

BOB HAMPTON of PLACER

By RANDALL PARRISH AUTHOR OF "WHERE WILDERNESS WAS KING" "IN LADY OF THE NORTH" "HISTORIC ILLINOIS ETC."



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CHAPTER I. Hampton, of Placer.

It was not an uncommon tragedy of the west. If slightest chronicle of it survive, it must be discovered among the dusty and nearly forgotten records of the Eighteenth regiment of infantry.

Yet the tale is worth telling now, when such days are past and gone. There were 16 of them when, like so many hunted rabbits, they were first securely trapped among the frowning rocks, and forced relentlessly backward from the narrow trail until the precipitous canyon walls finally halted their disorganized flight, and from sheer necessity compelled a rally in hopeless battle. Sixteen—ten infantrymen from old Fort Bethune, under command of Syd Wyman, a gray-headed sergeant of 30 years' continuous service in the regulars, two cow-punchers from the "XL" ranch, a stranger who had joined them uninvited at the ford over the Bear Water, together with old Gillis, the post-trader, and his silent chit of a girl.

Sixteen—but that was three days before, and in the meanwhile not a few of those speeding Sioux bullets had found softer billet than the limestone rocks. Six of the soldiers, four already dead, two dying, lay outstretched in ghastly silence where they fell.

Then the taciturn Gillis gave sudden utterance to a sobbing cry, and a burst of red spurted across his white beard as he reeled backward, knocking the girl prostrate when he fell. Eight remained, one helpless, one a mere lass of 15. It was the morning of the third day.

The beginning of the affair had burst upon them so suddenly that no two in that stricken company would have told the same tale. None among them had anticipated trouble.

In all the fancied security of unquestioned peace these chance travelers had slowly toiled along the steep trail leading toward the foothills. Gillis and the girl, as well as the two cattleherders, were on horseback; the remainder soberly trudged forward on foot, with guns slung to their shoulders. Wyman was somewhat in advance, walking beside the stranger, the latter a man of uncertain age, smoothly shaven, quietly dressed in garments bespeaking an eastern tailor, a bit grizzled of hair along the temples, and possessing a pair of cool, gray eyes. He had introduced himself by the name of Hampton, but had volunteered no further information, nor was it customary in that country to question impertinently.

Hampton, through the medium of easy conversation, early discovered in the sergeant an intelligent mind, possessing some knowledge of literature. They had been discussing books with rare enthusiasm, and the former had drawn from the concealment of an inner pocket a diminutive copy of "The Merchant of Venice," from which he was reading aloud a disputed passage, when the faint trail they followed suddenly dipped into the yawning mouth of a black canyon. It was a narrow, gloomy, contracted gorge, a mere gash between those towering hills shadowing its depths on either hand. A swift mountain stream, noisy and clear as crystal, dashed from rock to rock close beside the more northern wall, while the ill-defined pathway, strewn with bowlders and guarded by underbrush, clung to the opposite side, where low scrub trees partially obscured the view.

All was silent as death when they entered, yet they had barely advanced a short hundred paces when those apparently bare rocks in front flamed red, the narrow defile echoed to wild screeches and became instantly crowded with weird, leaping figures. It was like a plunge from heaven into hell. Blaine and Endicott saw, at the first fire, while Wyman's stricken arm dripped blood. Indeed, under that sudden shock, he fell, and was barely rescued by the prompt action of the man beside him. Dropping the opened book, and firing madly to left and right with a revolver which appeared to spring into his hand as by magic, the latter coolly dragged the fainting soldier across the more exposed space, until the two found partial security among a mass of loosened rocks littering the base of the precipice. The others who survived that first scorching discharge also raced toward this same shelter, impelled thereto by the unerring instinct of border fighting, and flinging themselves flat behind protecting bowlders, began responding to the hot fire rained upon them.

Scattered and hurried as these first volleys were, they proved sufficient to check the howling demons in the open. It has never been Indian nature to face unprotected the aim of the white men, and those dark figures, which only a moment before thronged the narrow gorge, leaping crazily in the riot of apparent victory, suddenly melted from sight, sinking down into leathery coverings beside the stream or into holes among the rocks. Like so many vanishing prairie dogs. Now and then a sly brown arm might incautiously project across the gleaming surface of a rock, or a mop of coarse, black hair appear above the edge of a gully, either incident resulting in a quick interchange of fire. That was all; yet the experienced frontiersmen knew that eyes as keen as those of any wild animal of the jungle were watching murderously their slightest movement.

