

## HUNTING FOR MY HORSES.



It was late in the fall. I had been away from my ranche for more than a week; in that time I had ridden over three hundred miles, and my horse, as well as myself, was in great need of rest. As it was nearly noon, I halted at Hunter's ranche for lunch, and while there I was told that on the third day after there was to be a "rodéo"—that is, a general hunt for cattle, in which all the owners join, sweeping the country in a large circle, and driving all the stock to a common centre.

Having learned where the meet was to be, and promising to be on hand, I remounted and pushed for home. A general outcry from half-a-dozen dogs heralded my approach, and, as I reined up at the door, Bill, our man-of-all-work, came out. As soon as he had told me what little news there was to tell, I said:—

"Well, start out and drive up the horses. I want Curlew put in the stable, as there's to be a rodéo next Thursday."

"Too bad, Cap., but the horses struck out day before yesterday—gone to the river, I think; have been hunting them steadily, but can't find hair or track of them."

This was pleasant news to hear. For work like that which was before me, a fresh horse was indispensable. I had nothing to do but to start out and hunt my own animals; so, tightening my girths, I turned my horse's head towards the river, twenty miles to the south.

I knew where the wanderers were likely to be; twice before had they run away, and each time had been found upon Steptoe cañon. I reached the head of this cañon late in the evening, and then horse and rider met with good care

from a stockman whose ranche is there located.

Early the next morning I started out. Steptoe cañon is far from being a pleasant place in which to hunt stock. It is a narrow valley or ravine some ten miles long, in which length it makes a descent of some two thousand feet. The sides are very precipitous; there is no road or sign of a road—nothing but narrow trails made by the stock passing up and down the cañon. I scanned the cañon faithfully, going up all the gulleys and using my field-glasses freely. No trace of the missing ones could I see.

It was late in the afternoon when I reached the river. It had been my intention, if I did not find the horses, to ride up to White's, some fifteen miles above the mouth of Steptoe, and come back by the hills the next day; but as I was coming down the last hill, my horse stepped on a stone, and recovered himself only to go dead lame. I had been warned to reach the river in time to get up to White's before sundown, the trail being very bad, so much so as to almost deserve the name of dangerous. There was no hope of doing so now, and to make my way back to my stopping-place of the night before was equally impossible. There were two other courses open to me,—to lie out all night without food or blankets, or to make my way down the river to the Wawawa Bar, and seek a night's lodgings with the Indians who inhabited it. I chose the latter, and dismounting, began to lead my horse along the narrow trail.

The Wawawa was only about four miles distant. The scenery about was wild, with something of a barren grandeur. Snake River at this point is nearly three-fourths of a mile wide. The hills upon its southern bank are low

and rolling, rising gradually to a considerable height inland; but on the north side, where I was riding, they rise bold and abrupt to a height of over two thousand feet. Not a tree or shrub was visible; but vast quantities of basaltic rock, in every conceivable form and shape, covered their sides.

The trail was narrow and bad. I could make but slow progress, for my poor horse could hardly be persuaded to move. I was not without a little anxiety as to my reception, for only two months before there had been serious trouble between these Indians and the settlers. The former had had a row among themselves, in which one of their number had been killed in the attempt to arrest the murderer. Shots had been exchanged, another Indian killed and one wounded; the arrest had been effected, but the Indians were said to be feeling very bitter. Had it not been so late in the season, I should infinitely have preferred "lying out." As it was, I kept on my way, and just as the sun was sinking behind the hills I came in sight of the Indian village.

It comprised, perhaps, a dozen lodges made of skins stretched over poles. There were, besides, two or three dilapidated-looking cabins built of drift-logs, and two huge structures, of the same material, used for smoking salmon. Below the village I saw several bands of Indian horses. A number of children were playing around the lodges. There were several garden patches, rudely fenced, and two or three fields of rye and wheat stubble; the crops had been gathered.

Going up to one of the largest tents, I was greeted by a deafening chorus from numerous mongrel curs that gathered from all sides. Their noise brought out a couple of Indians, who, when they saw me, gathered their blankets about them and came toward me.

Dropping my lariat, I went to meet them. I knew but few words of the

jargon commonly used between the Indians and whites, but hoped, with the aid of signs, to make my wants known.

"*Cli-hi-um-six?*" (How are you, friend?) I said.

"*Cli-hi-um?*" was the brief answer.

"You speak Boston man's talk?"

"*Na-wit-ka*" (No), said the Indian.

I took up the lariat, led the horse a few paces, pointed to him to show he was lame, then pointed to the west where the sun had already disappeared, and then to the lodge. Evidently they understood the pantomime, for, after exchanging a few words between themselves, one advanced and took my horse, while the other led the way to the tent. I followed without looking back; to have expressed the least doubt, by word or sign, as to the safety of my beast or his equipments, would have been a sad breach of manners.

Lifting a robe that hung over the entrance and served as a door, he motioned me to go in. I did so, and, making my way to the opposite side, sat down. The ground was covered with matting, save in the centre, which was bare. The dead coals lying there showed that this was their fire-place. There were four Indian women seated on one side of the tent. Two were quite old; one of them was busy making a wicker basket; the other, who was partly supported by sundry robes and parcels, seemed to be sick, as she was doing nothing. Of the remaining two, one was extremely homely, apparently about thirty years old, and busy plaiting matting. The fourth and last was young and very pretty; she was nursing a little papoose, and her dress and manner seemed to show that she was a favourite. The first three were dressed in plain dark-coloured calico, with leggings made of strips of blankets, and their blankets were of the ordinary kind used by Indians—of white, yellow, and blue stripes. All looked rather old and decidedly dirty.

