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Memories of Ranch Life



THE COWS on the ranch were of two kinds. Some were milch cows that had sucking calves. These we kept so we could save some of their milk each day to make the cheeses. And some were range cows that we let get fat in nice, green meadows all summer. These we took to the railroad station in the valley in the fall and put them on a train and sent them to the big city to be sold for beefsteaks and roast beef. Now because the range cows could run loose over the meadows so much, they were rather wild and not easy to make do just what we wanted them to do. They didn't like to be put into the corral where we had to keep them at nite so

they couldn't wander too far away and get lost in other people's herds of cattle.

One day Star and I were hiking over the foothills, when off in the distance I saw Carl riding toward me very fast. He was trying to follow a wild cow that was running this way and that, fooling him at every turn. Carl had a long, forked stick with six or seven nice big bass fish which he had just caught down in the river. When you carry fish this way, you put one end of the stick right through the fish's gills. These gills are like our nose and have an opening clear through the fish's



cheek. You string the fish through the gills onto the stick like you string beads on a string. Carl galloped his horse because the cow was running very fast. He was trying to get her into the corral, which was on the other side of a large plowed field of very loose

dirt. Now as Carl passed me, he called, "Come on, Gladys, give me your arm. Put your foot in the stirrup and you can ride with me." So I reached up and grabbed his strong arm and caught my foot in the stirrup as he slowed his horse down. He then gave me a quick lift, and I swung up behind him and threw my two arms around him and held on as tight as I could.

I was sitting right on the horse's back with my legs hanging down on either side. It was a very slick seat, for the horse was fat and sleek. I bounced a good deal, because the cow had decided to go right across the plowed field. The ground was very rough and bumpy, and the horse had to do a lot of leaping to jump over the bumps and keep up with the cow. Besides, the cow kept changing her mind on which way she was going, and in trying to get rid of us, she kept dodging just like a football player does on the football field, first turning sharply this way then that. Every time the horse leaped, I bounced very high, until one could have seen light between me and the horse's back, and every time she turned quickly, I was almost thrown on the ground. But I clung very tightly to my brother's waist, and it was so much fun and so exciting that I began to laugh instead of cry when I came down hard on my seat as the horse leaped over the plowed ground. I never have seen a cow that could run so fast, and I began to think that we were never going to get her in the corral.

Then I thought briefly of little Star. I wondered if he would get lost and not be able to find his way home. So right in the middle of a bump, I quickly looked behind me, and there I saw a very funny sight. Across the plowed field came little Star, or at least he was trying to come. His little legs were so short and the bumps were so high that he had to make two or

three tries before he could get over some of them. It looked like he was almost lying down, because you couldn't see his swift little legs at all. I laughed, and just then Carl said, "Hold on tight, Sister, because we are almost to the corral gate, and the cow won't want to go in, so I will have to turn the horse many times very quickly." So I squeezed him tighter than ever and pressed my knees into the horse's back and almost felt like yelling, it was so frightening and such fun. After darting back and forth three or four times and trying to get away, the cow finally decided there was nothing else to do about it but go into the corral. So she dashed in the gate, and Carl stopped his horse so fast that I almost went over his head. Then Carl swung out of the saddle and ran to the gate and closed it tight before the cow could change her mind again.

He lifted me down from the horse. I was so excited and frightened that my knees were shaking and I could hardly stand up. But just then, little Star made it across the field and came running toward me. He was trembling all over because he was afraid he was going to lose me. So I picked him up and began to pet him, and this made my legs stop shaking. He



kept leaping up in my arms and sticking his little tongue out to lick my face as if

he were kissing me, and this made him feel better, and he stopped trembling and yelping with his little voice. Then I put him down and we both ran to the cabin and climbed up on the bed to take a rest after such an exciting adventure.

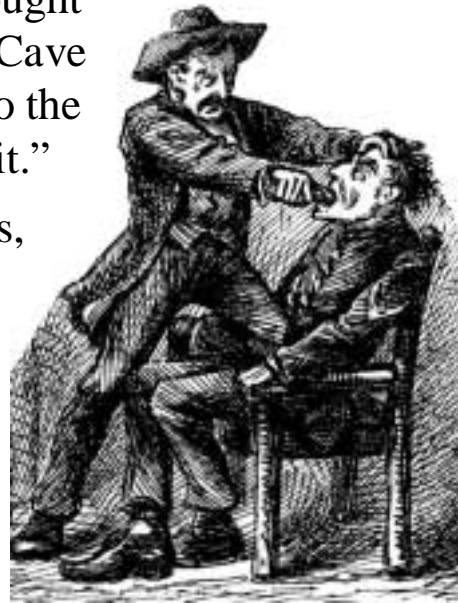
One day when I woke up in the morning I had a terrible toothache. It felt just like someone had taken a red hot poker from the fire and was poking me in the jaw. Today when someone has a toothache he goes to the dentist, but on the ranch there was no dentist to go to. I tried my best not to think about it. When it was time to eat I chewed my food with the other side of my mouth, but it still hurt, and I didn't feel like eating very much at all. I had trouble falling to sleep that nite, and though I hoped it would get better, the next day it was more painful than the day before. Finally at the end of three days Carl said, "We have had enough of this toothache. We will ride over to Cave Valley and have Brother Farr pull it out."

So Carl saddled up old Monte and put me up on his back, then he got up on his own horse, and we began our journey. It was a beautiful morning, with the sun sending down bright rays of sunlight that sparkled through the leaves of the oak trees along the way. Birds sang gayly in the meadows and darted about as jauntily as could be, and though normally nothing could have made me happier than to see them play so, today I

couldn't enjoy them, for it was a long way on horseback to Cave Valley, and each bounce of the horse made my tooth ache more. I can tell you I was very glad when at long last we came up over the hill and looked down into the little valley and saw a cabin standing there with smoke curling up from the big rock chimney.

As we rode up to the cabin door, Brother and Sister Farr came out and welcomed us. When Brother Farr saw my swollen jaw, he said, "Well, well, it looks like trouble, but we will fix that in a hurry. It's a good thing I brought my forceps with me when I came to Cave Valley this summer. Come with me to the shed, Gladys, and we'll take care of it."

So Carl took hold of one of my hands, and Brother Farr took hold of the other, and the three of us walked straight towards the shed. Soon I was sitting on a saw horse with my feet braced against the soft ground. Brother Farr opened his satchel and took out a pair of



awful looking pincers. He told me, "Now you must be brave for just a minute." He put one foot up on a chair and braced himself so he couldn't slip, then he said calmly, "Open your

mouth very wide and hold onto the cross-bar of the saw horse.” He then raised the forceps and fastened them very tightly around my sore tooth. It hurt to have the them touching such a tender spot, but I tried my best not to wiggle or cry. Then all of a sudden he gave a quick pull, and a little twist, and it felt as though a bolt of lightening had come through the forceps and into my jaw. Then he gave another quick pull, and right away I began to feel better, for now the tooth was out.

