Professing ignorance of his meaning, I requested him to explain.

"'I mean,' said he, 'do yer b'lieve in catchin' Injuns in ambulances or on hossback?'

"Still assuming ignorance, I replied, 'Well, Joe, I believe in catching Indians wherever we can find them, whether they are in ambulances or on horseback.'

"'Thet ain't what I'm a-drivin' at,' he responded. 'S'pose you'er after Injuns and really want to hev a tussel with 'em, would yer start after 'em on hossback, er would yer climb inter a ambulance and be hauled after 'em? Thet's ther p'int I'm a-headin' fer.'

"I answered that I would prefer the method on horseback, provided I really desired to catch the Indians; but if I wished them to catch me, I would adopt the ambulance system of attack.

"'You've hit the nail squar' on the head,' said he. 'I've bin with 'em on the plains whar they started out after Injuns on wheels jist as ef they war goin' to a town funeral in ther States, an' they stood 'bout as much chance uv catchin' Injuns ez a six-mule team would uv catchin' a pack of thievin' coyotes, jist as much.'"

Thus we can see that General Custer's estimate of California Joe was of the best, and in later years, when the two happened to be drawn into Indian campaigns together, they became very intimate, and Joe often wrote long letters to the General when he was in remote sections of the country, not engaged in army scouting.

During the period that California Joe was in Virginia City, and for some time afterward, while the Civil War was raging, many historians have accounted for his time as being spent with a regiment of sharpshooters in the Union Army. This was very evidently a hallucination on the part of the writers, for California Joe never served in any capacity with the army except as that of a civilian scout. He would not submit to any regulations or restrictions imposed by man.

The most generally accepted stories of the heroes of the Early West were those interesting sketches brought out in book form by J. W. Buell, and many were in the main correct, but he also states that during the Civil War California Joe was a member of Berdan's Sharpshooters of Civil War fame. To put such stories into the discard for once and all, the following letter from the War Department is reproduced:

"War Department,
"The Adjutant General's Office,
"Washington, D. C.

"January 22, 1924.

"Mr. Joseph E. Milner,
"Portland, Oregon.

"Dear Sir:

"The name Moses E. Milner ("California Joe")
has not been found on the rolls of the 1st or 2d
Regiment, U. S. Sharpshooters (Berdan's Sharp-
shooters), Civil War.

"Robert E. Davis
"The Adjutant General"

In the year 1864, California Joe was in or near Virginia City a great part of his time. While there he had the satisfaction of killing a brutal Irishman, known throughout the mines as "The Irish Bully," in the following manner. California Joe, having tried his luck at mining and with no large success, turned his hand to supplying the men with venison meat. He had a valuable hunting dog, which he was wont to take with him on his trips and of which he thought a great deal, as he always traveled alone and the dog was a faithful companion. One night when the crowd had repaired to Harry Pearson's saloon, the foremost drinking establishment of the camp, this bully took on a little too much liquor and began abusing several men in the place, finally ending up by kicking Milner's dog, which slunk off to one side whining. This brutal act aroused the terrible ire of the mountain man. Stepping up to the Irishman, California Joe placed his hand on his revolver, saying:

"Waal, now, so yer did it, after all. I bin a waitin' fer yer ter make some sich break, as I wants ter kill yer, an' if yer ain't got no gun, yer better git one, fer one uv us'll be dead afore mornin'."

No man in the camp seemed to have much use for the bully, and Pearson spoke up, saying, "Joe, if you kill him, I'll sell you a gallon

of whiskey wholesale and give you another."

"I takes yer up, Harry," said the now aroused plainsman.

Meanwhile the miner, whom nearly everyone in the camp was afraid of, had gone to his cabin. California Joe left the saloon and went to his own cabin, which he unlocked, and secured a double-barreled shotgun. A man who had followed him from the saloon stepped up and said:

"Joe, are yer agoin' ter his cabin? If so, I'll trot with yer, fer he has a big party on there and lots o' Irish friends."

"Come er stay, as yer please," said California Joe and started off, the other at his heels.

When they arrived at the cabin of the bully, they found the place alive with drunken Irishmen, singing, shouting and drinking, while from the one window shone a beam of light by which they could see the crowd. California Joe stepped up to this window, shouting high above the din, "Come out, all yer flannel mouths, fer I'm agoin' ter shoot in there." The crowd tumbled out in haste, all but the bully. California Joe stepped in the door, shotgun held ready, and as he did so, the Irishman, who was lying on a bunk at one side of the room, pulled loose both barrels of his shotgun, missing the intruder entirely, but tearing away the doorjam completely and killing the man behind California Joe. Before the roar of the gun had died away, California Joe shot from low at his side, and two loads of buckshot entered the head and shoulders of the Irishman, killing him instantly.

When California Joe returned to the saloon, Pearson was waiting outside and sang out, "Did you kill him, Joe?"

"Yer kin bet I did," answered California Joe, holding up the empty shotgun at arms length.

"Then come on in here, and I'll give yer two gallons of likker instead of one," promised the saloonkeeper.

"Naw, I won't charge yer fer but one gallon, it wuz too easy," said California Joe. "Now, boys," he said to the rest of the men, "I s'pose all his friends will be alookin' fer me. All o' yer vamoose home and git out o' ther way."

"Not much we won't," said a burly miner. "Ef they comes attter you, ol' pard, they'll find a whole caboodle ter fight."

So they all armed themselves and stayed up all night in the saloon, drinking California Joe's whiskey and preparing for war. But none came to avenge the bully, and it afterwards was told that his friends were glad when they heard that he had been killed, as they were afraid of him.

Then the Vigilantes took a hand. There had been entirely too much killing in Virginia City, they argued, a total of over three men per day for a month. So they held a secret meeting and took a vote. The vote was eleven for acquittal and ten for hanging him. When California Joe heard that they had come within one vote of hanging him, his ire arose again.

One day he came in from a hunting trip, riding up the street on his tough-looking army mule, and saw three of the most active members of the committee standing talking outside the saloon. California Joe reined up his sorry mount, and when the three looked up they saw his quizzical eyes bent upon them in a curious appraisal. "So yer come within a vote o' hangin' me?" he said. "Why didn't yer make that other vote an' come on over?" And when they made no reply, he said, "I kin tell yer why: 'cause yer knew if yer come over ter git me, some o' yer wud be kilt, and yer didn't know jist which ones wud die first, an' that's why." Such was the iron nerve of California Joe, so thus heard the only law of wild Virginia City, the hanging committee, who were responsible for the killing and breaking up of Henry Plummer's gang of murderers and the stringing up of the terrible leader.

When first the vigilantes of Virginia City were organized, after having seen countless bodies of murdered men and women brought in from the lonely trails, shot down from behind or knifed, they were in earnest and with few exceptions were all good law abiding men, but soon after their having come into control of the bad element, seeing their importance and that they were greatly feared, they became as such bodies of men do, very high-handed and self-righteous, often hanging a man on mere pretense to keep up their reputation. It was in accordance with this fact that they picked on California Joe as a good target for their aims, even though he had helped them by ridding the town of a most dangerous killer and bully. As California Joe said, the reason for the vote that saved him was probably the thought that all would not be sugar and honey in the taking. It was an action born of cautious respect for a man who would go boldly to a man's house in the night, after telling him that he was going to kill him before morning, and order his gang aside and enter the premises.

Seattle, Washington, 1908. Camp Fire Stories about California Joe as told by Buffalo Bill to Joe Milner, the grandson of California Joe.

"California Joe was seventeen years older than I," said Buffalo Bill, "but I knew him for years. I first met California Joe when I was a Pony Express Rider, back in the early '60's. He was a remarkable frontier character, a noted trapper, hunter and scout. He was standing beside a group of boulders that edged the trail when I first clapped eyes on him, and I instantly reached for my revolver, and California Joe as quickly dropped his rifle and held up his hands in token of friendliness. I drew rein and ran an interested eye over the man, who was clad in buckskin.

"California Joe, who was made famous in General Custer's book entitled My Life on the Plains, was a man of wonderful physique, straight

and stout as a pine. His red-brown hair hung in curls below his shoulders; he wore a full beard, and his keen, sparkling black eyes were of the brightest hue. He came from an eastern family and possessed a good education, somewhat rusty from disuse.

"Hain't you the boy rider I has heard of, the youngest rider on the plains?" he queried in the border dialect.

"I made an affirmative answer and told him my name.

"'Waal,' said California Joe, 'I guess you've got some money on this trip. I was strikin' fer the Big Horn, and I found them two stiff's up yonder layin' fer ye. We had a little misunderstandin', and now I has 'em to plant.'

"I thanked him warmly and begged him not to risk the perils of the Big Horn, but California Joe only laughed and told me to push ahead. When I reached my station on the Pony Express route, I related my adventure, and the stock-tender said it was 'good-by, California Joe.' But I had conceived a better opinion of my new friend, and I predicted his safe return. This confidence was justified by the appearance of California Joe three months later in the camp of the Pony Express Riders on the Overland Trail. He received a cordial greeting and was assured by the men that they had not expected to see him alive again. In return he told them his story, and a very interesting story it was.

"'Some time ago,' said California Joe (I shall not attempt to reproduce his dialect), 'a big gang of gold-hunters went into the Big Horn country. They never returned, and the general sent me out on the trail to scout around and see if I could get any trace of them. The country is full of Indians, and I kept my eye skinned for them, but I wasn't lookin' for trouble from white men. I happened to leave my revolver where I ate dinner one day and soon after discovering the loss I went back after the gun. Just as I picked it up I saw a white man on

my trail. I smelled trouble, but turned and jogged along as if I hadn't seen anything. That night I doubled back over my trail until I came to the camp where the stranger belonged. As I expected, he was one of a party of three, but they had five horses.

"'I'll bet odds, Pard Billy,' California Joe said to me, 'that the two pilgrims laying fer you belonged to this outfit. They thought I'd found gold, and were goin' to follow me until I struck the mine, then do me up and take possession. The gold is there, too, lots of it. There's silver, iron, copper, and coal, too, but no one will look at them so long as gold is to be had; but those that go for gold will, many of them, leave their scalps behind.

"'We kept the trail day after day. The men stuck right to me, the chap ahead keepin' me in sight and markin' out the trail fer his pard. When we got into the heart of the Injun country, I had to use every precaution; I steered clear of every smoke that showed a village or camp and didn't use my rifle on game, dependin' on the rations I had with me.

"'At last I came to a spot that showed signs of a battle. Skulls and bones were strewn around, and after a look about I was satisfied beyond doubt that white men had been of the company. The purpose of my trip was accomplished; I could safely report that the party of whites had been exterminated by Injuns.

"'The question now was, could I return without running into the Injuns? The first thing was to give my white pursuers the slip. That night I crept down the bed of a small stream, passed their camp, and struck the trail a half mile or so below. It was the luckiest move I ever made. I had ridden but a short distance when I heard the familiar war whoop and knew that the Injuns had surprised my unpleasant acquaintances and taken their scalps. I should have shared the same fate if I hadn't moved.