Wyman, now reclining in agony against the base of the overhanging cliff, directed the movements of his little command calmly and with sober military judgment. Little by little, under protection of the rifles of the three

civilians, the uninjured infantrymen crept cautiously about, rolling loosened bowlders forward into position, until they finally succeeded in thus erecting a rude barricade between them and the enemy. The wounded who could be reached were laboriously drawn back within this improvised shelter, and when the black shadows of the night finally shut down, all remaining alive were once more clustered together, the injured lying moaning and ghastly beneath the overhanging shelf of rock, and the girl, who possessed all the patient stoicism of frontier training, resting in silence, her widely opened eyes on those far-off stars peeping above the brink of the chasm, her head pillowed on old Gillis' knee.

Twice during the long night volunteers sought vainly to pierce those lines of savage watchers. A long, wailing cry of agony from out the thick darkness told the fate of their first messenger, while Casey, of the "XL," crept slowly, painfully back, with an Indian bullet embedded deep in his shoulder. Just before the coming of dawn, Hampton, without uttering a word, calmly turned up the collar of his tightly buttoned coat, so as better to conceal the white collar he wore, gripped his revolver between his teeth, and crept like some wriggling snake among the black rocks and through the dense underbrush in



Hampton Fired Madly Right and Left.

search after water. By some miracle of divine mercy he was permitted to pass unscathed, and came crawling back, a dozen hastily filled canteens dangling across his shoulders. It was like nectar to those parched, feverish throats; but of food barely a mouthful piece remained in the haversacks.

The second day dragged onward, its hours bringing no change for the better, no relief, no slightest ray of hope. The hot sun scorched them pitilessly, and two of the wounded died delirious. From dawn to dark there came no slackening of the savage watchfulness which held the survivors helpless behind their coverts. The merest up-lifting of a head, the slightest movement of a hand, was sufficient to demonstrate how sharp were those savage eyes.

Another long, black night followed, during which, for an hour or so in turn, the weary defenders slept, tossing uneasily, and disturbed by fearful dreams. Then gray and solemn, amid the lingering shadows of darkness, dawned the third dread day of unequal conflict. All understood that it was destined to be their last on this earth unless help came.

For two days Wyman had scarcely stirred from where he lay bolstered against the rock. Sometimes he became delirious from fever, uttering incoherent phrases, or swearing in pitiful weakness. Again he would partially arouse to his old sense of soldierly duty, and assume intelligent command. Now he twisted painfully about upon his side, and, with clouded eyes, sought to discern what man was lying next him. The face was hidden so that all he could clearly distinguish was the fact that this man was not clothed as a soldier.

"Is that you, Hampton?" he questioned, his voice barely audible.

The person thus addressed, who was lying flat upon his back, gazing silently upward at the rocky front of the cliff, turned cautiously over upon his elbow before venturing reply.

"Yes; what is it, sergeant? It looks to be a beauty of a morning way up yonder."

There was a hearty, cheery ring to his clear voice which left the pain-racked old soldier envious.

"My God!" he growled, savagely.

"'Tis likely to be the last any of us will ever see. Waan't it you I heard

whistling just now? One might imagine this was to be a wedding, rather than a funeral."

"And why not, Wyman? Didn't you know they employed music at both functions nowadays? Besides, it is not every man who is permitted to assist at his own obsequies—the very uniqueness of such a situation rather appeals to my sense of humor."

The sergeant, his teeth clinched tightly to repress the pain racking him, stifled his resentment with an evident effort. "You may be less light-hearted when you learn that the last of our ammunition is already in the guns," he remarked, stiffly.

