

WHEELER'S

FREIGHTED WITH TREASURES FOR BOYS AND GIRLS.

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JACK WHEELER.

A STORY OF THE WILD WEST.

By CAPT. DAVID SOUTHWICK.

CHAPTER XL.

JACK WHEELER'S life at St. Louis has little to do with his search for the mountain of gold, and may, therefore, be passed over very briefly. He was very kindly received by his aunt; and although he felt strange at first, the return of Senator Power and Bella from the West made him feel more at home. Between Bella's brother Alfred and himself a warm friendship sprang up, and the two were inseparable. The principal drawbacks to the pleasure of his life were the enmity of a lad of some nineteen years old, a son of Mr. Runman, the Express director, who conceived a violent animosity for Jack, and was continually doing him bad turns. The second cause was in the conduct of Mrs. Wheeler's father, who had never forgiven his daughter for making a match with a man who was not his equal in point of wealth, and who maddened Jack by speaking of his father as if he were a malefactor of the worst kind. The change of life, too, from the air of the plains to the confinement of a city, tried him sorely; and at last, after six months' stay, goaded to desperation by the abuse of his father by his grandfather, he determined to leave St. Louis, and seek his parents in California, making as he went west a great effort to find the mountain of gold.

He acquainted Alfred with his intention, and the lad, whose imagination had been fired by his cousin's description of prairie life, begged to be allowed to accompany him. Jack at first refused, pointing out that the hardships of the journey across the prairie would be too much for him; but at last he yielded to his entreaties, and the two boys, taking a small kit of clothes, set off on their journey.

Jack, who had during his stay at St. Louis paid great attention to the lectures on chemistry, surprised his cousin by taking a number of chemicals with him.

"My dear Alfred," he replied, "I know what I am doing. The Indians have got an idea in their heads that I am a great medicine; and I have got here chemicals which will enable me to perform experiments, such as will make them regard me as so wonderful a spirit, that they will be ready to do anything rather than offend me."

The boys had so timed their start that their absence was not noticed until they had reached the Missouri by rail, and had started on foot for the West, after which they knew that they were safe from pursuit. The privations of the journey were very great; and Alfred, as Jack had feared, knocked up and had fever. At last, after many adventures, which cannot here be recited, they reached Jack's old home on the plain. Here Jack found his ponies, arms, and all the property that had been left for him; and here they remained for some weeks, during which time Alfred, under Jack's tuition, worked hard at riding, shooting, throwing the lasso, and other exercises. During this time no caravan came along, for the Indians were out, and had committed many depredations. At last a strong party came up, and Jack asked permission for them to join it, which, when it was understood that he was a good huntsman and accustomed to the plain, was freely given.

The next morning the emigrant train started and the consins took their place beside the leaders of the procession, and placed themselves at their command. They presented a strong contrast to the rough-bearded men who acted as the advanced guard; but Alfred was most conspicuous, his lithe form, almost girlish features, and refined air, seeming very much out of place in that company;

while on the other hand, Jack's stature, robustness, and centaur-like seat, made him appear to be a natural part of the scene.

When the train had proceeded about two or three miles from the station, the men detailed as scouts spread out in every direction, and formed a line that protected it on all sides. The members of the main guard moved in groups, and chatted, smoked and joked on the way; but beyond them were solitary horsemen, looking like specks in the distance, who scoured the plains in search of savage foes; for they well knew that when the Indians were deemed to be peaceable, parties of them were always lying in ambush, in order to be able to swoop down on a train whenever a good opportunity presented itself.

These appeared and disappeared on the horizon quite frequently, and made signals at intervals to

indicate that no traces of an enemy had been seen, and that everything was all right.

The lads



"THEN THEY TOOK UP A POSITION AND COMMENCED BLAZING AWAY."

were with the advance guard, as they were supposed to be good scouts; and when far out on the plain Jack pointed to a distant object, and telling Alfred to keep by him, set spurs to his mustang, and went off across the plain at full speed.

They were soon within four or five hundred yards of the strange objects, which were nothing less than a large band of wapiti, or elk, as they are generally called.

On seeing the horsemen approaching, every animal stopped grazing, and stared at them in the most inquisitive manner. Not being satisfied with what their eyes revealed, all commenced sniffing, to see if they could detect their character by their odor; but as the wind blew from the opposite direction, this availed them little.

It being a characteristic of most wild animals to permit horsemen to approach them closer than persons on foot, especially from the leeward, the consins got within two or three hundred yards of the herd of wapiti before these began to display any signs of uneasiness.

It finally dawned upon them that the strange objects approaching might have some sinister designs against them, and as soon as they got that idea into their heads, they huddled together for a few moments, then fled as fast as they could. They presented a most wildly stirring scene to Alfred, for they were grouped together so closely that their antlers, which were loudly clanging when they struck each other, looked like a thicket of horns.

When they had got fairly started, Jack shouted: "Give your horse a free rein; but keep behind them, and rake them forward."