"But, boys, it is a grand and beautiful country, full of towering mountains, lovely valleys, and mighty trees, is the Big Horn country," said California Joe.

"In my early experience as a Pony Express rider, California Joe had related to me the first story I had heard of the enchanted basin, and in 1875, when I was in charge of a large body of Arapahoe Indians that had been permitted to leave their reservation for a big hunt, I obtained more details. In 1882 was the trip in which I paid my first visit to the valley of the Big Horn. I had often traversed the outskirts of that region and heard incredible tales from Indians and trappers of its wonders and beauties, but I had yet to explore its wonders and beauties myself. And now that I have my large ranch up there and also a town by my name and am enjoying its beauties, I often think of my old pard that I first met when I was a Pony Express Rider on the Overland Route, California Joe."

Here is another story about the great scout, California Joe, concerning his nerve, and his hatred and sincere disgust of every Indian, as told by Buffalo Bill to Joe Milner, the grandson of California Joe.

"I have often heard him tell this story," said Colonel Cody.

"One cold night when there were three feet of snow on the ground, California Joe staggered into the store at the Spotted Tail Agency. He was pretty well under the influence of liquor. There was a large box stove in the center of the room, and a crowd of Sioux Indians lay all around the stove, on benches and on the floor, soaking up the heat with many grunts of pleasure.

"This enraged the scout to see the red demons, who the next day might be out murdering defenseless men and women, enjoying the hospitality of the white men. Seizing a large stick of wood from the fuel pile, he started beating the Sioux over the heads with it. They, thinking a cyclone had struck them suddenly, made for the door, and although all

were heavily armed with tomahawks, etc., they thought of nothing except retreat and piled out of the place, California Joe knocking them down right and left with many oaths. One Indian, too dazed to get out after his knockdown, lay on the floor when all the rest had departed. California Joe seized him and, with his tremendous strength, whirled him over his head and threw him out of the open door with such force that two curiosity-stricken braves who were standing there were knocked flat."

This story, truthful as it is, has never been told before. In Seattle, Washington, in 1908, Colonel William F. Cody, Buffalo Bill, asked Joe Milner whether he had heard it. Buffalo Bill said that it was a noted happening, told around all of the camp fires on the plains at the time, about California Joe whipping a whole roomful of redskins.

Said Buffalo Bill to Joe Milner: "Your grandfather, California Joe, had no equal on the plains of the West for nerve and great strength, unless it was Wild Bill. He stood six feet, two inches in his stocking feet, long auburn hair falling down his back, and a full beard that was striking in appearance adorning his face. He was a picture of a fine, physical specimen to admire, and the Indians dreaded his appearance more than they did an army."

California Joe, Wild Bill, Buffalo Bill, Texas Jack and Captain Jack all scouted for General Custer and many other famous generals. They met often and scouted together in many a hot Indian campaign on the border. From 1869 till 1870 Wild Bill was a scout for General Penrose, Buffalo Bill was a scout for General Carr, and California Joe was a scout for General Custer.

California Joe Scouts in the Famous Black Kettle Campaign

A mule-skinner by the name of "Holdout" Johnson, who was with the command at the time, tells here in simple words the story of how California Joe operated in that remarkable campaign after Black Kettle under General George A. Custer.

"A small detachment of soldiers, teamsters and scouts were sent out to try to locate the camp of Black Kettle. I happened to be one of the teamsters, and California Joe one of the scouts, who went with this party. Shortly after leaving the main encampment we were jumped by a small band of Indians who started circling and shooting at us from long range. Not knowing how many Indians comprised the attacking force, we immediately corraled our wagons and got ready for a siege. The Indians kept riding around us, shooting, as stated before, from long range. We shot back, but although both parties had a lot of fun and fine target practice, nobody was hurt.

"There was one Indian who seemed to be braver than the rest, and he evidently thought we were cowards or poor shots or both, and tried to force the issue by getting closer and closer, riding well under his horse on the far side and letting us have his fire from under the neck of his mount. The Lieutenant, knowing quite a bit about California Joe's prowess and excellent marksmanship, rode up to where three of us were engaged in trying to line our sights on the redskin and said:

"'Joe, can't you get that redskin? If he is not picked off soon, some of us are going under, for he is getting bolder and bolder.'

"The old scout looked again at the Indian and then he said to the lieutenant, 'I don't know, Loot'nant, but I thinks I kin git him. Anyway, I'll try fer his hoss first.'

"Thereupon he laid down behind two sacks of corn, and resting his buffalo-gun on them, fired, and at the first shot the redskin was dismounted in approved style, headfirst.

"The Indian could have made his escape if he had made off at this time, but instead he ran back to his horse and attempted to take off the saddle and trappings. In the meantime, seeing that he was still in the ring, California Joe reloaded his gun on the double-quick, and leveling the weapon, shot the brave through both hips. He would have made good the effort by killing him as he lay, but the Lieutenant spoke up and said:

"'Stop, Joe, that Indian is only wounded. If we could get him here alive, we might be able to get some information out of him for our benefit.'

"'Waal, Loot'nant, I'll go get him if somebody will go along,' said California Joe.

"A sergeant spoke up and said, 'I'll go with you, Joe.'

"So through a hail of bullets from the besiegers the two men ran out, grabbed the redskin and dragged him into camp by the hair of his head.

"California Joe, having seen that the Indian was anxious to get his bridle, which had cost him his liberty and health, thought that perhaps the bridle was of some value, so he brought it back with him. The bridle was a fancy article, being hung full of scalps, many of them being the tresses of white women which he had murdered. The Lieutenant questioned the red demon, but the latter sulked and would not reply. All of us were pretty well worked up after seeing the women's scalps, and one of the soldiers said, 'So you have been scalping white women, have you? Well, I'll just do some scalping myself.' So he took out his campaign knife and seizing the Indian by a tuft of his heavy hair, cut a ring on his scalp about the size of a half dollar and with a yank tore off the appendage. The other soldiers, seeing how nicely this plan worked, took out their knives, and when they had finished their

work the Indian had a perfectly skinned head. When the Lieutenant saw what had been done he ordered the redskin shot.

These two long shots that California Joe made, and one of them at a running horse, were talked about all over the frontier. The distance was at least five hundred yards.

California Joe Meets Wild Bill and They Scout Together for
General George A. Custer

A short time after this episode, California Joe engaged upon an extended hunt and was gone several months. When he returned, some of his friends informed him that during his absence three men had taken possession of his claim and were operating it to a good profit.

Without saying a word the frontiersman got on his riding mule and rode up to his cabin. As he approached his property, he saw that he had been told the truth, for, sure enough, three men were there to receive him and their consternation was great when he leveled his revolver and gave them three minutes to put a distance between them and his cabin, or die. The three, believing that their strength lay in numbers, defied him to put them off the premises. "Now, look hyar," said the plainsman, and any one who knew him would have noted that his eyes held a dangerous gleam, "ef you-all don't vamoose from this ranch quicker'n chain lightnin', I'll be compelled ter shoot yer dead!" The claim jumpers thought otherwise, and the leader started cursing California Joe in a loud voice and laid his hand upon his six-shooter. When the smoke cleared away, the "claim jumpers" lay dead upon the ground, and California Joe, reloading the empty chambers in his revolver, rode into Virginia City to notify the authorities that "three men lays dead up thar whar they tried ter take my shebang."

After making a good strike in Virginia City the scout drifted

from that northern country down into Kansas, and it was at the "bad town" of Newton in that state that he first met one who was later to become his friend and bosom pard, Wild Bill Hickok.

In Newton, California Joe's pet vice, drinking too much whiskey, played him a trick which caused the killing of another man. It happened that one night he got into a poker game, playing table stakes, with a professional gambler without knowing that the other was anything but an honest man at the game. The gambler, having heard of California Joe's prowess, did not wish to take his money too quickly, so he took it by easy stages, that is, fooled along until daybreak, when the scout was nearly dead with fatigue and drink, then swept the board clean. That was perfectly all right with California Joe, as he knew some one must win the money, but when the gambler had departed with his winnings and the bartender sidled up to him and told him that he had been playing with a card sharper, one of the best in the country, the blood of the old Indian fighter boiled and he started out the door with blood in his eye.

Meeting a chance acquaintance on the street, he was informed that the gambler had gone to bed in his cabin and advised to wait until nightfall when the gambler should return to the saloon, and there charge him with cheating and fight it out. California Joe took this advice gladly, oiled up his six-shooters, and prepared for a fight to the death with the gambler.

It happened that the latter was a short sleeper, so it was in the afternoon when he returned to the saloon, where California Joe was waiting to see him. As he entered the door, California Joe met him face to face and demanded an explanation. "Ef yer kin prove that yer's no card sharper, why then, we'll call it squar' an' the drinks is on me," said the scout in conclusion of his remarks. "Ef otherwise, yer must fight me here an' now." The gambler, not wishing to match his

derringer skill against the dragon precision of the plainsman, made no reply, but bolted out the door and ran down the street. Taking this as an evidence of guilt, which it must have been, California Joe ran after him, and as he hit the street the gambler turned to see whether he was following. Emptying his revolver at the escaping man, California Joe killed him instantly.

A short time after this, Wild Bill invited California Joe to become one of his scouts, as Wild Bill was at that time chief of scouts and Indian trailers for General George A. Custer, and California Joe accepted, remaining with him until the end of the campaign.

The battle of the Washita, Custer's chief engagement, was one in which California Joe distinguished himself more than any other man in the entire command. The story of his bravery and exploits in this battle would make an entire book of thrilling adventures and hair breadth escapes. For his excellent and meritorious service the General selected California Joe to carry the report of the engagement to General Sheridan, a mission of greatest importance and in which his great plainscraft stood him in good stead.

During the years immediately following his service with Custer, California Joe roamed all over the West as a guide, Indian scout, free ranging hunter and trapper. One expedition he took down into New Mexico at the head of sixty adventurers on the hunt for gold. Before they reached their destination, the Apaches were so bad that twenty of the original sixty men were killed. This venture proving short-lived, the scout moved back up into Nevada in 1873, where he and a man named Wilson filed on a claim about forty miles from Pioche and operated a cattle ranch to supply the mines with beef. While there, California Joe's wife and son George came from Oregon to see him.

A short time after his entrance into select frontier society of that town, he was invited to participate in a shooting match, which was

held out on the plains and had all the best shots of the West entered as follows: J. B. Hickok, Wild Bill; Doc Carver; J. B. Omohundro, Texas Jack; J. W. Crawford, Captain Jack; W.F. Cody, Buffalo Bill; Dr. Frank Powell; and Major Frank North. In this, his favorite pastime and livelihood, California Joe led all the rest and succeeded in taking first honors as the best all-around shot on the plains; it also netted him the sum of \$600 cash, which had been put up for the winner.