"I suspected as much." And the speaker lifted himself on one elbow to peer down the line of recumbent figures. "To be perfectly frank with you, sergeant, the stuff has held out considerably longer than I believed it would, judging from the way those 'dough boys' of yours kept popping at every shadow in front of them. It's a marvel to me, the mutton-heads they take into the army. Oh, now, you needn't scowl at me like that, Wyman; I've worn the blue, and seen some service where a fellow needed to be a man to sport the uniform. Besides, I'm not indifferent, old chap, and just so long as there remained any work worth attending to in this skirmishing affair, I did it, didn't I? But I tell you, man there is mighty little good trying to buck against Fate, and when Luck once finally lets go of a victim, he's bound to drop straight to the bottom before he stops. That's the sum and substance of all my philosophy, old fellow, consequently I never kick simply because things happen to go wrong. What's the use? They'll go wrong just the same. Consequently, upheld by my acquired philosophy, I'm merely holding back one shot for myself, as a sort of grand finale to this fandango, and another for that little girl out yonder."

These words were uttered slowly, the least touch of a lazy drawl apparent in the low voice, yet there was an earnest simplicity pervading the speech which somehow gave it impressiveness. The man meant exactly what he said, beyond the possibility of

"Nearer, my God, to Thee!
Nearer, my God, to Thee!
That rascals me,
Still all my song shall be,
Nearer, my God, to Thee!
Nearer, my God, to Thee!"

Glazed and wearied eyes glanced cautiously toward the singer around the edges of protecting rocks; fingers loosened their grasp upon the rifle barrels; smoke-begrimed cheeks became moist; while lips, a moment before profaned by oaths, grew silent and trembling. Out in front a revengeful brave sent his bullet swirling just above the singer's head, the sharp fragments of rock dislodged falling in a shower upon his upturned face; but the fearless rascal sang serenely on to the end, without a quaver.

"Mistake it for a death song likely," he remarked dryly, while the last clear, lingering note, reechoed by the cliff, died reluctantly away in softened cadence. "Beautiful old song, sergeant, and I trust hearing it again has done you good. Sang it once in a church way back in New England. But what is the trouble? Did you call me for some special reason?"

"Yes," came the almost gruff response; for Wyman, the fever stealing back upon him, felt half ashamed of his unshed tears. "That is, provided you retain sufficient sense to listen. Old Gillis was shot over an hour ago, yonder behind that big bowlder, and his girl sits there still holding his head in her lap. She'll get hit also unless somebody pulls her out of there, and she's doing no good to Gillis—he's dead."

Hampton's clear-cut, expressive face became graver, all trace of recklessness gone from it. He lifted his head cautiously, peering over his rock cover toward where he remembered earlier in the fight Gillis had sought refuge.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

A Sure Cure.
F. Marion Crawford, at a dinner in New York, attacked spiritualism. "In principle it may be true," Mr. Crawford said, "but spiritualism as it is practiced to-day is a thing to beware of. I know a man whose wife suddenly developed a great interest in spiritualism. She attended seance after seance at the house of a handsome medium with dark, thick hair and smoldering eyes.

"Her husband cured her, though. He took to accompanying her to the medium's, and at every seance he got the most passionate and tender messages from his first wife."

Concrete Lighthouse.
By the use of concrete a tall lighthouse was constructed in a short period of time at the Point de la Coubre, at the mouth of the Gironde river, in France. The building is 225 feet high and about 35 feet in diameter at the base. It was finished in nine months after the beginning of the work, and cost \$30,000. The haste was due to the fact that the sea threatened to wash away the old structure.

Strange Law About Spooks.

Illegal to Shoot Them in England—Other Court Rulings.

Lawsuits about alleged ghosts, of a nature similar to the one which was thrashed out the other day before Mr. Justice Grantham, are far from uncommon.

Indeed, there is quite a little library of books relating to the subject, all of them full of musty, fusty precedents, and each and every one of them bound in that peculiar, underdone pie-crust colored material known to booksellers as law calf.

From these books one may learn many things about ghosts, and the proper way to treat them.

It is, for instance, illegal to belabor a "ghost" after it has cried out that it is not a ghost; while a man who goes gun-hunting after an alleged ghost, and shoots and kills a human being who is masquerading in spook attire, is guilty of murder.

You may not summarily give up possession of a house of which you are tenant, simply because you believe it to be haunted, nor yet even if

ence of my presence to the future development of Glencald. I learn that the climate there is more salubrious, more conducive to long living, the citizens of Placer being peculiarly excitable and careless with their firearms."

