

A PERILOUS CHASE.

Jack Hazen was spending the summer with his father, a railway contractor, who worked a large force of men and teams along an extension of the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad, in the days when the buffalo had not been exterminated on the plains of Dakota and Wyoming.

Hazen's outfit, a long line of teams dragging heavily-laden wagons and big wheel-scrappers, was moving across a rough country from the completed Black Hills Branch to the main line on the Running Water. Jack and the 'night herder,' 'Lon Bean,' were riding a mule or more in advance of the head of the train, seated in a light buckboard drawn by a 'leggy' span of half-breed Indian ponies.

Mr. Hazen always remained, riding a pony, near his outfit when on the move. He chose to be at hand if wagons broke down, teams gave out, or any serious thing happened. So it happened that Jack and 'Lon' had the buckboard to themselves.

The trail they were following was an old Black Hills stage route to the Union Pacific Railroad. It led across one of the finest cattleranges in the West. Literally, there were 'cattle on a thousand hills,' here. They were to be seen as far as the eye could reach and in every direction, their thousands covering the hill-slopes, where they were cropping the succulent feed of early June.

There were occasional bands of antelope, too—fleet, timid creatures, that scurried over the tops of distant ridges with a fleeting glimmer of white 'flashes.' And there were Jack-rabbits and prairie-dogs innumerable.

Jack had no gun; he was not deemed old enough to manage a breech-loader. 'Lon' was, indeed, the only man of the outfit who carried a weapon, and he had but a six shooter at his belt. He had worked as cowboy and 'line-rider' at different ranches, and the pistol in its holster was simply a part of his dress. He was no hunter, few cowboys are—and so the game along the route was little disturbed.

But this day, just as the buckboard and its riders had reached the summit of a high ridge, they came face to face with a straggling band of buffalo 'moggies' quietly along the old stage road. The humps of the animals were seen first over the rise. Then the occupants of the buckboard and the buffalo came face to face with not fifty yards of road between them. There Jack saw his first bison—a big bull and two cows.

The beasts raised their big shaggy fronts, stared a moment in alarm, then turned and fled at a lumbering gallop along the ridge, a little yellow calf near the flank of the hindmost cow.

As the buffalo turned their broad sides, 'Lon,' who had pulled up the team, drew his revolver, aimed at the bull and fired. A spurt of dust from the animal's flank showed where the bullet struck, but the night-herder might as well have used a popgun for the monster's rough, full coat was covered with a cement of baked mud, the effect of a recent roll in a 'wallow.'

As for Jack, he was greatly excited, 'Look at the calf! Look at the calf, the little buffalo, 'Lon!' he shouted. 'We must catch him!'

The thing seemed possible enough, and 'Lon,' who was quite dexterous with a rope, was not unwilling to give an exhibition of his skill.

'All right, son,' he cried, and gave the whip to the fleet ponies. Almost instantly the buckboard was bowling along in the wake of the buffalo.

The big beasts were a hundred yards or so in advance. Alarmed at the pistol-shot, they were running, in their heavy fashion, at a tremendous pace. Nevertheless it soon became evident that the ponies were gaining, and Jack and 'Lon' whooped with delight.

As the buffalo kept to the ridge, which stretched away into a flat table-land in the near distance, the ground became smooth and the wheeling clear, except for occasional patches of sage-bush. When the buckboard bumped over the roots of these, its occupants had to clutch hard at the seat to keep from being flung out.

Away they went, slowly gaining on the buffalo. The little calf presently began to lag and show signs of fatigue. Range cattle along their track hurried out of the way or stood with tails up, snorting at the team as they dashed by. The ridge melted into the plain. Nearer and nearer the pursuers drew to their quarry. The calf was twenty yards or more behind the mother cow, and but little more in advance of the ponies, when 'Lon' surrendered the reins to Jack, got a picket-rope from under the buckboard seat, swiftly made a running noose, and collected the rope for a throw.

A few minutes later they were running in the midst of the big herd of long horned steers—a herd which broke way for them and ran, following and plunging, on either side. Now the yellow mite of a calf was

almost under the ponies' noses.

'Lon yelled to Jack to 'pull to the left a little.' As the boy responded the night-herder flung his noose and coil of rope.

The cast missed. The calf bobbed along at the ponies' heads.