After leaving Pioche, Nevada, the veteran Indian fighter moved over into Wyoming, "follerin'," so he said, "ther scent o' Injuns," and had his desire for battle satisfied when he was hired as a scout by Captain Anson Mills of the Third Cavalry, known as the Expedition of the Big Horn. There at the headwaters of the Powder River, California Joe stayed until September, 1874, scouting, trailing war parties of savages, and now and then "potting" members of the northern tribes with his Sharps buffalo gun.

At Laramie City, Wyoming, California Joe and another man named Charlie Anderson went into partnership in the spring of 1875, the scout putting up the money for an outfit for freighting across the plains. The two camped in a canyon a few miles from Laramie. One evening Joe went to town and, indulging in one of his periodical sprees with whiskey, was gone several days. A friend of his, happening to meet him on the street one day, told Joe that his partner had sold the team of horses and pocketed the money. This made the frontiersman see red once more. As he said afterwards, "Seemed es ef everybody tried ter double-cross me." He made haste to get to the whereabouts of his erring pard.

As California Joe came up to the tent in the canyon, he spied Anderson sitting on a drygoods box just inside the entrance. At the same moment Charlie Anderson, who had evidently been awaiting his return, started shooting at California Joe with a Winchester rifle from a distance of only fifteen feet. He had pumped five shots at California

Joe before the latter had time to pull his six-shooter, but evidently being under stress of excitement and fear, missed every one and was rewarded for his lethal efforts by receiving a heavy slug from California Joe's buffalo gun in his shoulder. Dropping his rifle, he begged the scout to let him off, saying that he had not intended shooting, but that he feared California Joe might start first, and then he wouldn't have a chance. California Joe, ever kindhearted when his feelings were thus touched, let him off with a promise that he would never let the scout get sight of him again.

A few days afterwards California Joe was walking up the canyon when all of a sudden he was fired upon from both sides of the canyon, a crossfire operated by two men. California Joe was not hit, so dropped upon one knee and waited until the firing stopped, then ran back down the defile, came up behind one of his hidden foes, and at a distance of 250 yards, shot and killed him. The other hidden marksmen, fearing for his own life, climbed upon his horse, which was near-by, and made his escape. After satisfying himself that his foe was gone, California Joe went on his way.

A few days later California Joe wandered into Fort Laramie, where his well-known reputation was such that he was engaged as chief scout and guide for Professor Jenney's Black Hills exploring expedition sent out by the Government to confirm General Custer's report of the previous year (1874) of gold being found in that region. This was the spring of 1875. The expedition kept California Joe in the field until it was disbanded that autumn.

California Joe's Letter to his Sons in Oregon.

During the fall of 1875 the great scout was at Red Cloud Agency in northwestern Nebraska, from which point he wrote the following letter to his sons, then living in Oregon, directed to George Milner:

"Red Cloud Agency, Nebr.
"Nov. 1, 1875.

"Dear Sons:

"I received your kind letter yestidy and was glad to hear from you all. I returned from the Black Hills ten days ago after having a six months travel through the prettyest country that I have seen for many days. It would take me a month to discribe it to you, so I give you the outlines in short. As for gold, there is good wages, from 5 to 25 dollars per day by good work. The mining district is 40 miles long, 20 wide. It is placer diggings. There is some quartz, but not developed as yet. For a stock country the world can't beat it. Some of the creeks is the best for ranges I ever seen; timber and water splendid. If you all want to start in a new country, this is about your last chance. I wish you was all here any way. In the spring there will be a grand rush. The country is not 'treated' for yet, so the government is trying to keep the miners out, but they keep going and the soldiers keep bringing them back. The Injuns talk fight, but it is all talk. There is three companies of soldiers stationed in the Black Hills to keep miners out. It is 100 miles from here. There is 30 soldiers start from here tomorrow and I am going with them. I want to make some new locations because I know all the country and where the best pay is. In my opinion the first man that gets on the ground in the spring will hold it. As you say that you want to come out I would be more than glad to see you all. You, Charley and Eugene ought to come, for this is a better country to make money in than Oregon, but wait until I rite again. I will rite in time for you to come and tell you how to come if the Injuns don't get me on this trip. I saw five thousand Indians yestidy drawing their rations. The happyest days I see after deer with my pony, dog and gun. Direct letter to Fort Laramie, Wyoming Territory, to California Joe.

"Your affectionate father,

"M. E. Milner, California Joe."

California Joe's Last Meeting with General G. A. Custer.

It was late in 1875 or early in 1876 that General Custer saw California Joe in Bismarek, North Dakota, and asked him to go with the expedition which the Government was to send out in the spring of 1876 in charge of General Terry, to round up the bands of hostile Sioux under Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse. These Indians were supposed to be encamped somewhere in the Yellowstone country - just where nobody knew. Custer was just leaving for Washington, D. C., where he had been called as a witness in the notorious Belknap case. He advised California Joe

that he would probably return in about four weeks.

Custer failed to appear for some time after the expected date, so California Joe guided a party to the Black Hills, where he remained until after Terry's expedition, with Custer and the Seventh Cavalry, had departed for the Yellowstone country. Doubtless California Joe thus escaped the terrible fate which overtook Custer and five companies of his regiment in June, a few short weeks later.

California Joe Chief of Scouts for Generals Crook and McKenzie.

In the spring of 1876 California Joe joined the expedition sent out to round up the hostiles under Sitting Bull, serving as chief of scouts under the command of General George A. Crook. Calamity Jane, famous woman scout, also served with Crook in this campaign.

California Joe rendered good service to the end of the campaign, which resulted in the Custer massacre. Early in October, 1876, the expedition broke up at Fort Robinson, in the far northwest corner of Nebraska, and the troops were distributed to various winter quarters.

A new expedition was organized under General McKenzie of the Fourth Cavalry, to push into the Big Horn country and round up scattered bands of northern Cheyennes and Sioux, who were still active in that section, and California Joe was selected as chief of scouts.

California Joe Meets Jim Bridger.

In Wyoming in 1865 California Joe became acquainted with Jim Bridger, the famous plainsman, and they became very good friends. In this same year they went to New Mexico and did some mining. Later California Joe and old Jim Bridger guided various hunting parties to Arizona.

In New Mexico Joe and Jim were camped along a small river one night when they heard a noise among their horses, which were hobbled near by. Grabbing their rifles the two scouts walked quietly out where the horses

were snorting and prancing about. Two horse thieves were attempting to run the horses away. California Joe shot and killed one of the men and catching his own horse, he took after the other man, but he escaped, although compelled to abandon the stolen animals, which Joe recovered.

Many a good old spree California Joe and Jim Bridger had every time they met.

California Joe Meets Texas Jack.

During a short residence in Texas, drifting about, California Joe acted as guide and scout for a small party of emigrants, which he guided and guarded across the southwest plains. It was while thus employed that he fell in with and became a great friend of John B. Omohundro, Texas Jack, who accompanied him on one of his trips to the Black Hills, where they did some prospecting and scouted together for Custer. This was in 1868 in the Washita Campaign in Kansas.

The Death of Wild Bill.

The second of August, 1876, was a fateful day, in that Wild Bill was killed in Deadwood, Black Hills, South Dakota, and old California Joe figured in the aftermath of that assassination to a large extent. It happened that California Joe and his son Charley were at Cook City saddling up their horses on that day to go to Deadwood, where they expected to meet Wild Bill, Colorado Charley, and Texas Jack, and take a trip into the Hills to stake out the locations that California Joe had found. (Texas Jack did not arrive until afterward.)

It was about ten o'clock in the morning. California Joe's faithful hound dog, given to him by General Custer at Bismarck a year before, suddenly snapped at the heels of California Joe's horse while the old scout was behind the animal. The horse kicked out with both hind legs, striking Joe on the right hip, knocking him down, and almost killing him. One of the hoofs had glanced off the hip of the scout and struck him in the side. It was some time before Charley Milner could make

his father comfortable so that he could ride to Deadwood for a doctor and medicine.

As the plainsman would not let his son leave him at once, it was early in the afternoon when Charley Milner at length rode down the side of Deadwood Gulch. It was three o'clock when he rode into Deadwood, and as he rode in he heard a pistol shot coming apparently from the direction of the 66 Saloon. As he dismounted at the livery stable a man who knew him came rushing up and informed him that Wild Bill had been murdered by Jack McCall. Charley Milner immediately hurried down to the 66 Saloon, and there, sure enough, lay the form of the great gunman in the street in front of the place where he had been carried by willing hands.

Colorado Charlie, Wild Bill's been companion, saw Charley Milner as the latter came up the street, and said, "Charley, where in the world is your father?" Upon being told of California Joe's misfortune, Colorado Charley said excitedly, "Jack McCall, the dirty beast, has killed Wild Bill, shot him in the back. Get to your father and let him know about it as soon as possible."

After Charley Milner had ascertained that Wild Bill was actually dead, he procured some liniment, saddled his horse and rode as fast as the animal could travel back to his father, who lay groaning in terrible pain. As he leaped from his horse and ran to his father, Charley Milner gasped out the news that Wild Bill had been murdered. With a roar of rage old California Joe, forgetting all about his horrible predicament, leaped to his feet, only to fall back again. The old scout, pain-racked as he was, foaming at the mouth in an effort to keep back the spasms of suffering from showing in his face, hissed out:

"Charley, help me git on this yere hoss. I'm a-goin' ter Deadwood an' I'm a-goin' ter kill Jack McCall an' every one o' ther murderin'

gang what had anything ter do with it. Help me on, son, I says. Lone-handed I'm a-goin' ter wife out that shebang o' snakes."

But alas! When Charley Milner sprang to do his father's bidding, he found that the old scout could not stay in the saddle; therefore, he had to place him back on the ground again. The rage of the old plainsman, when he found that he would be unable to get to Deadwood and that the assassin stood a chance of escape, was both terrible and sublime in its ferocity. When his stock of "cuss words" ran out, he rehearsed them all over again and again until he laid back exhausted and pain-racked and fell unconscious. Thus it was that Jack McCall, the murderer of Wild Bill, was not killed by California Joe on the same day as his victim.

The day after McCall was liberated, a horseman rode into Deadwood and up the main street. As he dismounted in front of the 66 Saloon, a horde of men was there to greet him. But California Joe, reeling with a terrific fever that had taken possession of him from infection of his wounded side, bandied no words with the idle populace. Colorado Charlie and Charley Milner came forward. The old scout led the way to Wild Bill's grave on the hillside. For a long time the old scout looked at the rude headstone at the foot of a pine tree and reviewed the times when Wild Bill and he had been pardos of the plains. He passed a weary hand across his hairy face.

Turning to Charlie Utter, Colorado Charlie, He said simply, "Charlie, I'm a-goin' ter kill Jack McCall, an' I'm a-goin' ter do it with Bill's own guns. Has yer got 'em?"

From his belt Colorado Charlie drew the pair of heavy, silvermounted, pearl-handled revolvers that had once belonged to the terrible gunman. "Take them Joe," said Colorado Charlie, handing Wild Bill's guns to California Joe.