The sergeant had been listening with open mouth. "The hell you say!" he finally ejaculated.

"The undefiled truth, every word of it. No wonder you are shocked. A fine state of affairs, isn't it, when a plain-spoken, pleasant-mannered gentleman, such as I surely am—a university graduate, by all the gods, the nephew of a United States senator, and acknowledged to be the greatest exponent of scientific poker in this territory,—should be obliged to hastily change his chosen place of abode because of the threat of an ignorant and depraved mob. Ever have a rope dangled in front of your eyes, sergeant, and a gun-barrel biting into your cheek at the same time? Accept my word for it, the experience is trying on the nerves. Ran a perfectly square game, too, and those ducks knew it; but there's no true sporting spirit left in this territory any more. However, spilled milk is never worth sobbing over, and Fate always contrives to play the final hand in any game, and stocks the cards to win."

"A breath of good, honest prayer would serve better than anything else," groaned the sergeant, soberly.

The gray eyes resting thoughtfully on the old soldier's haggard face became instantly grave and earnest.

"Sincerely I wish I might aid you with one," the man admitted, "but I fear, old fellow, any prayer coming from my lips would never ascend very far. However, I might try the comfort of a hymn, and you will remember this one, which, no doubt, you have helped to sing back in God's country."

There was a moment's hushed pause, during which a rifle cracked sharply out in the ravine; then the reckless fellow, his head partially supported against the protecting bowlder, lifted up a full, rich baritone in rendition of that hymn of Christian faith—

"Nearer, my God, to Thee!
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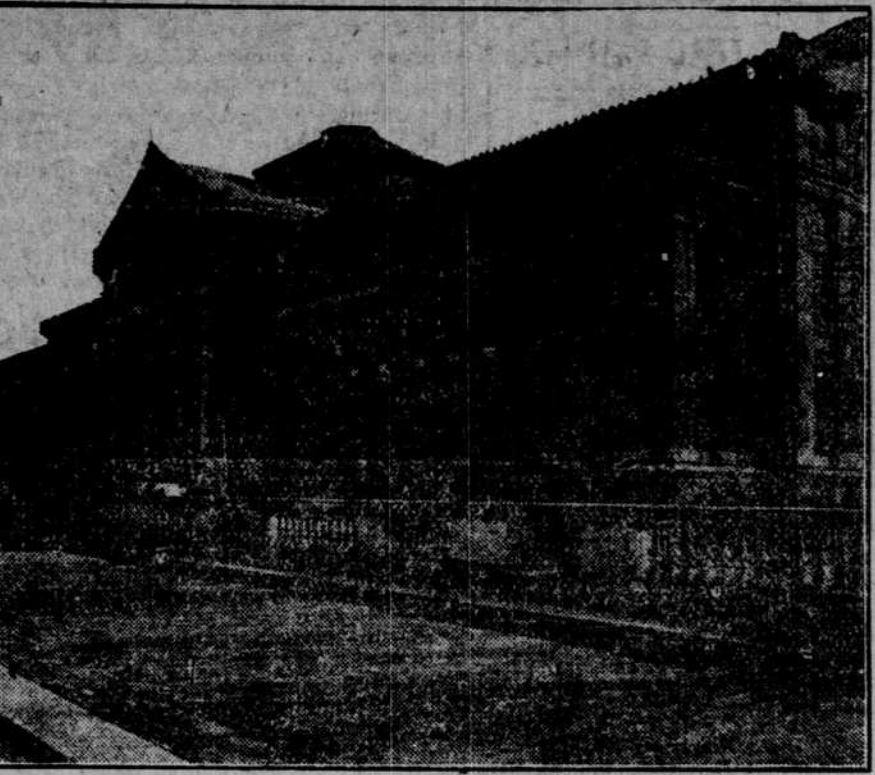
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U. S. ARMY WAR COLLEGE AT WASHINGTON



It is here that the officers of the army attend school for the study of war problems of all kinds. It is practically a post-graduate course for the army officer following his military training at West Point.

ELEPHANTS TO RESCUE

SAVE ENGINEER FROM WRECK AND QUENCH FIRE.

Huge Pachyderms Handle Tons of Debris as Though But Toothpicks and Have Trunk Cleared in Short Order.