We thanked Brother Farr and began the long journey home. On the way I could still feel a numb pain in my jaw and could taste the salt from the sore. Having one’s tooth pulled by a neighbor was a very frightening thing to have to go through, but in those days it was the best we could do. When we arrived back at Cliff Ranch and had our supper, I climbed into my soft feather bed and snuggled down to sweet dreams of the nite. It was so good not to feel the pain of the toothache anymore, but to feel instead the soothing process of nature healing up the hole where the tooth had been pulled out. I kept sticking my tongue in the hole. It felt so big and empty. But soon I was fast asleep and forgot all about it.

Now the older boys in my family liked adventure and thought they were very brave. What they wanted to do more than anything else was to lasso a bear with their lariats and bring it home alive. One day when they were returning from a

day on the ranch chasing cattle, they ran into a huge mother brown bear. She had with her two almost full-grown cub bears. “Now this is our chance,” thought the boys, but when they saw the huge size of both the mother bear and the cub bears, they thought better of it. They looked at their



guns and found that they only had four bullets between them, so they knew if the bear attacked them, they had to shoot straight and get three pretty much on the first try.

The mother bear thought she was being cornered by the boys, so she started to attack them. The oldest brother shot at her and wounded her but didn't kill her. This left three bullets. She ran away crying, and the cubs followed her. But she had not gone far when she changed her mind and turned and came toward them again. The oldest boy took careful aim this time and pulled his trigger, and this time he hit the bear right in the heart, and she dropped dead. But on came the cubs, very angry and ready for a fight. The other two boys each took aim, one at one of the cubs and the other at the other one. They were very careful to aim very straight at the

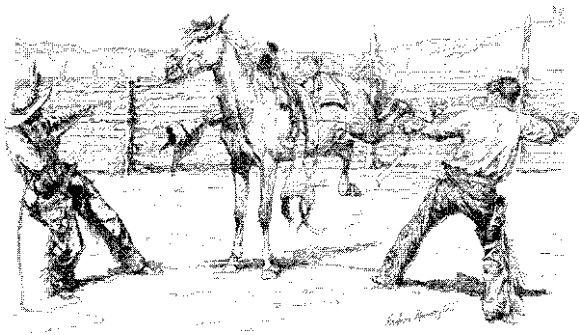
heart, and each bullet found its mark, and the two cubs lay dead at the feet of the boys.

They had had a very narrow escape, but they had got the bears they had been looking for, only not with a lasso or lariat rope but with the last bullet they had in their cartridge belts. When they realized that they had come that close to being clawed and mauled by the three bears and maybe killed, they were kind of shaky for a while. But soon they began to skin the bears so they could keep the beautiful, long-haired skins. They cut the skins from around the eyes and nose and head and paws, and hung the bodies of the bears on a limb of a tree. Then they ripped the hide down and away from the body until they had taken off the three beautiful skins and carefully wrapped them and tied them with three lariats to the backs of their saddles. Then they went down to the ranch and had the Mexican women cure and soften the skins in the way they knew. We kept the skins and used them for hearth rugs in front of the fireplace of our valley home as long as I was a little girl. I would curl up on the three rugs many times in front of the fire, and there I would go to sleep dreaming of the days when we were on the high ranch, thankful that the three lone bullets had not missed their marks when my brothers had been so brave and foolish.

Now all summer long my brothers ran the cattle with the vaqueros, which was the name for the Mexican cowboys who worked on our ranch. They helped the mama cows have their calves in the springtime and took care of the sick and orphaned ones. Each spring they would have to ride out onto the range and round up all the mama cows and all the new little calves and bring them down to the big corral in the meadow for branding. Now little calves can be very hard to capture, which is why my brothers and the vaqueros had lassos, to lasso the calves so they couldn't run away. They had a long stick of iron about as long as a grown-up person's arm, and on the end was the brand, a little iron circle with the mark of our ranch, different from all the other ranches around. They left the round end of the iron in the fire until it got very hot, and then they used it to burn a little mark into the calf's hide that would stay there all its life. The calves wiggled and kicked and bawled for their mammies all through the operation, as though it were the most frightening thing in the world. But calves have very tough hides, so the branding didn't really hurt them at all, and was necessary in case a cow or calf strayed so it could be brought home again.

My brothers rode all summer long caring for the cows, taking them to the best pastures and moving them on when the grass got too low. Sometimes they would find a wily cow with an older calf or two that had slipped away from them during the

roundup, so they would capture it and brand it and let it go again. The boys and the vaqueros needed lots of horses to do their work, and so we had a herd of those too. Now when a colt is very young, you mustn't ride it, but you must wait until it is about two years old so it will be strong enough to carry you. A colt that is just getting old enough to be ridden is called a bronco, and a bronco that has never had a vaquero on his back is a wild thing indeed. The minute he slips on, that bronco takes off running and twisting and jumping up with his hind legs and then with his front legs or even with all his legs at the same time, because there isn't anything in the world he wants more than to get that vaquero off his back.



So first my brothers or the vaqueros would rope the horse and hold onto the rope while it ran round and round until it finally wore itself down and didn't mind so much being on the end of a rope in the corral with a person. Then my brothers or the vaqueros would come closer and closer to the horse, patting it and talking gently to it all the time until it tolerated them very well. Finally they would get the horse so calm that they could slip a saddle on and buckle it up under its belly. You wouldn't

think the horse would hurt a fly by the time they got the saddle on, but the moment they slipped up onto its back, it bucked and twisted and jumped as though it were a mountain lion or some other wild beast. The brothers and the vaqueros who were not riding thought this was very exciting, and laughed and whooped and cheered, and the brother or vaquero who was riding whooped and called for all he was worth and struggled to keep from being thrown. The rider had to hold on very tight to not fall off onto the hard dirt of the corral and maybe hurt himself, but if he stayed on long enough, the horse finally got used to being ridden, and didn't kick and buck and twist, and with a little more patient training, that horse would become a very fine new saddle pony, ready for the roundup in the fall.

Now I was just a little girl, so I spent my days watching Aunt Dora with the cheese making, and hiking, and swimming in the river, and playing with my little friends, and helping my mother clean around the cabin and cook for the boys. The bronco busting went on day after day for many weeks, and after each day the boys would be very exhausted and very hungry. So mother and I would always have something very good for them when they got home, like baked trout, or duck, or venison, with potatoes, squash, or sweet potatoes, some hot johnnycake, some cheese, and glasses of good creamy milk.

After supper we would take our chairs or stools out into the courtyard and sing in the soft moonlight. The vaqueros would be out in the moonlight near their cabin, too, and when we had finished with a song, they would start up one of their own, and thus we would sing back and forth to one another until the hour grew late and we all felt soothed and refreshed.