'Lon started to draw in his rope for another throw, when suddenly they emerged from the dense throng of cattle and found themselves plunging down an incline into the narrow valley of a creek.

The descent was not only sudden but so steep, rough and stony, that the lines were jerked from Jack's hands, and the boy was flung upon the dashboard, as the vehicle bounced over a boulder.

'Lon gripped the seat, hanging to his rope, and Jack, managed to turn and fling his arms around the herder's legs and cling to them.

Then those half-Indian range ponies showed their training, on their instincts, for the chase. They never for an instant lost their heads or their footing, but lunged with stiff-legged jumps directly at the heels of the fleeing buffalo. The calf was now behind.

Down that dangerous incline the buckboard rolled for a quarter of a mile, in a cloud of dust and stones, until the bottom was reached without accident. Then, as the pony team, still at the tails of the buffalo, ran through a thick cluster of sage-bush, one of the front wheels—no doubt splintered upon the rocks above—went to pieces. Jack and 'Lon were pitched out, sprawling among the bushes, while ponies and buffalo tore away toward the creek.

The boys picked themselves up, bruised and scratched, but not seriously injured.

Almost the first object which met their eyes on getting to their feet was the buffalo calf they had been chasing so hotly. The little creature stood among the bushes only a few steps distant, its legs wide apart, its sides heaving, its tongue hanging out, and staring at them with protruding eyes. Evidently it was nearly exhausted with its long run, and in such a state of excitement that it had lost the sense of fear.

The picket-rope, which 'Lon had clung to until pitched out of the buckboard, lay across the tops of the low bushes close at hand. He cautiously drew it toward him, coiling and running a noose. Jack, forgetting bruises, teams and broken buckboard watched eagerly while the loop, circled in careful gyrations, then shot out a hiss like that of a snake, and dropped neatly over the head of the panting calf.

The rope, jerked taut as the startled calf turned to run, caught the little fellow just behind its jaws and ears. A practised jerk threw the tired creature upon its side, and Jack, with a whoop of delight, ran forward and pounced upon it.

But the calf had good lungs, and was not yet too tired to use them. Its doleful bleating could have been heard a mile away. For a minute or two Jack sat in triumph upon the bawling calf, while 'Lon turned to look after the runaway ponies.

He saw them presently, minus the buckboard, climbing the opposite bank of the creek, some forty rods distant. The buffalo had already crossed and were making off up the valley. Free from drivers and vehicle, the ponies had lost interest in the chase. Free, also from checkreins, they now took to cropping grass.

Suddenly an uproar came from the slope above. 'Lon looked up with a cowboy's instinct of what was coming. The great herd of cattle above, disturbed and made curious by the wild chase through their midst, had crowded along and over the edge of the bluff. That bawling of the buffalo calf had started a wild stampede down the hill—a great mob of crazily bellowing creatures plunging in a cloud of dust down the steep incline.

'Get off that calf and come here, quick!' yelled 'Lon to Jack.

But the uproar was so great that the boy, still sitting upon his prize, though now looking more in wonder than fear at the roaring stampede above, could not hear. 'Lon ran to him, seized him by the coat collar, and jerked him to his feet.

'Let that calf go! he yelled again. 'Get behind me—here—so—and stay there. No use to run!'

The buffalo calf struggled to his feet and ran off, dragging the rope. On came the crazy herd.

As the foremost reached the flat, which they did in a few moments, 'Lon drew his self-acting revolver and began firing above his head, but the cattle, attracted by the strange sight of men on foot, and furiously excited by the din of their own bawlings, paid no heed to the shots—it indeed they heard them at all. They only slackened their speed to surge in a tumultuous throng around the standing figures.

Those which ran past in the rush whirled and came back, to push and jam their way into the midst of the bellowing mob. The nearest ones lowered their horns, pawed the ground, and bleated in a hoarse, crazy roar of cattle thronging about some dead creature. This sound heard, even in the safety one's bed at night, sets the nerves a tingle.

Frightened and nervous the herder quite as much as Jack—the two young fellows stood close together, encircled at a few yards distance by wild-eyed, threatening steers. Many of the foremost cattle tell upon their knees, hooking the earth in mad and crazy fashion. Those behind—and there were hundreds in the throng—crowded them slowly forward. On all sides the space was narrowing.