"All right!" was the answer; and both dashed after the flying throng.

Although wapiti can run rapidly, their gait being a long, measured trot, yet they were no match for the swift-footed mustangs, especially on level ground, and the consequence was, that the young hunters were on their flanks in less than two minutes.

When Jack reached that position, he threw the reins on the neck of his pony, and as the magazine of his rifle was filled with cartridges, he had nothing to do but place it to his shoulder and fire.

Aiming at the ribs of a huge stag, whose ponderous weight forced it to keep in the rear, he fired, and brought him tumbling down on his head, and, after a piteous cry, he fell over on his side—dead.

Leaving him, he selected another, and another, until he had shot five; and, as he had not heard any rifle but his own, he stopped the pursuit, and gazed around to see what had

and were very anxious to learn how they had become such adepts with the rifle. Alfred told them his cousin had killed the animals single-handed; and this caused him to assume the proportions of a veritable Nimrod in their estimation. To all their queries, however, he had little to say; for, like all modest persons, he wished to remain dumb on the subject of his own merits.

The train moved on all day without any incident, and in silence, the only noise that emanated from it being the squeaking of axles which knew little of grease, and the occasional squall of a baby or the cackle of fowls. The men either walked or rode beside the wagons, or formed a mounted cordon outside them, while the women or the children acted as drivers. As the long line of white canvas, toiled over the prairie, the cattle seemed sometimes to be buried in the long grass, which, in some places, reached a height of seven or eight feet. Jack and Alfred frequently drew to one side, and watched the caravan with keen feelings of pleasure, on account of its pictorial effect. Not a soul was met all day long, except a solitary carrier taking despatches; but he fled past with the speed of the wind, and vanished from sight in such a short time that one might readily fancy he was an apparition.

About five o'clock in the evening a wall of water was reached, and there the train went into camp. Each wagon as it arrived took the place assigned it by one of the leaders, and when all were in position, they formed a huge square. The cattle, under the protection of a strong guard, were turned out to graze on the rich and succulent grass, and after this was done, preparations were made for dinner, all the fires being lighted inside the square,

because of his cousin. He espied him some distance away, leading his pony, and walking in a manner that indicated he was hurt. He rode back at full speed, and asked him what ailed him; Alfred replied that his pony had put his foot in a prairie-dog hole, and had thrown him, but that he had escaped with a shake, and some scratches. Jack examined these, and finding they were comparatively trivial, asked him if he had killed anything; Alfred answered that he had not, as he could not handle his rifle with one hand.

"There is no necessity for that," said his cousin. "All you have to do in chasing buffaloes, wapiti, or other deer, is to run your pony alongside of them, and as he knows his business, he will remain near their flanks while you shoot. You can put your left arm through the reins, or throw them in from the knob of your saddle, and use both hands for your rifle."

The boys now rode back to the wagon-train, and on reaching it they were severely reprimanded by one of the men for going so far ahead of the column; but when Jack told him their reason for doing so, there was a general expression of satisfaction; the lines of the man's mouth relaxed, and he looked at his companions with an expression which said as plainly as possible, "They know what they are about;" a sentiment which seemed to receive general approval.

Five wagons left the line to bring in the slain animals, and when they returned the men crowded round to take a look at the trophies, for the majority of them had never seen a wapiti. Those who had a knowledge of hunting were loud in their praise of the artistic manner in which the animals were killed, as the bullets had gone quivering through all of them, and either lodged in the muscles or emerged at the fore shoulder. It was evident, at a glance, that whoever had killed them was no novice at the business; and this made the boys appear more mysterious than ever.

The more enthusiastic of the men congratulated the young hunters on their good luck,

for fear the Indians might, by any chance, swoop down upon the emigrants when they were least expected.

The only material they had with which to make the fires was the dry dung of buffaloes, generally known as buffalo chips, which was freely scattered over the plain. This gives out a fair amount of heat, and little smoke, and when perfectly dry, burns freely. All the people received a share of the wapiti, and this was the first fresh meat many of them had tasted for two months.

Jack and Alfred were assigned to the mess presided over by an emigrant named McCooms, as he had the most generous supply of commissary stores, and but a small number to provide for, his family consisting only of a wife, a daughter about sixteen years old, and a son a year younger.

The wife took her new responsibilities under her care with the promptest alacrity, and showered almost as much motherly kindness upon them as she did upon her own children. The boys did not intend to accept her hospitality gratuitously, for they were prepared to remunerate her as soon as they separated. They felt thankful, however, at having fallen into such good hands, for the family were not only generous, but also pleasant and well educated.

When dinner was finished, and the animals were fed and watered, and tied up to the wagon-wheels inside the square, a patrol was detailed off for guard duty, and its members took up their position some distance away, and lay down on the ground, so that they might the more readily detect the approach of enemies, and avoid observation themselves.