Never was there such sweet singing, and I will always remember the haunting echoes of their joyous melodies rising up over the mountains, and our joyous songs in reply. The dogs had very tender ears, and sometimes they would get up on their hind legs, point their sharp noses at the moon, and howl a long, plaintive cry, as if they were saying, “Don’t sing anymore. It makes me sad, and besides, it hurts my ears.” We would say, “Hush up, Tige. Stop howling, Snap,” and would pat them a little and go right on with our songs. These songs were called *serenatas* and had names like *Cielito Lindo*, *La Paloma*, *La Golondrina*, and *Estrellita*. I taught them to my daughter Leonore, just like my mother taught them to me. If you meet her, perhaps you can sing them with her sometime.

The Mountain Lion and the Colt



THE YEAR BEFORE, Carl had given me a beautiful little sorrel colt. I remember how excited I was to see him, and how shiny and smart he looked trotting alongside his mother. He was just a yearling, and Carl said we would have to let the sorrel colt run with his mother for one more year until he got big enough to teach to wear a saddle and to ride.

I remember how Carl some evenings used to get down his little, long-handled pan that he used to melt lead in for his bullets. I was fascinated sitting near him as he held the pan in the fire, and the hard, inflexible metal bars melted down into a liquid mass of silvery, molten lead. I thought it looked almost

like melted cheese, only blue-grey instead of golden yellow in color. Carl dipped spoonfuls of this lead into his bullet mold, which was made of a cylinder of wrought iron. It was shaped so that when the molten lead was poured into it and allowed to cool, small bullets formed inside in the shape of small marbles, and very hard. He did this over and over again, pouring spoonful after spoonful of lead into the mold, then letting it cool, then taking the bullets out and storing them in a box high on the shelf. Carl said his bullets were almost gone, and that he would soon be needing more, so he was filling up the box with a new supply. These were what the boys used to shoot the deer and the turkeys and the ducks and geese that we had to have for our food, and to protect us from wild beasts.

Next he carefully took down his gun from the rack on which it was hanging above the mantle. He asked Mother for some pieces of soft, clean cloth, which she got out of a large bag of scraps in the corner. Carl tore these scraps into long, thin pieces, and piled them by a dish with fine oil. Now he took out his ramrod. This is a long piece of straight steel that fits alongside the two long metal parts of the gun, called the barrels. He dipped the little pieces of cloth in the oil, then used the ramrod to ram them down into the barrels. He would hold onto the end of the rod and work it up and down and

twist it around and around. When he pulled it out, it brought with it a lot of black, dirty grease and gun powder that had remained in the gun after the last time he had shot it. He did this many times until the rags came out clean from the barrel of the gun. Then he knew that the gun would not clog up and send the bullet crooked when he shot it at something. He held the barrel up to the firelight and looked inside to be sure it was thoroughly clean. Once he let me look down the barrel.

The fire reflecting on the shiny clean steel made circles of rainbow-colored lights. He told me what not to do while holding a gun and how to be very careful that a bullet was not in the barrel, and



never to put my hand on the trigger of the gun while looking into it. Little children should never handle a gun until some older person who is there can show and teach them how to do it safely. Before he put the gun away, Carl rubbed its outside with oil also until it was all polished and shiny as a new toy.

Next day Carl told me to play and rest much, because the following day he was going to take me on a long horseback journey. I could hardly wait to hear where we were going, but

he wanted it all to be a surprise, so I didn't ask any more about it, and went off with Star and my Mexican playmates to play games and have fun. We played mostly under the big oak trees, where we climbed on the great, drooping branches as if they were horses. We would then kick our feet hard against the ground, and this would push the limb high up in the air. Then we pushed down with all our might to bring the limb down close to the ground again. It was like a giant teeter-totter, only more exciting, because as the branch went up and down, it swayed very much and gave us lots of scary thrills.

Sometimes we would get off the limb and reach away up and grab onto long, trailing, leafy branches. We would run with them as fast as we could out to one side of the tree, then we would leap up and, still holding onto the branches, swing back to where we were before. This was a very fun swinging game, and as we played we laughed and squealed, for we had many near-spills. Over and over again we played horse and swing-out until we were tired and hungry, and went home for lunch with the promise to meet again. In the afternoon we played dolls with the dolls we made from the pretty, plentiful acorns nuts under the trees. We used acorns for the heads and bodies, pinned together with good, strong pins, and oak leaves for the skirts, so beautifully dark green and shiny and ruffled all around. The little acorn caps made very cunning little hats for

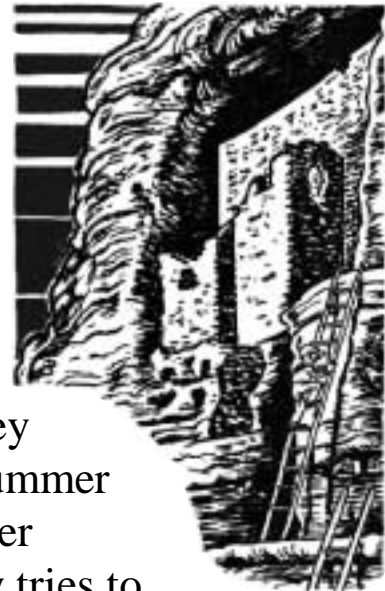
our dolls, trimmed with bits of silk and feathers we found about. Sometimes Mother helped us paint eyes and noses and mouths on the place where their faces could have been. After we had played dolls for an hour, we decided to go swimming again in the river, right at the time of day when the afternoon shadows were curling up from the river mists and the sun felt warm and lovely on the skin.

Next morning Carl and I packed our saddle bags with a generous lunch, and away we galloped on the new adventure. Before long we came upon a most curious sight. At the side of a cliff very near the road was a strange little house built right in the mountainside. The winds and the rain dripping down many years had carved out a hollow place in the cliff, and there in this cave somebody had taken mud and water and straw, and built little rooms and made a little house to live in. Nearby was another ledge with a house built into it too. Carl told me, "You are looking at ancient houses that were built here by another people many, many years ago." He said, "We call these buildings houses of the Cave Dwellers. Look up over your head and tell me what you can see." I said I could see a very high and large earthen vessel. He said, "Yes, it is what the ancient people used to store their grain in. They put their corn down into this vessel. Then it was safe from other people who sometimes tried to steal it from them."

“But,” I asked, “how could they get up such a steep cliff, and once they were there, how could they get up such a steep side of the vessel.”

“We know that they knew how to make rope and buckskin ladders so they could climb up these steep side walls. There have been many things found to prove they made and used them.” He said that one summer he and Rey and Ira had made a good ladder themselves and had succeeded after many tries to climb the cliff and then the side of the vessel and look down into it. They had seen kernels of corn still inside, so they were very sure it had been used by these ancient people for storing their corn.