With Wild Bill's guns in his belt, California Joe walked down the

main street of Deadwood a half hour later. Jack McCall had left town the night before. He would take that trail later. Just now he was looking for the accomplices of the assassin. In front of the 66 Saloon he met Tom Neukum. Little did he know then that this man was to later kill him in the same manner as his friend, Wild Bill, had been killed.

Neukum carried a Winchester rifle in his hand. Face to face they met and California Joe said, "What is yer a-doin' with that gun, yer dirty murderin' sneak?"

"Nothing at all," said Neukum, and he thrilled as he gazed into the demoniacal face of the old plainsman.

He had heard that old California Joe had sworn to kill any one who professed enmity toward Wild Bill, and further, he knew that the scout had dared any man or men in Deadwood to so declare themselves. As quick as a flash California Joe whipped out one of Wild Bill's six-shooters, which he placed against the heart of the now quivering man. His hand shook. And that action showed all the love that he had borne for the murdered man who lay on the hillside, for California Joe's nerves were as steady as the proverbial rock.

In a voice, low at first, that rose to a shrill whine, he said, "Pard, drop that gun. Yer last day hes come, fer I believes yer is a part o' thet murderin' gang which I've swore ter kill. Offer a prar, fer here yer goes."

His thumb hung over the hammer of the death-dealing weapon that had been the author of so many tragedies. As a cat watches a mouse, the fascinated gaze of Tom Neukum was riveted on the gun. He knew that gun well; it had belonged to the man whom he feared above all others on this earth. From the gun he looked up to the foam-flecked, uncompromising countenance of the avenger. With a wild cry of travail he threw the rifle far from him, at the same time dropping upon the ground in front of California Joe, entreating, begging, supplicating the latter to

spare his life. For a moment the scout looked at him grimly, the hammer of his gun half cocked; then his feeling of hate and revenge gave way to one of loathesome disgust. He sheathed the revolver and kicked the cowering wretch to his feet.

"Take yer miserable life, dog," he said gratingly. "Ef I wasn't California Joe, I'd shore kill yer, but as it is, I don't want sich on my record. But never let me see yer face again."

The scoundrel slunk off through the crowd. And California Joe had signed his own death warrant by not pulling trigger.

Across the Hills and on to Laramie, Wyoming, went the avenger on the trail of the murderer, Jack McCall. A queer twist of fate is in this, that at every turn his hand was balked from frontier justice. The day before California Joe reached Laramie, McCall in a drunken orgy boasted that he had killed Wild Bill, and United States Marshal of Wyoming, Jeff Carr, arrested him and locked him up.

Down to the jailhouse went California Joe. It was heavily guarded. "Let me see him," was his only request, which was denied. "See! Hyer's Wild Bill's own gun that I'm a-goin' ter kill him with," said California Joe, and he held aloft the weapon.

But his pleadings were all in vain. For two nights and two days the old scout camped beside the jail, hoping for a sight of McCall, but he was never to see him. His last request, before he left the premises was, "Boys, put him out here. Give him a six-shooter, loaded full up. Take mine (Wild Bill's gun) and leave but one shell in it, an' I'll swar ter give him ther first shot."

But the law of Wyoming Territory was too striot, so, shunning Laramie and Deadwood as a plague, the saddened old plainsman saddled up his horse and turned his horse's head once more into the Indian country. He intended to bide his time until Jack McCall was turned out, and then deal death cards, but the murderer never returned until the first of

March, 1877, when he was hanged in full view of the multitudes on the prairie at Yankton, South Dakota. California Joe had passed on before.

Mr. Ellis T. Pierce of Hot Springs, South Dakota, writes as follows about his old friend, California Joe:

"The last time I saw California Joe to talk to him was in August, 1876. He was following Jack McCall, who had killed his friend, Wild Bill, in the Black Hills. California Joe followed Jack McCall to Laramie City, Wyoming, but they had Jack in irons, so Joe did not get a chance to shoot him. Had he not been crippled by his horse when Wild Bill was killed, Jack McCall would not have lived to have had a bogus trial, or to be hanged later. . . .

"California Joe was a fine philosopher. I remember they were discussing religion one evening when he had returned from a scouting trip, and while he sat eating his lunch, the disputants would refer to him often, and after he got through eating he said: 'I never paid much attention to religion, but I can say this in regard to them Mormons, if you were lookin' fer brains, you could kill a dozen of the common herd and wouldn't get a spoonful, but if you killed a bishop, you would be likely to get a peck.'

"I remember one time a young man came into Old Fort Fetterman looking for a place as a scout. He was quite windy, knew it all, and talked long and loud, and the famous old scout stood watching him while he was at it.

"When he had finished, another old Indian scout turned to California Joe and said, 'What do you think of that fellow, Joe?'

"'Waal,' said California Joe, 'He could probably trail an elephant through six feet of snow, but I don't think he would be much on a blind trail.'

"At the time of Wild Bill's death, which happened at Deadwood,

August 2, 1876, Buffalo Bill and Texas Jack were in the show business in the East, and though they were to have arrived about that time, did not reach the Hills for some time later. Another pard, Captain Jack Crawford, the Poet Scout, was scouting with Crook at the time. He was one of Wild Bill's most intimate friends and commemorated his burial in the following poem, which was dedicated to "Colorado Charlie" Utter:

Burial of Wild Bill

By J. W. Crawford
("Captain Jack")

Under the sod in the prairie land
We have laid him down to rest
With many a tear from the sad, rough throng,
And the friends he loved the best;
And many a heartfelt sigh was heard
As over the sward we trod,
And many an eye was filled with tears
As we covered him with the sod.

Under the sod in the prairie land
We have laid the good and true;
An honest heart and a noble scout
Has bade us a last adieu.
No more his silvery voice will ring,
His spirit has gone to God.
Around his faults let charity cling
While we cover him with the sod.

Under the sod in the land of gold
We have laid the fearless Bill;
We 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, pards, - of his noble traits -
While you cover him with the sod.

Under the sod in Deadwood Gulch
You have laid his last remains;
No more his manly form will hail
The Red Man on the plains.
And, Charlie, may Heaven bless you!
You gave him a "bully good send";
Bill was a friend to you, pard,
And you were his last best friend.

You buried him 'neath the old pine tree,
In that little world of ours,
His trusty rifle by his side,
His grave all strewn with flowers,

His manly form in sweet repose,
 That lovely silken hair -
 I tell you, pard, it was a sight,
 That face so white and fair!

This was the inscription on Wild Bill's grave, written by Charles H. Utter, "Colorado Charlie," his pard.

"Wild Bill"
 J. B. Hickok
 Killed by the Assassin
 Jack McCall
 Deadwood City
 Black Hills
 August 2, 1876
 Pard, we will meet again in the
 happy hunting grounds to part no
 more - good-bye. ("Colorado Charlie")

"Wild Bill"
 By J. W. Crawford
 ("Captain Jack")

On the side of the hill,
 Between Whitewood and Deadwood,
 At the foot of a pine stump
 There lies a lone grave.

Environed with rocks
 And white pine trees and redwood,
 Where the wild roses bloom
 O'er the breast of the brave.

A mantle of brushwood
 The greensward encloses;
 The green boughs are waving
 Far up overhead;

While under the sod and the flow'rets reposes
 The brave and the dead.

O Charity! Come fling your
 Mantle about him,
 Judge him not harshly -
 He sleeps 'neath the sod.

"Colorado Charlie"

(Charles H. Utter, a Famous Scout)

By Col. Charles D. Randolph
("Buckskin Bill")

He rests beneath the green sod
Mid clusters of flowers,
Through cold winter's winds
And spring's lovely showers.

Where the eagle cries loud
And the night hawk is calling,
Where the whipper-will whistles
And the deadwood is falling.

Amid the greenwood and sage brush,
Where there's redwood and pine,
In the wildest of nature -
The most grand you can find.

General George A. Custer thus speaks of California Joe.

General Custer had lost track of his old friend California Joe after their last meeting at Bismarok, North Dakota, in 1875, but upon the publication of his first and only book entitled *My Life on the Plains*, Custer, in almost the last paragraph in the volume, again refers to his former old scout as follows:

"A few words in regard to one other character with whom the reader of these sketches has been made acquainted. California Joe accompanied my command to Fort Hays, Kansas, on the Kansas-Pacific railroad, where the troops were partially disbanded and sent to different stations. California Joe had never seen a railroad or a locomotive, and here determined to improve his first opportunity in these respects and to take a trip on the cars to Leavenworth, distant about four hundred miles.

"A few days afterward an officer of my command, happening to be called to Leavenworth, thought he recognized a familiar face and form in front of the leading hotel in that city. A closer scrutiny showed that the party recognized was none other than California Joe. But how changed. Under the manipulations of the barber, and through the aid of

the proprietor of a gentlemen's furnishing store, the long, curly locks and hair of California Joe, both of which had avoided contact with comb, brush or razor for many years, had undergone a complete metamorphosis. His hair and beard were neatly trimmed and combed, while his figure - a very commanding one - had discarded the rough suit of the frontiersman and was now adorned by the latest efforts of fashion. If the reader imagines, however, that these changes were in keeping with the taste of California Joe, the impression is wholly incorrect. He had effected them simply for a sensation. (See photo on page 152 of notebook.) The following day he took the cars for the West, satisfied with the faint glimpse of civilization which he had had.

"As I soon left that portion of the plains in which these scenes are laid, I saw no more of California Joe, but I often wondered what had become of my loquacious friend, whose droll sayings and quaint remarks had often served to relieve the tedium of the march or to enliven a group about the camp fire.

"I had begun, after a few years had passed without trace or tidings of Joe, to fear that he had perhaps gone to that happy hunting ground to which he had no doubt sent more than one dusky warrior, when a few weeks ago I was most agreeably surprised to receive indubitable evidence that California Joe was still in the land of the living, but exactly where, I could not determine, as his letter was simply dated 'Sierra Nevada Mountains, California.' Now, as this range of mountains extends through the entire length and embraces a considerable portion of the State of California, Joe's address could not be definitely determined. But as his letter is so characteristic of the man, I here introduce it as the valedictory of California Joe:

"Sierra Nevada Mountains, California

"March 16, 1874

"Dear General:

"After my respects to you and Lady I thought that I tell you that I am still on top of land yet. I have been in the Rocky Mountains the most of the time since I last seen you, but I got on the railroad and started West and the first thing I knew I landed in San Francisco, so I could not go any further except goen by water and salt water at that, so I turned back and headed for the mountains once more, resolved never to go railroading no more. I drifted up with the tide to Sacramento City and I landed my boat so I took up through town. They say thare is 20 thousand people living thar, but it looks to me like 100 thousand counten chinamen and all. I cant describe my wilfish feeling, but I think that I look just like I did when we was chasing Buffalo on the cimaroni. So I struck up through town and I come to a large fine building crowded with people, so I bulged in to see what was going on and when I got into the counsil house I took a look around at the crowd and I seen the most of them had bald heads, so I thought to myself, I struck it now, they are Indian peace commissioners. So I look to see if I would know any of them, but not one, so after while the smartes lookin one got up and sed, gentlemen I interduce a bill to have speckle mounten trout and fish eggs imported to California to be put in the American bear and yuba rivers. Those rivers is so muddy that a tadpole could not live in them caused by mining. Did ennybuddy ever hear of speckle trout living in muddy water. And the next thing was the game law and that was very near as bad as the Fish for they aint no game in the country as big as a mawking bird. I herd some fellow behind me ask how long is the legislatures been in session. Then I dropt to myself it wuzent Indian peace commissioners after all, so I slid out, took acrost to chinatown, and they smelt like a kiowa camp in august with plenty buffalo meat around. It was gotten late so no place to go, not got a red cent, so I happen to think of an old friend back of town that I knowed 25 years ago, so I lit out and sure enough he was thar just as I left him 25 years ago bashing, so I got a few seeds I going to plant in a few days. And give my respects to the 7th calvery and except the same.