Morgantown, W. Va.—A freight train on the Baltimore & Ohio railroad was derailed at Corbin and the engine and 16 cars were dashed to pieces. A broken rail was the cause. The engine man escaped death by jumping.

The engineer, James Malcolm, of this city, was caught when he leaped from the cab and imprisoned in the wreckage. Not a cut, bruise or scratch did he receive, and where he was penned in looked as if it had been built for his protection.

So tightly were timbers wedged about Malcolm that human hands could not budge them and he was in danger of being burned alive, for the wreck had taken fire and was spreading. His cries for help were heart-rending.

Fortunately, two sections of the John Robinson circus were closely following and these were flagged. The keen thoughtfulness of Gov. John F. Robinson displayed itself and the elephants, eight of them, were quickly unloaded and taken to the scene of the wreck, which was right in the center of the town.

FOOD FOR LONG TRIP

NAVY DEPARTMENT PREPARING FOR VOYAGE TO PACIFIC.

Bids for Supplies for from 12,000 to 15,000 Men Asked for—6,000,000 Pounds of Provisions Required to Feed Sailors.

New York.—Five million pounds of provisions will be required to feed the enlisted men of the Atlantic fleet on the voyage to San Francisco, which is to commence about three months hence. Bids for this amount have been asked for, all of the supplies to be delivered at the New York navy yard, the deliveries to begin November 1.

It is announced that each of the ships, including those in the torpedo boat flotilla and the colliers and supply ships when they leave for the Pacific will have on board all of the provisions necessary for the entire voyage. But the officers have not been taken into consideration in these figures. They will have to make their own arrangements for board before they sail.

Nearly everything that a person can think of to eat or drink, except intoxicants, is included in the lists of supplies. In making out the lists the navy department officials took into consideration the facts that the ships will be at sea on Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's and Washington's Birthday, and special dinners for those occasions have already been arranged, as is shown by the large number of turkeys, plum puddings, pumpkin pies, nuts, dried fruits and other delicacies that are named in the lists of foods required.

There will be between 12,000 and 15,000 enlisted men on the battleships, torpedo boats and auxiliary vessels, that are going to the Pacific, and the job of figuring out how much food and of what kind, was needed for them, was one of the toughest mathematical problems ever turned over

A Cow Swallows Dynamite.

Notice Put at Head of Body Warns Against Jarring.

Lewisboro, Conn.—All that is mortal of a cow lies in a swamp just outside town. At the cow's head is a board with the inscription: "Do not jar this cow or it will explode."

Albert Scofield had been blasting rocks and stumps on his Lewisboro farm. He reached the field the other day in time to see one of his cows swallow two sticks of dynamite. Scarcely had she taken the morsel into her mid than acute indigestion attacked her, and jumping the fence she ran through the village bellowing with pain.

Scofield followed her at a distance. "Don't stop her," he yelled, "she's full of dynamite."

A council of war was held. John Simpson, the town's best shot, loaded his trusty carbine, took a position 200 yards from the cow and fired. The cow fell dead. Then very slowly her

body was dragged to a remote spot in the swamp.

Legless Man a Prize Dancer.
Bayoune, N. J.—A buck and wing dancing contest for the local championship and \$20 in gold was the feature of the ball of the Fourth Ward club here. The contest was won by Henry Blaire, a legless painter, who carries his own legs and wears shoes. He introduced steps his competitors never had seen.

Potatoes Made New by Dope.
Columbus, O.—The "rejuvenated potato" is the latest form of adulterated food to which State Food Commissioner R. W. Dunlap's attention has been called. Local dealers are treating potatoes of the crop of 1906 with some liquid that peels off the skin after the manner of the "new potatoes."

A man in Chicago has unearthed a piece of prehistoric leather. Doubtless a boarding house steak.

SEELKS FOR HONEST MAN.

He Finds Mrs. O'Bryan's Lost \$1,000 Package and Mails It.