All around the circle of this little secluded valley there were more and more cliff houses. Once we stopped and got off our horses and explored all around and went into many of the rooms. Sometimes the door was so low that we had to stoop way down to get under the lintel. We believe that perhaps these were very short people and not tall like people today. We found many little things in these little houses, such as chipped flint arrowheads and little carved stone images, and picked them up to keep. Carl went over to the corner, and



from a hiding place he pulled out a most wonderful gift for me from where he had hidden it weeks before. It was an *olla* or earthen vessel full of little tiny white and pink beads. They were made from little, delicate sea shells, and each had a small hole pierced in the end. This was so it would be possible to string these little shells on a tough string and wear them for a decoration, just like a string of pearls. “Why are these little pretty things here?” I asked. He told me he had been digging in the *montezumas* or mounds of earth where the ancient people buried their dead. He said the *olla* had been placed nearby the person that was being buried as a gift to carry with him to the land of the Great Spirit. I packed the *olla* securely in the saddlebag, right-side-up so none of the pretty shells could spill, and then we went on our way.

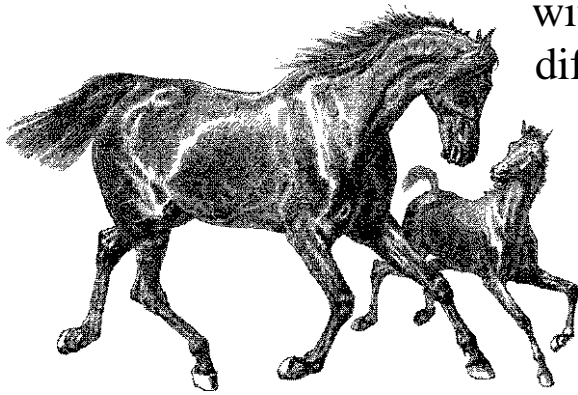
We rode on and on for many miles. As we left the valley, I saw a great big grapevine growing high, high up in an oak tree. I wanted to pick some, but Carl told me I must wait until we were coming home, and then if there was time we would gather some and bring them home.

“Now, Gladys,” said Carl, “We’ve come near the part of the country where I think that little sorrel colt that I gave you last year ought to be pasturing.”

I gave a little squeal of joy and said, “O!” I had almost forgotten about him. “Will he be big enough to ride this year?”

“He is two years old now, and I think it will be the right time to bring him in and let him run with the other horses and gradually get him used to the saddle and the bridle. But we will see if we can find him first. We may have to hunt for a long time.”

As we came near a lush, green meadow, we saw several horses running fast away from us, tossing their tails and manes in the air. I noticed that most of them seemed like they were mama horses with baby colts tagging along and running with them. These colts were all different sizes, because some



were two years old, and some were one year old or less. Carl wrinkled his brow and put his hand up to his eyes and looked and looked very hard at the band of

horses. He raised himself up high in the stirrups of the saddle and turned far around this way and that. He couldn't seem to find what he was looking for. Finally he said, “Little Sister, I am afraid something dreadful has happened to your colt. He is not with the mother nor any of the other horses. Now you stay right here where you are, and I shall take a look around.”

He rode slowly along the edge of the meadow, looking carefully in all directions. He stopped his horse very quickly and pulled out his gun from the case it was riding in along his saddle. He raised it very steadily, and I saw him look along the barrel, and then I heard a loud shot. I saw a very large animal bound off under the trees. Carl aimed his gun and shot again, and I heard a loud yelping and a very angry growl. By this time my horse was very excited, and he whirled very swiftly and would have bounded away in fear. I held tight to the reins and talked soothingly to him, and after a while he slowed down and didn't whirl anymore.

My brother galloped his horse after the animal, then I saw him aim his gun the third time. He shot, and I saw something fall in the dust, and the yelping and growling ended.



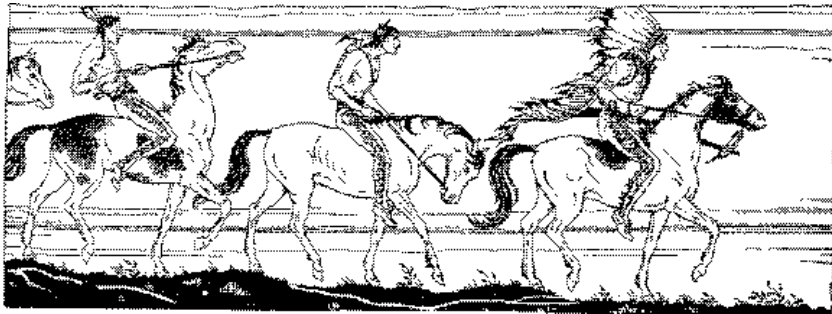
Carl came galloping back to me and said, "Dear little Sister, don't cry, but I have to tell you that last nite a mountain lion snuck up on the horses, and your pretty little sorrel colt was attacked and killed by him." This often happens to young colts in the mountains. We rode over to look at the lion, and on the way we came upon my poor little colt, torn horribly on his shoulder, lying dead upon the ground. Carl comforted me

and led me away and said, “Now remember, there will be other colts that will be yours, although maybe you can’t ride them quite so soon. But the lion made one mistake. He came back to have a second feast during the time the mama horses were feeding, because he was not expecting us to come riding upon him. But I shot him dead, and he will not get any more colts in this valley or any other.” Of course I did cry because I was so disappointed, and then it was quite horrid to imagine that awful beast lying there with his forepaw holding down my dear little colt and gnawing away on his leg. I felt happy that my brother knew how to shoot and was not afraid to kill a beast that was so destructive. But even lions have to eat, and they think that colts are the best eating in the world.

After we looked at the lion and checked on the other horses, we turned around and rode towards home. When I had dried my tears, I began to think of the ripe, wild grapes again. Soon we came to the oak tree where they grew, and here we got off our horses, and climbed and picked and climbed and picked until we had enough to make a luscious grape pie when we got home. I soon forgot the horrible sight of my colt and the mountain lion. I began dreaming about selecting a new little colt, and I resolved to keep him in the corral and feed him all winter so no lion could get at him this time.

12

The Indian Scare



IN LATE SUMMER, when my brothers and the vaqueros had broken many horses and there were plenty ready to ride, they all started out on the big roundup. During the roundup, they would ride and ride and gather from the canyons and the meadows all the cattle they could find, and bring them to the big corral next to the ranchhouse, so they could ride herd on them until it was time to drive them to the market to be sold. They told us it would take them all that day. They started at dawn and said to have a good, hot supper ready about sunset time. So we waved them goodbye and told them to be careful and all the things you say to someone who is going on a hard journey.

Mother and I cooked all morning, while Aunt Dora made two new cheeses and rubbed and turned all the old cheeses so they would cure better and better each day. We had to think of something to do to keep us busy so we wouldn't worry about the boys, so we made starch. This is how we did it. We peeled many potatoes, then we cut them into thin strips and put them in a pan with just enough water to cover them. We let them sit in the water all day. Toward evening we poured the water off, leaving about a quarter-inch thick layer of white, milky liquid. This was the starch that had oozed out of the potatoes and sunk to the bottom of the pan, because it was heavier than the water. We had to put these pans of starch in the sun to dry very thoroughly. That meant we would have to wait until next day to finish the starch making.