"Yoursley,

"California Joe."

The Battle of the Washita.

Prior to the battle of the Washita in November, 1868, and while General Custer was endeavoring to locate the village of Black Kettle, the celebrated Cheyenne chief, (which he attacked and destroyed while the chief and others were encamped along the Washita River, under the protection of General W. B. Hazen), the command started out in the

darkness of night, and after proceeding for some distance it was deemed advisable to know something of the numbers and exact position of the Indians. General Custer, therefore, decided to send a party of picked men under the guidance of California Joe to crawl up on the village of the savages and learn what they could.

The Cheyenne village was located on the Washita River, and the entire camp was surrounded in the dead of night. The attack was to be made at dawn. During this delay General Custer strolled to the camp of the scouts, where California Joe and his "pard" were engaged in low but earnest conversation. General Custer inquired what their opinion was in regard to the prospects for a real fight.

California Joe snorted. "Fight!" he exclaimed. "I ain't nary doubt concernin' that part uv the bizness; but what I'm tryin' to figger out is whether we'll run agin more'n we bargained fer."

"Then you think, Joe," continued Custer, "That the Indians will not run away?"

"Run away? How in thunder kin Injuns er ennybuddy else run away when we'll hev 'em clean surrounded afore daylight?"

"But supposing that we get the village surrounded all right - do you think we can hold our own against the Indians?"

"That 'ere's the very p'int," argued Joe, scratching his bushy head in perplexity. "If we jump these here Injuns at daylight, we're a-goin' to do one o' two things - we're either goin' to make a spoon er spile a horn - that 'ere is my candid jedgment sure, an' if them Injuns don't hear nothin' uv us till we open up on 'em at daylight, they'll be the most powerful 'stonished redskins thet's been in these 'ere parts lately. An' if we git the bulge on 'em an' keep a-puttin' it to 'em sort o' lively-like, we'll shor sweep the platter."

And so the battle of the Washita was fought with California Joe in the thick of the fray. General Custer reports him as moving about in a

most independent and promiscuous manner, now here, now there, according to where the fight raged fiercest. While the fray was at its height California Joe came galloping up to General Custer and reported that a large herd of ponies was to be seen near at hand, and requested authority and some assistance to bring them in. The proper authority was given him, and General Custer had forgotten all about the incident when, in the course of half an hour, in came tearing a herd of about three hundred Indian ponies, driven by a couple of squaws, with California Joe bringing up the rear, mounted on his favorite mule and swinging his lariat about his head as a whip to urge the "drags" in the herd forward. California Joe had captured the two squaws while endeavoring to secure the ponies and had wisely made use of the women to help bring in the herd.

After the capture of the Indian village General Custer wisely retreated to avoid another serious engagement with several hundred Indian allies who were encamped some miles farther down the Washita, and who had promptly rallied to the defense of their tribesmen. General Custer was desirous of sending a message to General Phil Sheridan, who was at Camp Supply detailing the outcome of the fight. Calling California Joe to his side, he informed him that he had been selected as the bearer of the message and that he was at liberty to name the number of men he desired to accompany him as an escort and guard, as it was a most perilous mission which Joe was about to undertake. However, California Joe was not in the least perturbed or worried about it. The greater the chance for a scrap, the more eager Joe would doubtless have been to get into it.

General Custer had expected that California Joe would select at least ten or twelve men for an escort, as very few persons would have cared to undertake such a perilous ride through a country swarming with savages, without at least several times that number of soldiers for an

escort. California Joe quietly remarked that he would talk the matter over with his "pard."

He disappeared for a few moments and presently rejoined General Custer. "I've bin a-talkin' this 'ere matter over with my pardner," he volunteered, "an' him an' me concludes that ez safe an' sure a way thar is, is fer me an' him to take a few extry ca'tridges and strike out together the minute it gits dark. We don't want any more men along, becuz in a case o' this kind, thar's likely to be more dodgin' an' runnin' than fightin' and two men kin do better'n twenty; they can't be seen half ez fur an' won't leave much of a trail fer the Injuns to find. If we git away from here by dark, we'll be so fur away by daylight that no Injuns is a-goin' to bother us. Waal, I'm goin' back to the boys at the scout camp and see if I kin borry a leetle tobacker, so whenever you git them dockiments ready, jist send yer orderly to me, an' me an' my pardner'll be ready."

California Joe was an inveterate smoker and was rarely seen without his stubby, dingy-looking briar pipe in full blast.

General Custer thereupon penned his report to General Sheridan and had just finished it when California Joe appeared and remarked: "I'm not so anxious to leave yer all here, but the fact is, the sooner me an' my pard are off, I reckon the better it'll be in the end. I want to put at least fifty miles 'tween me an' this place by daylight tomorrow mornin', so if yer'll jist hurry up yer papers, it'll be a lift fer us scouts."

California Joe's "pardner" turned out to be Jack Corbin, almost the antipodes of California Joe in regard to many points of character. He seldom spoke unless spoken to, but was a keen and sagacious scout, well versed in Indian lore and with a thorough knowledge of the country.

General Custer delivered his report to California Joe, and the old

scout consigned the package to an inner pocket of his buckskin, fringed hunting coat, remarking, "Waal, Ginerall, I hope an' trust yer won't hev enny skrimmages whilst I'm away, 'cuz I'd hate mighty now to miss enny-thing of the sort, seein' I've stuck ter yer this fur."

California Joe and Jack Corbin then took their departure as General Custer shook hands heartily with both and wished them good luck and a safe journey. California Joe was dressed and equipped as usual in a buckskin, fringed suit, high riding boots, wide brimmed black hat, while about his waist he wore a wide cartridge belt containing a Colt revolver 44 caliber, and a long hunting knife; these with his inseparable companion, his buffalo gun, a long Springfield breech loading rifle, composed his defensive make up. His "pard" Jack Corbin was very similarly arrayed except in equipment, his belt containing two revolvers instead of one, while a Sharps carbine supplied the place of a rifle, being more readily carried and handled on horseback. The mounts of the two scouts were as different as their characters, California Joe confiding his safety to the transporting powers of his favorite mule, while Jack Corbin was placing his reliance upon a fine gray charger.

The troops, by easy marches, gradually drew near to Camp Supply, and General Custer was uneasily wondering whether his two couriers had got through safely. Two or three days had elapsed since their departure. While the general and some of his staff were riding in advance of the troops, the attention of the party was directed to two horsemen who were riding slowly along near a fringe of timber. General Custer was at a loss to determine whom they might be. The two horsemen evidently discovered Custer's party, as they at once turned their mounts and disappeared into the timber, doubtless taking them for enemies. General Custer's field glasses at once were leveled toward the spot, and just as the last horseman disappeared into the timber, the joyful discovery was made that it was none other than California Joe mounted on his raw-

boned mule.

General Custer at once put spurs to his horse and dashed forward toward the horsemen, who presently rode cautiously out of the timber for another look at the approaching party. General Custer swung his hat, and California Joe appeared to recognize him, as he stuck the spurs into his long-legged mule and was soon grasping his chief by the hand. "I counted on it bein' you when I fust ketched sight uv yer," exclaimed California Joe heartily, "but I wasn't takin' any chances on it bein' Injuns an' concluded that this 'ere timber would be the best place to make a stand in case I war mistaken. We war a-gittin' ready ter sling lead into yer in case it turned out ter be Injuns. Waal, I'm powerful glad ter see yer again, Ginerel, that's dead shor. How be ye, ennyway?"

California Joe then related that Jack Corbin and himself had made the trip in safety, and that General Sheridan, after complimenting them, had fed them well and then started them back to meet General Custer and deliver a package of letters and orders. Such were some of the incidents in which California Joe figured while he was Chief of Scouts for General Custer in 1868.

A Story About California Joe as Told by John B. Omohundro, Texas Jack.

In March, 1877, W. F. Cody, "Buffalo Bill," and Doc Carver, the Evil Spirit of the Plains, while returning from a successful hunting expedition visited the camp of Texas Jack. While seated around the camp fire talking of buffalo hunts, old times, etc., Texas Jack told the following story:

"When California Joe and I were trapping together, back in the late 60's, we had been meeting with good success and having no trouble with Indians. One night Joe was late in getting into camp, but when he did return, he had plenty of Indian traps, ponies and game and he gave me the following account of his adventures, but of course I can not repeat his exact language, so will relate it as best I can.

"California Joe that afternoon ran across a fresh trail of what appeared to have been made by three Indians. Following the trail cautiously for a mile or more, Joe came to where the Indians had camped the night previous on the banks of a small stream. On the opposite side of the creek were tall bluffs covered with trees. Joe decided to secrete himself in the dense thicket until night and await the return of the Indians to camp.

"About sundown one buck, loaded with game, came in and commenced building a camp fire; shortly after, two more made their appearance, and Joe could see that it was a small hunting party, armed with bows and arrows only. After enjoying their evening meal and smoking and chatting for some time, the three Indians wrapped themselves in their blankets and were soon sound asleep.

"Cautiously, California Joe now began to descend from his high perch, but the 'best laid plans of mice and men gang aft aglee,' and so it proved in this case; for as silent as death, California Joe was easing himself down when he happened to place his foot on a dead limb, which broke with a snap that startled the three Indians from their slumber and came near landing California Joe within ten feet of them.

"The wily Indians began at once to search for the cause of the noise, and, it being moonlight, they soon discovered Joe in the tree on the bluffs, and in their Indian dialect called upon him to come down at the same time they commenced advancing and discharging their arrows, whooping and yelling as only Indians can. By the aid of the moon California Joe fired at the nearest one and had the pleasure of seeing him drop. Then climbing to the very top of the tallest tree, he prepared to reload his trusty rifle (this happened before the days of the Winchester or Remington), but the remaining two Indians began rapidly to ascend and soon were in dangerous proximity to the old scout, and the nearest one prepared to use his bow.

"This situation was becoming desperate, but California Joe, nothing daunted, broke off a good-sized club from a dead limb, and taking good aim, landed it fairly upon the head of the Indian, knocking him from his perch. In his fall he struck his companion, and both of them fell into the creek bottom. One was instantly killed, and the other badly wounded. California Joe quickly descended and dispatched the wounded, and with three scalps and what plunder he could carry, hastened back to our camp."