New York.—Mrs. Edward O'Bryan of Mount Prospect avenue, Newark, is looking for the person who found her package containing \$145 and several valuable treasures which she had lost, and which were mailed to the person that the owner intended them to be sent to, in order that she might reward him for his honesty. She accordingly inserted an advertisement in a Newark Sunday paper, which reads:

"Will the honest gentleman who has mailed my lost registered letter in front of the Newark city hall on Wednesday evening, which contained four diamond rings, five \$20 bills, two \$20 gold pieces, one \$5 gold piece, and a picture of my deceased mother, to Mr. C. O'Bryan, Scranton, Pa., send his name and address to Mrs. E. R.?"

Mrs. O'Bryan had prepared and addressed the package to be sent to her brother in Scranton last Wednesday, and while en route to the Newark post office she dropped it near the new city hall at Broad and Green streets. The loss of the money and jewelry caused her considerable worry, but she was surprised late Saturday afternoon when she received a letter from her brother stating that he had received the package safely. The envelope containing the valuables bore the name and address of the brother, and the finder, seeing the address, mailed it and registered it at his own expense.

Mrs. O'Bryan values the contents of the package at about \$1,000, and is determined to locate the person who was honest enough to send it on to its destination. She hopes to eventually learn the name of the sender through her brother, who may have it on the return card of the registered package.

THREE GESE ON A SPREE.

Ats' Some of Beck's Cider Pulp and Were Soon Dead to the World.

York, Pa.—Martin Beck, a farmer of the Conewago hills, came to town with a tale about some geese owned by a neighbor named Beck.

On Beck's farm is a cider press, and it is the custom to throw the pulp into a heap near by. The farmer's geese, discovering the pile, ate the pulp with relish. Soon the geese swayed from side to side and cackled hoarsely, and Beck and his wife agreed that they were sick. Finally one by one they fell, limp and apparently dead.

Grieving over the loss of three plump geese, yet remembering that feathers were worth something, Mrs. Beck carried them into the house and began to pluck the feathers. She had about half finished with the first when she detected a quiver in the body and dropped the goose in astonishment. The movements continued and presently the half naked fowl opened its eyes, staggered to its feet and started out through the doorway. The other two soon afterward also revived.

It was not until later, when a pair of ducks were similarly affected, that the farmer realized what was the matter. The pulp, lying in the sun, had fermented and his poultry had been indulging in spees upon a very fair substitute for applejack.

WILL HAVE THEATERS ON SEA.

Frohman Arranges for Regular Performances on Cunard Liners.

New York.—Hereafter those who go down to the sea in ships with the intent of crossing the Atlantic will not be forced to forego the Wednesday matinee, the vaudeville performance or the concert. The Cunard Steamship company has arranged with Charles Frohman to give theatrical performances on its big liners by players who may be making the voyage, and if these prove a success regular companies will be put on the ships. Alf Hayman, manager for Mr. Frohman in this city, said: "Mr. Frohman is at present in London cooperating with the Cunard company. The scheme will probably be tried first on the Lusitania. Light comedy will be given, and if successful other branches of theatricals will be put on the steamship boards. The chief difficulty with the players would probably arise from sea-sickness, but I suppose others would go on and fill the gaps. I cannot tell when the theater on the high seas will be put into operation, for some of the details are not definitely settled."

All Forbidden to Treat Him.
Danville, Pa.—"Judge, I want you to make an order that no man shall be permitted to sell or give liquor to me," said young Walter Rupp, just sentenced here to 60 days in jail for assaulting an officer.

"That is what ruined me, and I want to start life anew without the ruin," concluded the prisoner.

"The clerk of the court will enter an order to that effect," said the judge, and I commend the defendant for his determination to reform."

A Log to a Car.
Portland, Ore.—Four fir logs, all cut from the same tree and containing more than 42,000 feet, were shipped to this place the first of the week from near Raymond. Each log occupied a car. The larger log was 101 inches in diameter at its small end and was 36 feet in length, containing 17,000 feet. The stump from which the tree was cut measured ten feet eight inches in diameter. At \$10.50 per thousand, which is the price paid on this harbor for high grade fir, the four logs would bring more than \$423.

Must Pay for a Corpse.
Fort Worth, Tex.—Another kink has been found in the anti-pass legislation.

With death a man ceases to be a railroad employe, and fare must be paid for the transportation of his body.

Application was made to the Trinity & Brazos Valley line for transportation of the body of a former employe of the Cotton Belt.

Investigation shows that under the interstate act the pass privilege is limited strictly to employes.