While we were working, we had a visitor. A man on a horse came galloping very fast up to our door. He stopped and said, "Good afternoon. I just rode over to tell you that Apache Kid is on the rampage again, and it would be well if you put all your things in the house and locked them up well tonite." When the Apache Kid and his band of renegade Indians went about thus and needed things, they just took whatever they could find, saddles, bridles, clothes off the line, a rope, or anything useful.

I saw my mother turn a little pale, and even though I knew the band of Indians was near, I wondered why she was so frightened.

After supper, I was riding a very tame old saddle horse around the meadow at a very slow pace, because mother was walking beside me. All of a sudden, we heard a shot from a gun. We listened, and in a very few minutes we heard two more shots, “Bang, bang.” It sounded very near. Mother had that same frightened look again, but she said, very bravely, “I guess that is the boys coming home. Maybe they found a deer to kill. We will go get the dinner warm.” But I knew in my heart that she was afraid.

So I asked her, “Mother, why are you afraid every once in a while when we come to the ranch? Why are you afraid now? It all seems so peaceful to me.”

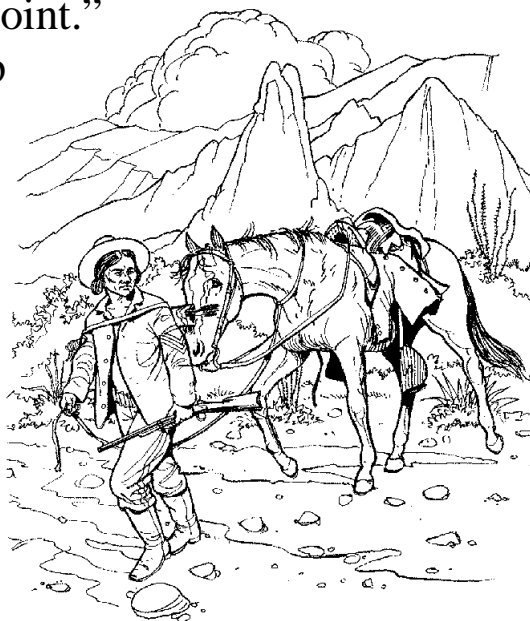
She didn’t tell me right away but led me to the house, where we lit the lamps and candles and sat down to wait for the boys to come. Then she said, “I do have something to tell you, Gladys, so you will know why I have fear sometimes when I am alone on the ranch.

“When we first came here and built the cabins, there was a band of real mean Indians roving over these hills. The Apache Kid was their chief, and he was a very fierce man. Apache

Kid was Geronimo's son, and he had had some very hard treatment from some white men. He had seen his brothers killed mercilessly by them, so he felt all the time in his heart that he had to get revenge ten times on the white man for his cruel deeds. That is why he stole and did all the mean things he did.

“There came a time when our families moved from the big ranch to a smaller ranch further down towards the valley. The big ranch was rented to a family by the name of Thompson, and they lived in the lower cabin. One time, all the men folks went off on the roundup, leaving the women home alone, even as we are today, Gladys. The very morning they rode away, Apache Kid and his fierce band had camped up on the mountainside behind Needle Point.”

Now Needle Point was a sharp point of rock near our cabin. When I looked out the window, I could see its sharp spire sticking up against the horizon in the twilight. I could see that the rock was very large and that it would make a very good hiding place. One would not





even be able to see the smoke of their small cooking fires.

Mother continued with her story:

“Now when the Indians saw that all the men had gone, they rushed down upon the women and the children and dragged them out of the houses and killed them with big rocks. These Indians were called

apachurreros de huesos, which means crushers of bones, because that is what they did to their victims when they captured them. Now it so happened that the little girl, eight years old, saw that her little brother, six years old, had been hurt. The Indians were busy with the other people of the house, and so they didn't pay close attention to these two children. So the little girl dragged the little boy to the chicken coop nearby, tore her apron in wide pieces of cloth, wrapped them tightly around the bleeding wound in the boy's hip, and then covered him all over with straw. She herself crawled deep down into the straw, and then they lay very, very still. The Indians looked into the chicken coop, but it seemed to them that everyone was dead, so they rode away without harming them any more. After many hours the men came

home and found the little boy and girl. They washed and dressed their wounds and saved their lives. But Apache Kid has not been captured. The United States Army captured most of the tribe who were Geronimo's people, but Apache Kid and some of his companions escaped and are still running loose in the fastness of these rugged mountains.

“Now, Gladys, you know why I am a little nervous when the boys go out to the far off places and we are here alone, and tonite especially, because I have heard the shots and have imagined that maybe the boys met some of the Indians and had a battle with them. But they will be coming soon, I am sure. We will sit in the cabin doorway and listen for the cowbells and the bleating of the cattle that will tell us when they are near.”

Well, we waited and we waited, and the nite wore on. The moon came up very bright and made long shadows under the pointed pines. Nite bird and whippoorwills cried as they flew across the valley from tree to tree, but still no cowbells could we hear nor any bleating of cattle. Mother would sit still for as long as she could. Then she would get up, walk around a bit and sing a gay little Spanish song, then settle down in her chair again. Once or twice she went down to the lower cabin to talk to the Mexican women. They were very anxious too, and most of them were kneeling in front of their crucifixes or

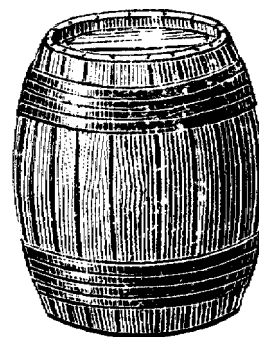
images of the Virgin Mary and were praying constantly for their men to return safely. Eight o'clock came and went, then 9:00 o'clock, then 10:00, and still no boys. Finally about 11:00 o'clock we heard very faintly the tingle of the bells. I took Star, and away we ran to the lower cabin to tell the good news. All the vaqueros' wives got up from their prayers and came to the doors to listen. When they heard the bells and the lowing of the cattle, they dropped on their knees again right where they were and began crossing themselves, as Catholic people do, and saying prayers of thanks for the return of their men.

Soon the dust of the herd rose like a silver mist in the moonlight, and the cattle were corralled and rounded into a big herd, and guards of vaqueros placed around them. As the boys climbed stiffly out of their saddles, their spurs jingling and their leather chaps flapping, we ran to them and almost leaped in their arms, crying, "You're safe, you're safe, and are home again." They said, "What in the world are all the tears about?" and we said, "We heard your guns fired hours ago, and when you didn't come, we were afraid you had met some Indians and had a battle with them. They sounded so near."

The boys laughed and called us scaredy-cats and said, "We must have been in one of those peculiar places where a shot echoes on the nearby cliffs and is amplified and sounds much nearer than it is and much louder. We didn't see any Indians,

but we did see some very fine deer, so we shot three and brought them home.” Now it was just getting to be time for us to put some deer meat in barrels of salt and cure it so it would last through the winter, and sure enough, strung in back of the boys’ saddles were three fine deer. They took them off and used a knife to put a slit in the tendons of their legs, then ran a tough stick through them and hung them by a peg on the side of the shed for skinning. They would not wait to skin the deer, because they said it would make the meat taste too strong. So while we sang our thanks for their safe return and got their supper hot, they skinned the deer and tacked their hides stretched tight against the shed wall. Once they had dried and cured, the Mexican women could get the hair off and tan them and pound them into good buckskins.