When everything necessary for the safety of the camp was arranged, the groups inside the square gave themselves up to such enjoyment as they could command. Some formed into large groups, and devoted themselves to singing negro melodies, hymns, patriotic songs, and lays of love or war; while others tripped the light fantastic toe to the music of cracked fiddles, asthmatic accordions, and shrill flutes. Everybody seemed as happy as



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Such sturdy independence of character is always admired, when it is exhibited in a good cause...

There is another such monument in the city of Berlin. Formerly the Alexander Place was used for mili-

tary drills. It was also occupied on certain days for a market, and some collisionous area. In order to settle one of these disputes...

LOST CHANCES.

"I don't have any chance," remarked a young lad to an older friend. "I wish I could change my luck..."

This youngster represents a large class. They are not all studying German. Some of them are at school. Some are in stores or workshops...

THROUGH LIFE.

We slight the gifts that every season bears, And let them fall unheeded from our grasp. In our great eagerness to reach and grasp...

ACCEPTING A DARE.

It is a very natural impulse to accept a "dare," as it is called. Either the pride is touched by it, or the ambition kindled...

A few months ago a thoughtless girl dared a Harvard student to ride his bicycle down the steep hill upon which she lived. The young man accepted the challenge...

It was a narrow escape from death. The young man had a sound constitution, and was in excellent athletic form. This alone saved him.

The worst "dares," however, are those which endanger the character rather than the limbs. Challenges to smoke, to drink, to plunge into water...

POPULAR SONGS.

Our readers will find an opportunity to get many popular songs at a very low price from G. Hathaway, Boston, Mass.

DR. ALEXANDER MILTON ROSS. Philanthropist and Scientist. BY JUDSON NEWMAN SMITH.

The beginning of the latter half of this century stands in the history of our country as one of its most turbulent eras. The halls of the nation's Capitol rang with the thrilling speeches of Webster, Clay and Calhoun.

During the session of 1848-50, might have been seen in the visitors' gallery of the House, a young man, who drank with avidity the words of these heated statesmen. This young man was Alexander Milton Ross, destined shortly to bear a noble and important part in the events that were the outcome of these issues...

Alexander M. Ross was born in Belleville, Ontario, in 1832; his ancestors were early settlers on the continent, his father having immigrated shortly after England gained possession of Canada...

Dr. Ross attributes his success to the wise teachings of his great mother, who was indeed a pattern of a Christian parent well worth emulating. She instilled into her son the true principles of manliness...

The boy soon gave indications of that courage that so distinguished him in later years. In 1858, during a period of rebellion in the Canadian Provinces, his little town was thrown into wild excitement...

When he was twelve years of age, his father died, and it became incumbent on the young man to do something for his own support. So he entered a printing office and learned type setting, acquiring thus a trade upon which he could at any time fall back...

Later, he entered the office of a merchant, who was a kind man of refined tastes, and seeing a laudable ambition in the young clerk to obtain an education, gave him the freedom of his library.

But opportunity was too limited in his town to satisfy the ambition of the vigorous young scholar, and after much deliberation, New York City was decided upon as the most likely place for the successful prosecution of his labors.

He called on Dr. Valentine Mott, the most distinguished surgeon of those days, unfolded his desire, and asked for his advice. The learned doctor gave

him his kindly attention, and then said: "Well, as you appear determined to study medicine, it would be useless for me to try and dissuade you, which I would if I thought I could." He thereupon advised the student what course of study to pursue, and loaned him the necessary books for the purpose.

During this period, young Ross formed the acquaintance of Horace Greely and William Cullen Bryant, and they, too, impressed with the sincerity of his endeavors, gladly gave him what assistance they could, in the way of introductory letters to prominent gentlemen in Washington.

It was at this time that he sat night in the gallery of the House and, as the wrongs and sufferings of the slaves were exposed and denounced, formed a mighty purpose to bear his humble share in the work of emancipation.

But the time was not yet ripe. The unhealthy atmosphere of Washington compelled him to return to New York, where he still set type by day, and studied medicine by night, and having, by economy, put by sufficient money, with the little left him by his father, embarked later in the lumber business in Canada.

This undertaking, ending in failure and the loss of all his possessions, finally demonstrated that trade was not his proper calling, and his long and severe studies having qualified him for admission to the medical profession, he soon commenced practice.

In 1855 he suffered a severe shock in the death of his mother, who had always been the object of his reverence and love. Soon after this came the opportunity to effect that purpose spoken of, namely, the liberation of the negro slaves in the South.

The result was he started South, and engaged, till the necessity no longer existed, in running the slaves from Virginia into Canada. He helped them and he took them northward. His only aim was mere chance. If discovered death were almost certain.

When times of peace came, Dr. Ross returned to the study of natural history and successively produced "Birds of Canada," "Butterflies and Moths of Canada," "Flora of Canada," and many other valuable contributions to science, gaining for him, decorations from sovereigns and learned societies the world over.

THE GOLDEN THOUGHTS. THE sweetest freedom is an honest heart. THE surest way to please is to forget one's self and think only of others. EVERY day give back to society, at least a part of what you received from it.