(This story was taken from General Custer's book, My Life on the Plains.)

California Joe's Family.

California Joe's family lived in Benton County, Oregon on a 640 acre ranch that the old scout homesteaded from the government in 1852. This ranch was located twelve miles west of Corvallis, near Wren Station, and is known today as the "Old Milner Place." It was here that California Joe's four sons were born, and it was here that the famous old plainsman drifted when he often disappeared from the "Great Plains."

The old frontiersman had the following children: Edgar A. Milner, born October 1, 1853; George Milner, born February 17, 1855; Charles Milner, born February 18, 1857; and the youngest, Eugene Milner, born March 17, 1859.

The Founding of Circle City.

California Joe is said to have founded Circle City, South Dakota, Black Hills, and named the town, plotting it on his 160 acre ranch at that point. The Deadwood gold excitement, however, spoiled his plans for a permanent settlement.

Mr. G. W. Stokes, of New York, speaks of California Joe.

An old friend of California Joe, in the person of G. W. Stokes, of New York City, has given some interesting side lights into the character

of the famous frontiersman. He states that California Joe was doubtless engaged in placer mining on or near Woolsey's Flat, California, some of the time between 1863 and 1868. Jim Woolsey and California Joe met in Deadwood in 1876. "I heard them talking about some of their experiences," said Mr. Stokes, "as I was in Deadwood at the time.

"I know that California Joe and Dick King came to Cheyenne from up Pioche, Nevada, way in November, 1875. Maybe they met there, for I think California Joe went into the Black Hills with General Custer from Fort Abraham Lincoln, near Bismarck, in 1874.

"We went into the Hills together from there. (Deadwood.) General Custer had a blue greyhound which he had presented to California Joe. Our party was composed of California Joe, Dick King, and my party of four, and eight other teams, for self-protection from the Indians, which were bad at that time. We were all 'holed in' about six miles from Fort Laramie, waiting for the squadron of the Third Cavalry to come back with the last batch of gold miners they had rounded up at French Creek stockade.

"We lit out for the Black Hills as soon as the troops and the prisoners had passed our hiding place. California Joe had two pack horses, his saddle horse, his greyhound, and was accompanied by a young man named Benson, a youth of twenty or thereabout. California Joe had his bedding and some grub on Dick King's four-horse wagon. When we reached the stockade we found five or six miners with some gold dust, but no grub except venison. They had succeeded in dodging the soldiers.

"California Joe, Dick King, Benson and our four partners left the others and went over the divide to Spring Creek, where Professor Jenney's exploring party had found more gold than on French Creek. We all took up 300-foot claims and had them recorded. California Joe and Dick King went two miles down the creek from our claims, near the mouth of what we called Palmer's Gulch. We washed out about one thousand pennyweight

of coarse gold that winter, but California Joe, Dick King and Benson didn't get to bedrock. Some time early in the spring they went over to Bear Butte Creek.

"I next saw California Joe in June of 1876. He and a man named Wood were prospecting for quartz. They had some drill steel and dynamite and had found a ledge of white quartz on Deadwood Creek, opposite the rich Father De Smet ledge. Neither of them understood the use of dynamite, so they asked me to join them. On our way through Gayville, where gold was first mined in Deadwood, we saw Bill Gay unsaddling his horse. Bill called California Joe aside. They were well acquainted. They conversed in a low tone for a few minutes while Wood and I squatted in the shade of Al Gay's store. When California Joe returned he informed us that Bill Gay had told him that General George A. Custer had been wiped out with his whole command.

"Bill Gay was a squaw man - had an Indian wife and two kids at Spotted Tail agency. He had been down to take them some supplies and money and on his return had met an Indian runner, a relative of Bill's squaw, then on his way to report to Spotted Tail and Red Cloud of the Custer disaster on the Little Big Horn. Three days later the news was confirmed by Cheyenne mail stage.

"We fired a shot or two into the quartz vein, but the ore yielded less than \$2.00 a ton on assay. I bought an interest in Claim No. 10 on Deadwood Creek and never saw California Joe again. I think he left the Black Hills with General George A. Crook's command in September, 1876, and was Chief of Scouts on the successful rounding up of that wonderful fighter, Crazy Horse."

An Incident.

General Custer once asked California Joe whether he had ever seen General Sheridan, and this is what the old hunter said:

"What! Gin'rul Shuriden? Why, bless my soul, I knowed Shuriden way

up in Oregon more'n fifteen year ago, an' he was only a second lootenant of infantry. He was quartermaster of the foot, or sumthin' of thet sort, an' I had the contract of furnishin' wood to the post; an' would yer believe it, I had a kind of a sneakin' notion then that he'd hurt some-buddy if they'd ever turn him loose. Lord, but ain't he ol' lightnin'."

Letter written by Captain Luther H. North.

Captain Luther H. North, of Columbus, Nebraska, a brother of Major Frank North, organizer and commander of the famous "North's Pawnee Scouts," and himself a lieutenant in that organization during its entire enlistment, sent the writer the following interesting letter regarding California Joe:

"Columbus, Nebraska
"March 30, 1925

"My dear Mr. Brininstool:

"Your letter just came, and I will tell you what little I know about California Joe.

"I thought when I wrote to an Eastern magazine several years ago, that I was the last man to talk to California Joe before he was murdered, but perhaps not. When we got to Fort Robinson after capturing Red Cloud, we camped on the creek about a mile below the fort, and Joe came down to see my brother. (I never had seen Joe before.) He ate supper with us and soon after went back up to the fort, saying he would come back in the morning.

"Just after he left, my brother got orders to send some men with the horses that we had taken from Red Cloud, to Fort Laramie. Frank took twenty men and started at once, about eight o'clock. I think there were 722 head of ponies, and before noon the next day he had them at Laramie, ninety miles from Robinson. I was to come on the next day with the rest of the men.

"When I was breaking camp the next morning, Joe came down. He was on foot. I told him about Frank having gone, and as soon as we got loaded up, we started. I bade Joe good-by, and he started back for the fort.

"There was a company of infantry that had started for Laramie that morning ahead of me, and one of the lieutenants had stayed behind for some reason. When I had gone about ten miles, this officer overtook me and rode with me for some distance. He said:

"'There was a killing at the fort this morning. California

Joe was shot.'

"I replied, 'Why, he was at my camp when I left.'

"The officer replied, 'Well, some fellow shot him in the back when he was on his way to the fort.'

"This was the only time I ever saw California Joe. As I remember him he was a man over six feet tall and powerfully built; and had black hair, turning gray, and a heavy growth of beard all over his face. He was dressed in an ordinary civilian suit of clothes, and my impression is that he wore a cloth cap, but I am not sure. He was not very talkative.

"When Frank introduced us, he grinned and said, 'The Major thinks so much of me that he used to come and see me every day.'

"It seems that the year before (1875) or maybe the spring of 1876, Joe started to guide a party of miners into the Black Hills, and the troops stopped them at Fort Laramie. There were several other parties which were stopped there. They camped along the Platte River, waiting for the Government to conclude a treaty with the Indians to allow them to proceed. Frank was chief of scouts, guide and interpreter at the time at Fort D. A. Russell, and he was sent to Laramie and every day was sent out to patrol the river to see that none of them crossed. That was what Joe meant by saying, 'The Major thinks so much of me that he used to come and see me every day.'"

Another Letter from Captain Luther H. North.

Colonel Charles D. Randolph, Buckskin Bill, received the following letter from Captain Lute North, as he was known on the plains:

"Columbus, Nebraska
"April 15, 1928

"Col. Charles D. Randolph, "Buckskin Bill,"
"Davenport, Iowa.

"My dear Colonel:

"Your letter came yesterday. Yes, I was probably the last man to talk to California Joe; as he left my camp about a mile below Fort Robinson and started for the Fort (on foot), I started for Fort Laramie with my company of Pawnee scouts, and when out ten or twelve miles, was overtaken by a lieutenant who said California Joe was killed just before I left the Fort. Dr. V. T. Gillicuddy (who was at the Fort) says he was killed in the afternoon, but I hardly see how this could be, as the lieutenant overtook me before noon.

"In answering your questions I will say that California Joe was ahead of most of the men you name. He associated

with Jim Bridger, Kit Carson, Jim Beckwith, Wild Bill, and Buffalo Bill claimed to know him. He was undoubtedly a great guide and scout. My brother knew him very well, but I never saw him but the one time, though I had known of him for many years.

"The men you mention were very seldom seen together. They might have been in the Government service for years in different departments of the west without meeting one another. California Joe scouted for Custer, Miles, Crook and others. Captain Jack Crawford, when I knew him, was a newspaper man. If he was ever a scout, I didn't know it. Texas Jack belonged to Buffalo Bill's theatrical company, though he was employed one season to take the Pawnee Indians on their annual buffalo hunt. Buffalo Bill was Post Guide and Scout at Fort McPherson from 1869 to 1872, and as my brother and I served with General E. A. Carr, we were with Cody a good deal of the time. Wild Bill, I think, scouted for Custer at one time, but became famous as Marshal of Abilene when he cleaned up the desperadoes there. I don't think I ever knew Charlie Utter, Colorado Charlie. Dr. Carver, as you know, was a showman with Buffalo Bill and later by himself. Dr. Powell I didn't know. Deadwood Dick was a scout with Custer and a real one. Charlie Reynolds was a scout for Custer and in my opinion the greatest of them all.

"This is just a bald statement of these men with no attempt to give you any of their adventures, of which there are perhaps many, but these men seldom met, as they were, as I said before, employed by different commanders in different parts of the country.

"As to Dr. Tanner, Diamond Dick, I never knew him personally until the last two years. He is one of the finest men I ever met, but I know little about him, as he has little to say of himself.

"California Joe's name was Moses Milner, and he has a son living, I believe, in Seattle Washington, but I don't know his first name.

"L. H. North."

The Death of California Joe.

We now come to the last days of this droll, quaint, rough-and-ready, devil-may-care character of the old frontier. California Joe made many friends in his last days. Chief among these was Dr. V. T. McGillivuddy, now living in Berkeley, California, formerly one of the best-known Indian agents that ever acted as a guard for Uncle Sam's red wards, a man of unflinching courage, thoroughly familiar with the Indian character, and a fighter for the Red Man in seeing that he got every ounce of rations

promised by the Government. Writing in 1922 to a mutual friend, Dr. McGilliuddy says:

"California Joe and I became closely acquainted in the spring of 1875, when he joined the Black Hills expedition at Fort Laramie as chief scout and guide. He was by nature a scout and thoroughly reliable. He stood over six feet two; had long reddish hair and whiskers; spare built, but athletic; indulged in liquor occasionally, but was never quarrelsome; and was one of the best-known scouts of his day. He served with the expedition until we disbanded in the fall at Fort Laramie.

"In the spring of 1876 he joined the expedition sent out to round up the hostiles under Sitting Bull, serving under the command of General Crook. He rendered good service to the end of the campaign. In this expedition I was surgeon of the Second and Third Cavalry, and I was known as the Surgeon Scout.