Now this is how the boys prepared the deer meat for winter. After the meat had chilled all nite in the cool mountain air, they sliced it up into thin pieces and rubbed it all over with lots of salt. They let it dry thoroughly by hanging it on racks in the sunshine, then salted it again several times, day after day, and left it to get drier and harder. Meanwhile they cleaned some wooden barrels very well with boiling hot water to keep it in. This is called jerky meat. It can be softened up with boiling



water and made into a nice, rich cream sauce and eaten over hot biscuits or toast or hot cornbread. This is a very tasty dish, especially if you add a little green pepper and onion to the white sauce or when you are warming up the meat in melted butter. It became one of our favorite dishes on the ranch or in the valley. Of course, one had to have a very sharp knife to shave off the dry, hard jerky meat after it was thoroughly cured. But it helped out our meat problems. We didn't have a meat market. The only meat we ate was what we killed. And then we had no freezer, so whatever we didn't eat and didn't cure with salt would spoil.

We all went to bed very tired after such an exciting day but with grateful hearts that the lives of our loved ones had been spared. Of course, I was a little tingly remembering about Apache Kid and his rampages. I didn't blame my mother anymore but understood better why she got nervous sometimes alone up on the mountain.

13

The Bear and the Rooster



THE LONG, GOLDEN DAYS and the cool, cool nites of summer can't last forever. One morning I awoke very early to much racket and commotion around the cabin. "What's going on, Mama?" I asked sleepily. I saw two of my brothers carrying out the cheeses and loading them in the wagon box. Another was fixing up the chicken coop and putting in the protesting roosters and hens. Mother was packing our clothes. I knew by all these signs that the days on the ranch for this summer were almost over. I ran to the spring for a cool, refreshing drink, and then came in to a hearty breakfast of sausages and hotcakes and syrup. Afterwards I

helped carry this and that to the wagon and in a way began to enjoy the packing and the excitement of leaving.

It was some time before we got everything either packed in the wagon or stored safely in the cabin for the winter. When we finally climbed in the wagon, and Carl gave the command and cracked the whip, and the horses started to plod down the red road and across the bridge, I looked back, and there in the dooryard of the lower cabin were all my little Mexican companions of the summer. They were sleepy-eyed and tousled but were throwing kisses vigorously and waving their hands and calling, "*Adiós, adiós, amigita querida.*" I waved back to them and threw them some kisses too, and finally all I could see was the tall, pointed Needle Rock, the tops of the pointed pines around the cabin, and the trail of dust raised by the horses' hoofs as they trotted down the road. Tige and Snap strolled happily after the wagon, dashing here and there to frighten a chipmunk up a tree or send a prairie dog scrambling into its hole in the ground. I cried a little bit because I loved the ranch so much and I knew it would be a long time before I could come again. I had little Star on my lap, and he kept jumping up and licking my face with his warm little tongue as if to say, "Don't cry, friend. I'll play all winter with you and keep you happy." So very soon I was playing get'n-get'n-get'n with him, as he bounced around trying to keep out of my way and not get tagged.

The first nite we camped not too far from the sawmill, but we did not stay with the families there. Instead we made camp in a beautiful green mountain meadow. Carl made my bed on a thick canvas that he laid on the ground beside the wagon tongue. Mother's bed was on the other side. Just before we settled down for the nite, Carl fed the chickens. One old rooster got rebellious, and before we could think, he slipped out of his coop and fluttered away. We couldn't catch him because he flew up on a nearby limb of a tree, and there he sat

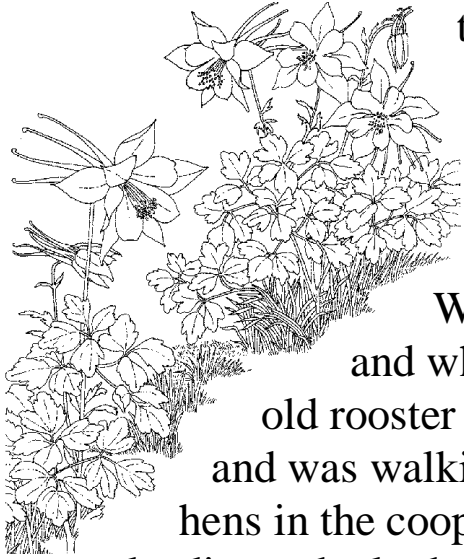


and made a very defiant challenge with his rooster voice. "Don't try to catch me. I'm free. I'm free, and I'm going to stay free." Well, we couldn't do anything about it, so Carl latched the coop, and we all crawled into bed. I lay there with little Star a long time looking up through the canyon walls at the stars, which were many and so thick that they all ran together in one place and made a white trail across the sky. I said, "Mother, why is there a white pathway across the skies?"

She said, "That is where the stars are thickest. We call it the Milky Way." It really did look like someone had been milking and had spilled some on the sky. I lay very quiet and listened with my ears to the lovely sounds of the nite. The whippoorwills

were singing, also the mocking birds, and the crickets chirped lazily and sleepily, as if they were calling goodbye to summer. It was very restful and very soothing, and although my bed was on the hard earth, yet before very long I had gone sound asleep, and so had little Star and Mother and the boys.

Next morning after we woke up, I saw Carl coming toward my bed with something in his hand. He brought it over to me and held it close so I could see it. It was a flower blooming on a long, slender, green stem. Its color was partly reddish orange and partly pale, creamy yellow. It had five beautiful petals that opened like a bell, and extending from the petals were five cunning little spurs, like five little horns of plenty. Many yellow stamens and a long, yellow-tipped pistil extended from the center of the flower. The base of the petals were shaded pale earth-green. I said, "O! what is it, and where did you find it?" I took it in my hands and examined it tenderly. I thought that I had never seen anything quite so lovely nor such a happy flower ever before. To me it looked like a little clown flower with all those horns of plenty coming from its petals. Carl said it was a columbine, that he had found it in the meadow just on the other side of the mountain, that they bloomed in the high meadows and were of many colors. He said he had seen hundreds of them blooming together in some places where he had ridden hunting cattle,



that some of them were red and orange, some were blue with white, and that once in a while he found a very rare kind that was purest white all over.