Even if none of the steers should attack the boys, their chance of being trampled under foot, or smothered like cats in a sack, was imminent.

For the moment the ex-cowboy 'lost sand.' He had reloaded the chambers of his revolver mechanically, and he now stood helplessly beside Jack, the weapon dangling limply in his hand.

A choking cloud of dust tore over the surging mob. It grew instantly thicker—the fine, smothering dust of 'gumbo' soil. The two boys found themselves gasping for breath, suddenly cut off from view of even the nearest threatening horns.

'Grab my belt behind with both hands,'

yelled 'Lon in Jack's ear. 'We'll shoot our way through. Come on!'

Jack closed his eyes, hung on and followed. He heard, above the uproar of the cattle, the crack of 'Lon's revolver, and felt himself jerked over the carcass of a kicking steer. Crack! went the revolver again, and there was another struggle across a kicking body. Then they were jammed in between two animals, for an instant the life was nearly squeezed out of both.

Again a report, muffled, deadened by close contact. Again a brief gap, with obstructions underfoot.

Two more shots were fired—one without effect—another crowding steam went down. Then, for a few moments, 'Lon dealt heavy blows right and left with the butt of his big pistol. There was breathless crowding and jimmieing; then, bruised and half-smothered, they reached open ground and ran for the bluff.

'Saved by the dust!' said 'Lon,' as they threw themselves, panting, among some bushes. 'Never saw a worse mob—dead crazy, all of them; and if we hadn't been hid by that dust for a minute, you and I'd been picketed out as ornaments on some of those branching horns.'

'They get that way occasionally especially if they get to stampeding down hill, just after being to salt,' said he, 'and they ain't used to seeing men on foot.'

In the meantime the excited herd, which now had some dead steers to roar over, kept up their frightful din in a fog of dust below. This lasted for a half hour or more. Then, tired out, the herd rolled on up the creek.

'Lon and Jack secured their ponies, but the buckboard had been strung out in useless pieces across the valley. They mounted the ponies and hunted for a time after the buffalo calf. But the creature had evidently regained its wind and speed, for it had escaped a tramping under the stampede, and had gone on. They found the rope, which had loosened and dropped from its neck.

There were four dead steers on the scene of the recent crush, quite trampled out of the semblance of living creatures. Jack proposed that the owners should be found, and then his father should pay them for the loss. This was attempted later, but the ranchmen, after listening to the story of their killing, only laughed, saying they guessed that on the whole 'the steers had about an even thing,' and the affair might be considered a 'stand-off.'

It was these men, also, who informed Jack that their salting ground, where they kept rock salt thrown out, was about a mile above where he had met with his adventure, and that there were several bands of buffalo in the habit of 'licking' there.

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RAILWAY RISKS IN CHINA.

They Come Mostly Upon all the Foreign Employees.

The most amusing and painful experiences that attend 'railroading' in China fall, not upon the promoters or the passengers, but upon the foreign employees. An engineer's life in north China, for instance, is generally an exciting one. Besides natural and routine difficulties, he has to cope, says the London News, with mandarin intrigues, village opposition, mutinous railway coolies and turbulent soldiery.

A somewhat typical incident was that of 1890, when, during floods, a mob led by soldiery cut the railway embankment and destroyed seven miles of line near Tien-Tsin. The cause alleged was that the embankment prevented the flood water from running off—which, as there were

TIME TELLS THE STORY.

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frequent outlets, was utter nonsense. Previous to that attempts had been made to wreck trains, and the foreign employees were constantly threatened.

The life, too, of a foreign guard on a train is not always a happy one. Mandarins' servants without tickets frequently take possession of first-class carriages, and in the most comprehensive sense make themselves at home. Perhaps, if the weather is cold, they undertake to get warm by lighting pans of charcoal.

Charcoal has certain asphyxiating effects; the other passengers complain, and the servants have to be ejected. Too much violence might lead to a general attack on foreigners and another Tien-Tsin massacre while too little would not be effective. The unhappy guard has to follow the 'happy' mean between a hard push and a knock-down blow.

There have been many ludicrous as well as dangerous incidents on the North China line. When it was first opened, Chinese would come to the booking office and try to bargain for tickets. When told the fare they would offer half, and gradually raise their bid, much disgusted that they should not, in a business spirit, be met half-way.