"Early in October, 1876, the expedition broke up at Fort Robinson in the far northwest corner of Nebraska, and the troops were distributed to various winter quarters. A new expedition was organized under General Mackenzie of the Fourth Cavalry, to push into the Big Horn country and round up scattered bands of Northern Cheyennes and Sioux, who were still active in that section, and California Joe was selected as chief of scouts.

"There was employed in the post butcher shop at Fort Robinson a man named Neukum, or Newcomb, with whom California Joe had had some trouble. But the day before the expedition was to leave, the two, California Joe and Thomas Neukum, met at the post trader's, where they had a few drinks and apparently became good friends.

"About 5:00 P. M. California Joe was standing on the banks of the White River with some comrades, when suddenly Neukum appeared at the corner of the quartermaster's corral and without warning shot California Joe through the back with a Winchester. California Joe died instantly.

"Thomas Neukum was thrown into the guardhouse, and I had the remains of the old scout carried to the post hospital, where I made an autopsy on my old friend. When Mackenzie's expedition marched past the hospital the next morning California Joe was resting in his coffin in front of the post hospital with the flag draped over him. I found memoranda in his clothing that he was Moses Milner of Kentucky and I placed a red cedar headboard with the inscription, 'Moses Milner of Kentucky (California Joe), murdered October, 1876,' over his grave on the banks of the White River at Fort Robinson, Nebraska.

"As the law required, we notified the authorities of the nearest organized county, Holt County, 33 miles away in Eastern Nebraska, of the affair. Four days elapsing and no

one appearing, we were obliged to turn Neukum loose. Rigid army discipline prevented his just lynching, so he was turned loose. Thus ended the life of the most reliable scout of the great Northwest.

"Sincerely and very truly yours,

"Dr. V. T. McGilliuddy,

"The Surgeon Scout and

"'Pard' of California Joe."

At the time of his death California Joe Milner was 47 years, 5 months, and 21 days old. His body lies in grave No. 14 in the post cemetery at Fort Robinson, Nebraska.

As the law had not yet penetrated that part of the frontier, and as California Joe was a civilian scout, and not a member of the military forces, the murderer was liberated. Although feeling ran high for some time, and lynching was suggested by the friends of the noted scout who were present, rigid army discipline prevented any such occurrence, and Thomas Neukum had satisfied his long-felt desire to murder the man who had once humiliated him on the streets of Deadwood in the Black Hills of South Dakota.

Charley Milner, the son of the noted plainsman, at once took the trail of the dastardly assassin and, through some misunderstanding, got on the "wrong lead" and though his six-shooters blazed spitefully and carried a load impregnated with death for "Thomas Neukum," it killed an innocent man. Fifty years have passed since that fateful happening, and Charley Milner is as yet unaware that the murderer of his father still lives, unmolested.

California Joe left more friends to mourn his death than any other man in the history of the West. Among them were the following plains scouts: Colorado Charlie, Texas Jack, Captain Jack, Buffalo Bill, Doc Carver, Major Frank North, and Captain Lute North.

Mrs. Moses E. Milner

California Joe's Wife

Col. Charles D. Randolph, "Buckskin Bill,"

dedicates the following poem to

"Captain Lute North"

He knew Wild Bill and Texas Jack
And California Joe,
Kit Carson and Jim Bridger
In the days of long ago.

He knew Charlie Reynolds,
Doc Carver and Pawnee Bill
When the West was wild and unsettled
From the Black Hills to Fort Sill.

He knew Captain Jack Crawford,
Deadwood Dick and Buffalo Bill
When Injuns were a millin'
And you couldn't keep them still.

He knew some famous generals,
Sherman, Sheridan, Miles and Crook,
And Custer, Carr and Merritt,
When he scouted every nook.

He had a brother Major Frank North,
Chief of the Pawnee Scouts of fame,
And together they were well known
By the great men of the plains.

He's now a friend of Diamond Dick,
Who lives out near the old Platte's flow,
Captain Lute North, Pawnee Scout and Plainsman
Of the days of long ago.

"California Joe"

By Col. Charles D. Randolph
("Buckskin Bill")

No more he'll hear the war whoop
Of the Cheyenne or the Sioux,
The yelping of the prairie wolf
In that country wild and new.

No more he'll mount his pony
And dash across the plain,
Or watch and wait, or guard and guide
Some lonely wagon train.

No more he'll don the buckskin,
Or pack his old six shot gun,
Or trap the beaver and the bear,
He knew there every run.

No more he'll scout for Generals
Crook, Miles, Custer, Carr,
Or play a game o' poker
Down in Tom Sherman's bar.

No more he'll hear the redskin wail,
Or camp along some stream,
Or kill a bison with his Sharps,
Or hear a panther scream.

No more he'll saddle up
And hit the Indian trail,
And pass the hostile savages,
He never was known to fail.

No more he'll dash across
The hills and out across the plain,
For the old scout took his last ride
And won't return again.

No more he'll be seen around the camp fire
With some weird tale to tell
Of how the redskins bit the dust
Before they went to "hell."

No more he'll get likkered up,
Or smoke his pipe o' briar,
Or brave a Dakota blizzard,
Or see a prairie fire.

Lieutenant Colonel George A. Custer, who at the time of his death was still universally called by his Civil War title of general. "His yellow hair hung in long ringlets over his shoulders. His feet were encased in boots as soft as a lady's dancing slippers, and as spotless."

Chief Gall, said to be the Sioux who killed Custer. Of the bodies of the Americans slain in the battle all were scalped and mutilated except Custer's - an "Indian's tribute to a brave man."

Sitting Bull was the best-known Indian of his generation, and is still popularly but erroneously regarded as the chief cause of Custer's defeat. Actually "he was a coward at heart, which was a rare thing among Indians of that day."

Curly, Crow scout, sole survivor of the massacre by a technicality, since he left the scene before the fighting really began.

Buffalo Bill

Dr. W. F. Carver

Wild Bill

Crazy Horse, the greatest strategist among the Western Indians, who was responsible for Custer's defeat. He, Dull Knife and Gall, though "devoid of popular reputations, were the equal of any combat leaders, white or red, of the period."

"Texas Jack" (J. B. Omohundro),
a famous scout and close friend
of "Buffalo Bill."

Capt. Jack Crawford

"Texas Jack"

By Col. Charles D. Randolph
("Buckskin Bill")

He hailed from the Lone Star State
Down in the great Southwest.
He scouted and ran into
Many a hostile Indian nest.

He quelled the cattle rustlers
Across the burning sand.
He stopped the raids of greasers
When he crossed the Rio Grande.

He was a scout and plainsman,
A hunter and a guide.
He has gone to join his partners
Who are on the other side.

He later acted on the stage
And showed the old-time West.
He has a place in history
With the winning of the West.

"Captain Jack" Crawford, the author of California Joe, was a great friend of mine. He was six feet tall, well built, wore long hair, a mustache and a goatee. He was a famous writer of stories of the West, a famous poet, and a pard of all the old-timers. He died in 1917, the same year "Buffalo Bill" Cody died. They were life-long friends. I have written all over the United States, trying to get a book of poems which he wrote entitled, "The Poet Scout." I have never been able to find one. Can anyone help me in this? He was a fine old man!

--Col. Charles D. Randolph ("Buckskin Bill").

Major Frank North in 1867

Captain Luther North

WESTERN POEMS

Composed and written by "Buckskin Bill"

Randolph about the Wild West, The Plains, The
Famous Scouts. This book of over 80 poems, 50¢.

Col. Charles D. Randolph

2108 E. 13th Street

Davenport, Iowa.

(Wanted: in Beadles Libraries; California Joe;
and Capt. Jack Crawford.)

"Buckskin Bill"

By Col. Charles D. Randolph

I braved the storms for cattle,
I camped out on the sage,
I rode the outlaw horses
And drove a six-horse stage.

My favorite horse was buckskin
And the boys all called me Bill.
That's how I won the title
That's known as "Buckskin Bill."

Yes, I rode the range for cattle
And rounded wild horses, too;
I lived among the Indians -
Blackfeet, Flatheads, Sioux.

I liked it in the mountains,
I liked it on the plains;
I was happy in the saddle
And loved to hold the reins.

That country has a history
Which gives you a real thrill.
And that is how they gave me
The name of "Buckskin Bill."

(The above is the opening poem in the book of poems by Col. Randolph, "Buckskin Bill." The book is a neat volume of some eighty or more poems, written by "Buckskin" about the West, and the old pards and comrades of the plains which were his, and whose fame has become a by-word to all who discuss early western history. "Buckskin" is a member of Happy Hours Brotherhood.)

(Clippings)

Dime Novel era was brought back to Los Angeles last fall when Col. William Pearson, more familiarly known as "Idaho Bill", strolled into town with an 800-pound lion tagging behind. He roped the king of beasts in the mountains of Mexico, but this was no novelty to him - merely a revival of the days when he, and Deadwood Dick, Diamond Dick, Pawnee Bill, etc., roamed the plains in all their glory.

Buffalo Bill's Sister Meets Old Friends After 73 Years; Seeks His Grave at Arlington.

"Aunt Julia" Cody Goodman is a flirt at 84.

Crack shot and horsewoman of the western plains, she demonstrated her prowess at the feminine arts on her visit to Davenport, Saturday, before an admiring circle of hoary-haired playmates whom she had not seen for 73 years. She has come back to make her first visit to LeClaire, her birthplace and that of her famous brother, "Buffalo Bill."

"These men have to see a romance in everything," she whispered in an excited aside. "But we girls--"

She left the sentence unfinished as the men crowded around. There was Col. Joe Barnes, LeClaire pioneer, known as "the runt" in the days when he took part in the pranks at which "Willie" Cody, as he was then called, was the ringleader. There, too, was Charles Rich of Davenport, 86 years old. It was at his father's farm near LeClaire that the Cody family lived in the interim between the sale of their household goods and the journey overland "away out west to Kansas." "Buckskin Bill" was there, too, Col. Charles D. Randolph of the Rock Island arsenal, who had known the picturesque Buffalo Bill in the West.

"Oh, yes, we've been writing for 25 years, but mostly about Bill," she confided with a mischievous glance at Col. Barnes. "Sweethearts,

well, we're a little past that stage. We used to play together, that's all."

And the chorus joined in with delighted tales of the good times at the Cody house in LeClaire, where Mrs. Cody let the children of the neighborhood have the run of the house.

Mrs. Goodman was the most vigorous of all the little group. She rises at 5 a. m. and scorns an afternoon nap. She retired from the hotel business at Cody, Wyoming, at 75, she says, and has done nothing but retire ever since.

Her full face, softly lined, fairly beamed at the little circle gathered in the Hotel Blackhawk. Not an ordinary little old lady was she, for her every movement indicated the reserve power she had stored up in her lifetime in the West. She wore a plain black brocaded dress with a collar and fichu of white lace caught at the throat with a quaint old-fashioned cameo. A bit of black lace at the wrists and a scarf of black embroidered with tiny white roses completed the costume. Her curly gray hair was caught up under a small black hat relieved with a white rose at the side.