We started to hear a clucking noise, and when we looked over, we saw that the old rooster had flown down from the tree limb and was walking back and forth in front of the hens in the coop. He seemed to be grumbling and pleading to be let back in, as though he had been very frightened. Carl began looking around on the ground, and pretty soon he stooped by some tracks near the crossbar of the wagon. “Oh-oh!” he said. “I see what has happened.” And maybe you won’t believe this, but there, all around on the ground, were the tracks of a rooster, and there beside them and around the camp were the tracks of the big paws of a bear. This is the story that the tracks told Carl. During the nite, the bear had come seeking some food. He tried to catch the rooster, but the rooster was so light and could fly here and there so fast that the bear had not been able to get him, and finally he flew up on the wagon’s crossbar to keep out of the way. The bear had looked all around and investigated the camp very thoroughly and very curiously, and had actually

stepped right over me while I was sleeping, several times. Now why he didn't choose me for his supper, I do not know, except that his nose finally led him to the grub box. With his huge paw and nose he was able to work it open and took what he wanted, a side of bacon, a loaf of bread, and a jar of honey. I suppose he decided that that was enough of a tasty morsel for one nite's grub, and that bacon and bread and honey were better than a girl to eat and easier than to jump around and catch a rooster. Anyway, it was a thrill to know that we had had a visit from a bear during the nite. We didn't begrudge the bacon, bread, nor honey that



he stole, and the old rooster was so anxious to get behind the bars of the chicken coop that he allowed himself to be picked up and tossed inside without a shudder or peep.

So we headed home and arrived after two more days' travel. And while I missed the ranch, it is always good to come back to a lovely home and your own room after you have been away for a long time.

A - Nutting We Will Go

OF COURSE, the first thing one does when one gets home again is find and greet one's friends whom one hasn't seen for such a long time. So Star and I started out right after breakfast, and he seemed as glad as I did to be calling at the different houses. He showed it by jumping all around in circles, chasing his tail, and barking glad, little barks.

We learned that all the boys and girls of the village were planning an overnite journey to the nearby canyon in a few more days. The walnuts were now ripe and falling from the trees that grew so plentifully all about. These were black walnuts with very hard shells, but when placed on a rock and

hit with another rock or a good, heavy hammer, they could be broken into smaller pieces. Then with patience the juicy, sweet meat of the walnut could be picked out and stored in a glass jar and used in cakes and frostings and candy during the winter months. The young men friends came to our house and asked Mother if she would go with us so the other mothers wouldn't have to worry. She said she would love to go.



Finally, one golden autumn day, the time had come to go “a-walnutting,” and the young men began to get the hay cart and saddle horses ready. One of my boy friends asked me, “Which way would you rather ride on the picnic, on the hayrack or on a horse?” It didn't take me long to decide, because I would rather ride on a horse anytime than to do most anything else in the world.

To make the hayrack ready, the boy friends piled some nice, fresh straw all over the big, wide wagon. It was open all around, so they stretched a rope tight around it, so those riding could hold on and not slide off when the horses went over a bump or trotted very fast. Next they tied a canvas cover over

the straw to hold it in place, so it wouldn't slip off on the way. Then they went all around to the different homes and gathered up the food that each girl had prepared for the trip. Finally everything was ready, and the girls and boys began to arrive in at our house. They dressed mostly in cowboy suits, the girls in Levi's and bright shirts with gay-colored kerchiefs around their necks, and some wore hats so they wouldn't get their noses freckled in the hot sunshine. The boys wore high heel boots and Levi's and bright-colored shirts, and most of them had a high felt hat with a wide brim turned up on the sides like real cowboys wear. Orson, the boy who was my partner, looked very handsome in a pair of chaps. My brothers and the vaqueros wore these on the ranch. They are just like leather pants that come up over the legs but have the seat cut out entirely. They hang from the belt, which is buckled very securely in front, and the chaps stay in place very well. They protect the legs of a horseman from the thorns of the mesquite and chaparral that grow so thickly all over the prairie land. They are usually trimmed with a large leather flap on each side, and on the flap are more silver buckles that glisten as he walks or rides.

I wore some good high boots, a very bright red shirt, and a yellow neckerchief around my neck to keep the dust out of my throat. Just as I was leaving, my brother Leon brought me

his big, wide-rimmed Stetson hat, which was his pride and joy, and said to me, “Here, Sis, you may wear my Stetson if you like.” It had a braided horse-hair band around it with a tassel on it, and I was as proud as a peacock to wear it and knew that my brother must love me very much to let me take it. Of course I thanked him very much. The boys and girls who had gathered laughed and joked a good deal before climbing on the hayrack. Just then, my partner came riding into the yard. The right side of his face and arm were all skinned, and Mother said, “What happened to you, Orson?”

He said, “Well, when I roped the horse out on the prairie yesterday, she had not been ridden for so long that she had gotten a bit wild. So when I got on her to ride her home, she threw me and I fell on my face.” This was the horse I was to ride on the picnic. Mother objected very much to me getting on that horse. Orson said, “Oh, she’ll be alright. I rode her hard all day yesterday and she has calmed down.”

Mother wasn’t convinced, so I said, “Mother, don’t you know that my brothers have taught me how to handle horses? I’m not afraid. It is just the kind of a horse I would love to ride, so very lively and fresh.” So after some coaxing on my part, she gave her permission. I swung right up into the saddle. The horse leaped and jumped a few times, but I gently guided her and spoke soft words to her and petted her neck and back, and

soon she quieted down, and I was able to guide her anywhere and at any speed I wished. What a happy thing it was to be riding off toward the canyons, everybody laughing and singing, the empty walnut sacks piled high reminding us that there would be much happy fun on winter nites when we would get together and have candy pulls and game playing.

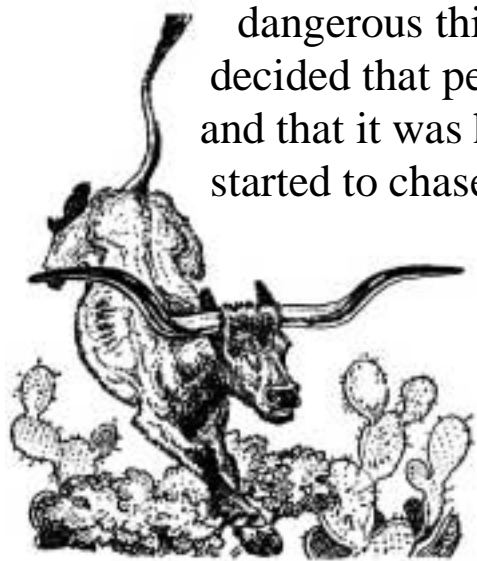
Off we rode, some of us in the wagon, Orson and I and some of the others in our saddles. After a while we came to a big, open valley. Over this valley every



once in a while grew great clumps of tough, long-stemmed grass called sacaton, about two feet high and three feet around. Now, whenever we came to grass like this, we who rode horses had a very fun game. We would get back a long

way from the clump of grass. Then we would get our horses running and would make them leap over. Of course it was dangerous, because the horse might tumble, or he might get his leg caught in a gopher hole and trip. But when we were young we liked dangerous things to do, and so we played sacaton until we knew that we had tired our horses. Then we rode along slowly for a while to let them rest.

After a while we saw off to one side of us a herd of Texas longhorn cattle. They are called Texas longhorns because their horns are about five feet from tip to tip and very big around. I said, "Let's get the herd running by chasing them." The others were willing, so we galloped our horses towards the herd, waving our hats and yelling, "Yi-pi-yi-pi." This startled the cattle, who began running away from us, and we thought it was great fun to chase them. But a very unexpected and



dangerous thing happened. One of the great bulls decided that perhaps he would have some fun too, and that it was his turn, so he twisted around and started to chase us with his horns down. Now if he

had caught up with us, he would not have stopped at less than goring our horses with his horns.