Very different was the apparel of the youngest squaw. Her dress was a new and very pretty calico; her leggings made of white fine doe-skin, with long fringes; her mocassins were gaily ornamented with beads and sundry devices worked into them with coloured thread; while her blanket was a new one, being a bright crimson with a black border.

In addition, this young mother was adorned with bracelets of some kind of metal; had several silver rings on her fingers, shell ear-rings in her ears, and a chain of shells woven through her hair. Her papoose was dressed in a single garment, none too long, but adorned with beads and bits of coloured ribbon.

The Indian who had come in with me took a seat at my right, and in a few minutes we were joined by the other. They both produced pipes, and I took out mine to keep them company, offering to each a little fine tobacco that I had loose in one of my pockets. We smoked for a few minutes in perfect silence; then one of the Indians said a few words in his own tongue to the sick squaw, who, raising her eyes, said to me:—

“Jeta mica nanitch?” (What are you looking for?)

“Four Boston mancortins, three Boston clutcheman curtains, six Indian curtains, three papoose clutcheman curtains”—all of which meant that I was looking for four American horses, three American mares, six Indian ponies, and three colts.

“Branded?” she asked.

“Yes, here,” I answered, pointing to my left shoulder, and drawing on the leaf of my note-book a mark like this: ♂. All stockmen have a brand of their own, made of iron, which is heated and the stock marked with it, sometimes on the shoulder, sometimes on the flanks.

A few words passed between the old woman and the two men, and then she gave me to understand that they knew where the horses were, and would get them for me in the morning.

Meanwhile, the two who had been working set about getting supper. One produced a sack of flour and stirred up a pan of dough; the other took down a couple of dried salmon from a string of them which hung from one of the poles. These she placed each upon a stick, and then building a fire, set them before it to toast. Next she took down some pieces of dried meat, from which she cut a number of thin slices.

The dough having been more or less kneaded, squaw number one raked out some of the ashes, and then proceeded to divide the dough into small cakes, which she laid in the ashes to bake. Sundry preparations of dried berries were added to the repast; and having eaten nothing since morning, I am free to confess that not only had I a good appetite, but that I found myself able to make a right hearty meal. Water was the only drink offered. The food was served upon tin dishes. The two male Indians and myself ate first, and the two squaws who had prepared the meal waited upon us. After we had finished, the four squaws took their turn. I noticed that the youngest partook freely of the dried berries, while the others did not touch them.

After supper we took to our pipes again. There were but few attempts to talk; my hosts gave me of their best, but evidently did not care to be intimate. It was only when I began to wind up my watch that they showed anything bordering upon curiosity, and I readily showed it to them, opening the cases and letting them see the works.

During the evening three or four Indians came in, sat down, smoked a good deal, talked but little, and finally went away. About nine o'clock the squaws began to make up the beds. There seemed to be an abundance of robes and blankets in the lodge, and the process of bed-making was very simple. First, a robe was spread upon the ground, two pairs of blankets were laid upon

that, another robe placed over all, and the bed was ready.

Although I was very tired and glad to lie down, my rest was remarkable chiefly for its restlessness. Few nights have seemed longer to me than did this, and I was heartily glad when morning came and the occupants of the lodge began to move. The older squaws were up first; but the men soon followed, and with them I went outside. A number of horses were picketed below the village. Taking two, each tied a lariat around the lower jaw of his animal, and, mounting bareback, they were soon out of sight.

During their absence, I made my way into the salmon-houses. Poles were stretched across, and to these were fastened a vast number of salmon. The process of curing is very simple. Each fish when caught is split open, the entrails taken out, a short stick inserted at the widest part to keep it open, and then it is put on the poles with thousands of others and allowed to partially dry. They are then put in the large houses before mentioned, a slow fire built under them, and they are slowly smoked until thoroughly cured.

In less than half-an-hour I heard loud hallooes and trampling outside, and going out, found my night's hosts coming back driving a large band of horses before them, among which I could see some of my own. All were driven into a huge corral, and then we went into breakfast, which meal was much the same in kind and quality as the supper had been.

Having finished, I handed the two squaws, who had done the work, a half-dollar each. Going to the corral, the Indians immediately got inside, and with their lariats caught my horses one after the other with great rapidity.

When all were collected outside, the horse I had ridden the day before was brought up, with the saddle, bridle, and blankets. These I put on to one of my other horses, and then turned to settle with my Indian friends. A plug of tobacco and a small coin to each seemed to satisfy them; and throwing myself into the saddle, I was soon making my way up the Wawawa, and, once upon level ground, made rapid time home.



## ADVENTURE WITH A SEAL.

My man, one day while we were waiting in our ambuscade for the seals, gave me an account of a curious adventure he had with one a few years back.

He was lying at daybreak ensconced close to the water's edge, waiting in vain for a shot at some grey geese that frequented the place at the time, when he saw a prodigiously large seal floating quietly along with the tide, not thirty yards from shore. Donald did not disturb the animal, but went home early

in the day, and having cast some bullets for his gun and made other preparations, retired to rest. The next morning he was again at the shore, well-concealed, and expecting to see the seal pass with the flowing tide; nor was he disappointed. About the same period of the rise of the tide, the monster appeared again. Donald cocked his gun, and crouched down behind his ambuscade of sea-weed and shingle, ready for the animal's head to appear within shot. This soon happened, but instead of swimming on with the tide, the seal came straight to the shore, not above ten yards from where his mortal enemy