Tales of Buffalo Bill forgotten by all save herself, the last member of the family in her generation, she told to the little group.

"Remember Willie's three-legged yeller dog?" she inquired. "That dog Skip surely kept the teacher busy. He followed Willie to school every day, and when the teacher put him out, Willie went too. They'd play outside until recess or until school was out. I guess we never got much schooling, just what we taught ourselves."

Another reminiscence she conjured up for a laugh.

"Suppose you never heard of the time Willie taught the boys to hunt for gold in the Mississippi river. You see it was this way. Mother had an old country silver piece we were told never to touch. Willie took it one day and went down to the river. All of a sudden he yelled,

'I've dropped it, I've dropped it.' He gathered four or five boys to help him hunt. He pointed out where it had fallen, and let them do the work. Sammy, our oldest brother, ran to tell mother. She came down on the warpath. On the way she took off her slipper. 'Willie, come here,' she called. He looked at her calmly, took the silver piece out of his pocket and handed it to her. 'Aw, I was only teachin' the boys to hunt gold here like they do in California,' he told her."

Mrs. Goodman in searching over her childhood haunts will find two of the Cody homesteads still standing, the frame house built by her father in LeClaire overlooking the river, and the stone house on the Breckenridge road where the family lived later. The farm house two and a half miles west of LeClaire where she and her brother were born, was destroyed years ago, as was also the house on the Walnut Grove farm where her brother Sammy was killed by a fractious horse.

Mrs. Goodman would not exchange her pioneering experiences for all the joys of present day high living, she said. She has raised two families, her own brothers and sisters left orphaned in Kansas after their father had been killed in the border wars and their mother died not long afterward, and her own family of six sons and two daughters, left fatherless at an early age.

In their early days in Kansas she and Buffalo Bill kept guard around their cabin against the attacks of the border ruffians. Their father, Isaac Cody, was the sworn enemy of these men, for he made no secret of his belief that Kansas should become a free state. She learned to shoot as well as her brother, three years her junior.

"The last time I tried to shoot was in 1902," she recounted. "My son in Cody, Wyoming, dared me to shoot the old dinner bell. 'I'll bet I can do it,' I took him up. I shot the rope clear in two and he had to ride a half mile for a new bell before he could call his men to dinner."

She made her living and that of her family most of her life managing hotels. The famous characters of the plains, California Joe, Texas Jack and Wild Bill Hickok, had all put up at her hotels. She was with her brother, Buffalo Bill, the last six weeks before he died.

Now she has a mission in his behalf.

"I want Bill buried in the national cemetery at Arlington," she confided. "He served his country on the frontier and as a Union spy in the rebellion. He's buried away out there at the summit of Lookout mountain near Denver. It wasn't his wish to be buried there, and I know, because I was with him to the end."

Like any grandmother taking leave of the family circle, she waved her farewell, "Goodbye, dears, I'm coming back to Davenport soon and I want you to come to see me."

Seriously, she does. She is anxious to meet any old friends of hers who may be in the city. Those desirous of getting in touch with her may address Col. Joe Barnes at LeClaire.

With her cousins, Mr. and Mrs. Hiram S. Cody and their children, Rosemary and Bill II, of Evanston, Illinois, she left for LeClaire. On this trip she is to visit Dan Winget in Clinton, publisher of a book of memoirs on "Buffalo Bill," Dr. John Knox at Princeton and later a reunion of the Cody family in Detroit. Within a few weeks the citizens of Cody, Wyoming, and members of the Cody family are to open a "Buffalo Bill" museum at Cody.

Friends Greet Sister of Buffalo Bill After 73 Years

This picture shows Mrs. Julia Cody Goodman, sister of "Buffalo Bill" Cody, and friends here, whom she met this morning at Hotel Blackhawk in Davenport after a lapse of 73 years.

Mrs. Goodman is in the center. On the left is Col. Joseph D. Barnes of LeClaire, once her sweetheart, and on the right, Col. Charles D. Randolph, who scouted with her brother.

Standing behind them (left to right) are Charles Rich, pioneer resident, Mrs. H. F. Cody and H. F. Cody. Mr. and Mrs. Cody are cousins of Mrs. Goodman.

(Clipping)

Buckskin Bill of Davenport Eagerly Awaiting Thrilling Story of
Plainsman in Argus.

In all the quad-cities there will be no more interested reader of the serial story, "The Blazing Horizon," a historic fiction tale of the "boomer" days of Oklahoma, by Ernest Lynn, which starts in The Argus, Monday, than Charles D. Randolph, (Buckskin Bill), 2108 East Thirteenth Street, Davenport.

One of the leading characters in the story, in fact its hero, will be "Pawnee Bill," Major Gordon W. Lillie, now living on his buffalo ranch in southern Oklahoma, who is an intimate friend of "Buckskin Bill" Randolph, cowboy, stage driver, "mule skinner," prospector, poet of the west, veteran of the World War and now a guard at the Rock Island arsenal.

"Pawnee Bill," who led the grand rush in the opening of Oklahoma and who was adopted by the Pawnee Indians as their white chief, is the youngest and one of the few survivors of the old plains scouts who were made immortal in frontier days. Among them were "Buffalo Bill" Cody, "Wild Bill" Hickok, Frank Canton, Bill Tilgham, "Diamond Dick" Tanner, living at Norfolk, Nebraska, Richard Clark, known as "Deadwood Dick," B. R. Pearson, "Idaho Bill," John B. Omohondro, "Texas Jack," Joseph E. Milner, "California Joe," and Captain Jack Crawford, the poet-scout.

They were all friends of "Pawnee Bill," and "Buckskin Bill" Randolph of Davenport was also a friend and acquaintance of several of them, notably Colonel Cody and Dr. Tanner, known as "Diamond Dick." In his den he has the portraits of all of these great characters and in his library he has all their biographies.

Will Follow Story Daily.

"Buckskin Bill" will follow the daily installments of The Argus

serial, as it unfolds the romantic history of the newest state in the union, with the most avid interest, for its characters and romances will be real to him.

Mr. Randolph came from Iowa pioneer stock. He was born in Scott county and his grandfather worked for the father of "Buffalo Bill" at what was known as the "Big farm," near McCausland, Iowa, in the early 40's. Shortly after "Buckskin Bill's" birth, at Pleasant Valley in 1888, his father moved to western Nebraska, homesteading a tract of land near North Platte. There he was a neighbor of "Buffalo Bill," whose ranch, "Scout's Rest," was located nearby.

Mr. Randolph grew up in a cow country and it was but natural that he chose a life in the saddle as soon as his years permitted. He worked as a horse wrangler in his boyhood and learned to stick to the back of outlaw bronchos whether they "sunfished," or did straight away bucking. He could also handle the lariat with the best of them and it was not long before he made a top cow hand, holding up his end in the round-up, cutting and branding the range stuff in the spring and bunching the fat beeves in the fall beef hunt.

Member of Ranch Crews.

In this capacity he worked all over the northwest, covering the great ranges of Wyoming, Montana, Idaho and Washington. He was a member of the "S. O. W." ranch crew in Montana and later joined the "Flying V" on the Cheyenne reservation in the border country of Wyoming and Montana.

He was in that section at the time of the big feuds of the cattle and sheepmen and once near Garrison, Montana, saw "Doc" Merritt ruthlessly shoot down a flock of sheep that had strayed onto the cattle range.

Later he went into Saskatchewan and was a "mule skinner" in the construction work of the Canadian Pacific and at the time the great plains that were crossed by the road were strewn with the bleached bones of

herds of buffalo that had been wantonly slain for their hides.

On the "S. O. W." ranch in Montana, while on a round-up participated in by six outfits that were combing the range, he witnessed a stampede of 1,000 head of maddened steers which rushed headlong into a canyon, milling, bawling and frantic with fright. He was on a mesa rim hundreds of feet above them and the scene was one of the most thrilling of his life.

Headquarters of the ranch were located 65 miles from Lewistown, Montana, and supplies had to be freighted from the railroad at that point. Blackfeet, Mandan, Crow, Flathead and Siwash Indians were numerous in the neighborhood.

Drove Stage Coach.

Later he drove a stage coach in Arizona and made acquaintance with the Mescalero, Tonto and Chiriqua Apaches of that section. They were remnants of the blood-thirsty tribes that had been led by Geronimo, Victoria and "The Kid" in the last murderous forays of Indians in the southwest.

In the World War Mr. Randolph served in the Seventeenth division of the A. E. F., overseas, and is now following the prosaic life of a guard at the arsenal.

He is a lover of the old West and of its traditions. No man in the country reverts the memories of its scout and peace officer heroes more than he and in his capacity as poet he has eulogized them in scores of effusions.

All of his verse has the flavor of the cowboy ballads of the range reminiscent of, "Come all ye gallant cowboys." He has written an ode to Pawnee Bill in which the refrain says:

"He guided the settlers in that southwest boom
And settled it with white folks where Indians once roamed.
He was with the Pawnee Indians until he got his fill,
And since then they have called him Pawnee Bill."

Longs for Old Days.

And while he is resting from his labors as guard at the Rock Island arsenal, in the quiet of his den, he often opens up his traveling kit and looks upon his two guns, one a silver mounted .38 Colt, the other a gold-mounted .38 Smith & Wesson, his cartridge belt, saddle, bridle and hackamore and longs to go back to the old West.

The yearning for the old life is expressed in his poem:

"Buckskin Bill's Lament"

"Come gather round me plainsmen,
The ones that yet remain -
Come let us have another round-up,
Out on the western plain.

"Come let us rope some cattle
And have a branding bee.
This will be our last great round-up
In the land that once was free.

"Come saddle up, old timers,
Put on your buckskin chaps,
Your boots and spurs and six guns,
And all your western traps.

"We'll have an old time round-up
And we'll camp out on the plain.
Come on now old timers -
Let's have a round-up once again."

Because he was of the old West and knew the old timers who will be part of the dramatic setting of The Argus serial story, "The Blazing Horizon," a story of the old southwest and of "Pawnee Bill," which starts Monday, "Buckskin Bill" is waiting patiently, but like a small boy with his appetite sharpened for pie, for the first installment.

And, believe you us, he will read it to the last word.

This book was written and compiled by

Col. Charles Daniel Randolph

"Buckskin Bill"

The Poet Laureate of the Plains

and famous Western writer

Life of California Joe -----	Col. Prentiss Ingraham
Letter About California Joe -----	Joseph E. Milner
Life of California Joe -----	Raymond W. Thorp
Sketch of California Joe -----	General George A. Custer
Stories About California Joe -----	"Buffalo Bill" Cody
	"Texas Jack" Omohundro
	"Captain Jack" Crawford
	Ellis Pierce
	G. W. Stokes
	Captain Lute North
	Dr. V. T. McGillivuddy
Added Features -----	Col. Charles D. Randolph

Arranged to give the complete life of California Joe