Some of the other bulls became angry and began to chase us too. So, very frightened by this turn of events, we wheeled around,

galloping our horses as fast as we could away from them. Luckily for us, they soon became discouraged in the chase, and we were able to gallop up near the hayrack and the rest of the boys and girls, thankful that our own foolishness had not caused a bad accident. Texas longhorns are best just let alone to eat grass and watch you pass peacefully by.

When evening shadows were lengthening under the pines, we came near to a cool spring of water, and the boys who were driving the teams said, "This is a good place to make camp." We were all very glad, because we had ridden far and very hard. We climbed off our horses and found that our legs were stiff, but after we had walked over to the spring and laid down on our stomachs and got a long, cool drink, we felt very good. One of the boys said, "Let's hurry and eat our supper and go for a hike up to the top of those cliffs." We were all anxious to see the pretty sight from the top. So we ate our supper of baked beans and cold sliced ham and banana nut bread. Then, with a whoop and a holler, we ran one after the other, racing to where the trail started up and around back of the cliffs.

We found that the trail crossed the creek, so the boys threw some big rocks into the stream so we could cross without getting our feet wet. It was really very hard not to slip off of the rocks, because some of them had moss growing on them, and green moss growing on wet stones makes them very slick. Several of us fell into the creek and got our feet and legs wet up to our knees. Of course we knew that as we walked along we would get dry again and not catch cold, so if we fell we just laughed and squeaked a little bit, because it was so much fun to get a cool bath after such a hot, long ride. We had to

pull ourselves up over big, steep rocks many times to keep on the trail. Soon we arrived at the top of the cliffs and looked down on the winding river that flowed through the beautiful, pine-tree valley.

Some of us were very brave, and we could walk without being afraid right up close to the edge of the cliff and look straight down, down into the camp below. Of course we had to be very careful not to fall, but it was fun to watch those that had stayed behind at the camp, and they looked about as big as ants. Some of the girls were scarecrows and would not go near the edge and look down. This made the boys laugh and make fun of them, and I also felt sorry for those who missed so much fun because they were frightened. After a while it began to grow late, so we started down the trail so that we could get back to camp before dark. Some of us slipped on the slippery rocks and into the stream again, but this time we knew that we could get dry by the campfire, so we just went running across the rocks whether we slipped or not. When we got back, some of the boys who had gone out hunting came walking into camp carrying a deer between them. They said, "Now tomorrow nite we can have a real feast." They skinned the deer and hung it up on the limb of a tree, and we all went to bed after we had sung a few good old lively songs together around the campfire.

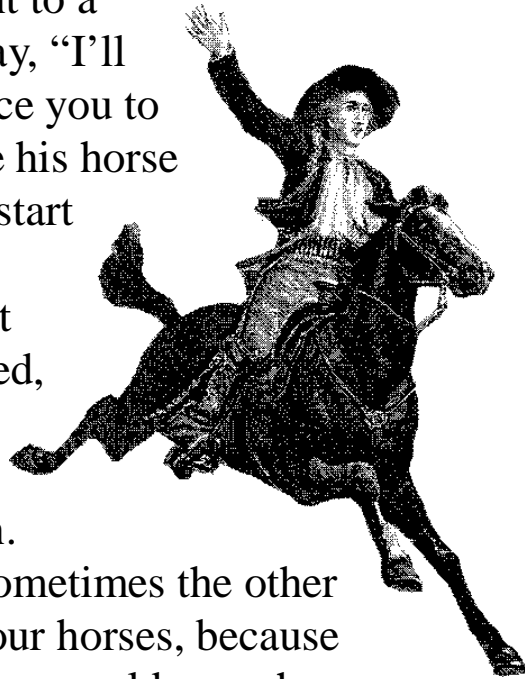


Next day we remembered what we had come for, so two and two went together with a big sack, and each pair picked up walnuts as fast as they could and put them in their bag. All the day we worked, filling many twenty-five-pound bags of walnuts. When evening came we were very hungry, so the boys said, “Now we will prepare something special for all of you.” We had not brought frying pans nor Dutch ovens, but they wanted to serve us some deer meat anyway. So they sliced some deer steaks very thin and used their pocket knives to sharpen some long, strong sticks on one end. They also placed bacon and onion slices on these same sticks to make kabobs. Then they stuck the sticks through the steaks and pushed the other ends into the dirt very securely so that the ends with the meat could lean over the hot, red coals of the fire. There they left them for a long time, and the deer meat began to sizzle and cook, and the red juice dripped down into the coals. My, how good it smelled as it broiled there over the fire.

Some of the girls were very finicky and turned up their noses and said, “We won’t eat meat cooked like that.” And I must admit that I was a little wary myself. The boys said, “Why? Those are charcoal-broiled venison steaks. You would pay much money in a restaurant for such fine servings of meat.” Mother called me over to her side and whispered to me, “Gladys, don’t you dare make a fuss over that nice meat that the boys have prepared for you. You eat it and enjoy it if it kills you. You must learn to eat and enjoy many things in life, and when anyone makes something very rare and different but very good, try to learn to like it.” So I took the stick with my kabob on it and sprinkled salt and pepper over it and got some bread and butter to go with it. After the first bite I smacked my lips and just kept eating the rest of it while it was nice and hot, and when I was through I asked for another. This pleased the boys, and I was proud of myself because I did what my mother told me and didn’t turn down a very tasty supper just because I imagined it wouldn’t taste good.

The next day our walnutting picnic came to an end. We had to go home and get our clothes and everything ready for school, because this was Friday, and Monday morning the old school bell would ring, and we would all have to go to our classes and learn our lessons once more.

It was late at nite before we got down to the last lap of our journey—but the fun was not over yet. Our riding ponies had been going easy for a long time and were good and fresh and very lively. So when two riders would come close together, one or the other of us would point to a certain spot down the road and say, “I’ll race you to that bush,” or “I’ll race you to that rock,” and then start to make his horse run. Then the other horse would start to run, and the two of us would have a long race down to the spot we had decided upon. As we raced, the boys and girls on the hayrack would cheer for the one of us that they wanted to win. Sometimes one would win and sometimes the other one. But it was great fun racing our horses, because the moon was bright as day, and we could see where we were going. The dust from our horses’ hoofs made a wide trail of silver in the road. I am an old woman now, but when I think back on these happy times of my youthful days, I think they were my golden years. I have always been glad that my father, Helaman Pratt, and my mother, Emaline Victoria Billingsley Pratt, and Aunt Dora Wilcken Pratt obeyed the



words of the prophet and brought us to that far-off land. And I have always been glad they bought and pioneered Cliff Ranch, and that they kept it, even when they moved to the valley, for our treasured summer home.

- END -