One day a country gentleman, on his first ride in a train, seeing his house midway between two stations flying past, deliberately opened the door and stepped out into space. At the pace the train was going a European would certainly have been killed, but the supple Celestial, after a prolonged period of somersaults, was seen to pick himself up, dust his clothes, and set off home across the fields—much pleased with his short cut and the convenience of the 'fire-wheel carriage.'

An unfortunate railway coolie, equally ignorant of the laws of mechanics, did not get off so well. Seeing two trucks coming at a snail's pace down a siding, he placed his foot on the rail to stop them. To his astonishment it was cut off, and he learned, like Stevenson's cow, that momentum is made up of mass as well as of velocity. But in spite of everything, railways are bound to prosper in a country where travelling is otherwise so slow and so difficult.

CHURCH COURTS.

May Differ and Split Hairs on Doctrinal Points, but may Join Hands for Humanity in Proclaiming the Virtues of Dr. Agnew's Catarrhal Powder.

Catarrh, that dread menace to humanity, attacks the high, the low, the rich, the poor, the learned and the illiterate, but Dr. Agnew's Catarrhal Powder is the sovereign cure and needs no more reliable testimony of its efficacy to cope with and cure this disease than that such eminent divines as Rev. W. H. Withrow, Methodist; Rev. Mungo Fraser, Presbyterian; Bishop Sweetman, and other prominent leaders in the Church courts, who have over their own signatures testified to its virtues. What better evidence for you that it will cure you. Sold by E. C. Brown.

Thackeray.

Thackeray, anxious to enter parliament, stood for Oxford, thinking he might win the seat from Lord Monck, who then represented it. Mrs. Ritchie, in her biographical preface to 'The Virginians,' tells a pleasant story on the subject, one that exhibits the amenities of politics when gentlemen are opponents.

My father, meeting Lord Monck in the street, shook hands with him, had a little talk over the situation, and took leave of him with the quotation. 'May the best man win.' 'I hope not,' said Lord Monck very cordially, with a kind little bow.

From the same preface we learn that, during his second American tour, 1855-56, Thackeray was peculiarly affected by our climate. He writes:

'In both visits to America I have found the effects of the air the same. I have a difficulty in forming the letters as I write them down on the page in answering questions, in finding the most simple words to

form the answers. A gentleman asked me how long I had been in New York I hesitated, and then said a week. I had arrived the day before.

'I hardly know what it said. Am thinking of something else, nothing definite, with an irrepressible longing to be in motion. I sleep three hours less than in England making up, however, with a heavy long sleep every fourth night or so.

'There is some electric influence in the sun and air here which we don't experience on our side of the globe: people can't sit still, people can't ruminate over their dinners, dawdle in their studies; they must keep moving. I want to dash into the street now.'

WAR ON TORMENTORS.

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A. Darnell, of Hayden, Neb., writes: 'For 12 years I was tormented with itching piles, the agony at times was almost beyond bearing. I tried a dozen or more so-called pile remedies without any lasting benefit. One box of Dr. Agnew's Ointment cured me.' This remedy cures eczema when all else fails. Sold by E. C. Brown.

All They Could Hope For.

Dean Redding was a man of a remarkably cheerful and hopeful turn of mind. His wife, on the other hand, took things very seriously, and had no small difficulty in accommodating herself to the peculiarities of her neighbors when, as not unfrequently happened, they differed from her own. Life cites an anecdote illustrating these opposite traits of character in the husband and wife.

Shortly after the dean had moved to a new parish in the Woking district, the worthy woman had been out calling among the poor parishioners.

'John,' she cried, returning home in a state of mental agitation, 'what do you think they say of Mrs. Riley, the butcher's wife?'

'I'm sure I do not know,' responded the sagacious husband, too discreet to hazard a rash opinion. 'I'm sure I don't know. What? Nothing serious, I hope?'

'They say they can tell when she's going to have company by her washing the children's faces! Now, you're a pretty sanguine man, John, but what on earth can you hope for of a woman like that?'

'Well,' he answered, with something like a sigh, to hide the humor which no wise husband cares to show in considering the difficulties of his wife, 'I suppose all we can hope for is that she entertains a good deal.'

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