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HENRY WALLACE PHILLIPS
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(Continued from page 1)
wiggle on you."
"All right—slide along. I'll keep it
to you," says he.
I looked back and saw him leaning
out with his saddle on his arm. "That's
a particular kind of cuss," I thought.
"Bareback would suit most people."
Taking it a little easier for the next
couple of miles, I gave him a chance
to pull up.
We pounded along without saying
anything for a spell, when I happened
to notice that his teeth were chattering.
"Keep your nerve up, pardner!" says
I. "Don't you get scared—we've got a
good start on 'em."
He looked at me kind of reproach-
ful.
"Scared he derned!" says he. "I
reckon if you was riding around this
nice cool night in your drawers, your
teeth 'ud rattle some too."
I took a look at him and saw, sure
enough, while he had hat, coat and
boots on, the pants was missing. Well,
if it had been the last act, I'd have had
to laugh.

"Couldn't find 'em nohow," says he.
"Hunted high and low, jick, Jack and
the game—just comes to my mind now
that I had 'em rolled up and was sleep-
ing on 'em. I don't like to go around
this way—I feel as if I was two men
and one of 'em hardly respectable."
"Did you bring a gun with you?"
He gave me another stare. "Why,
pardner, you must think I have got a
light and frivolous disposition," says
he, and with that he heaves up the
great granduncle of all the six shoot-
ers I ever did see. It made my forty-
five long look like something for a kid
to cut its teeth on. "That's the best
gun in this country," he went on.

"Looks as if it might be," says I.
"Has the foundry that cast it gone out
of business? I'd like to have one like
it, if it's as dangerous as it looks."

"When I have any trouble with a
man," says he, "I don't want to go
peeking at him with a putty blower,
just irritating him and giving him a
little skin complaint here and there. I
want something that'll touch his con-
science."

He had it, for a broadside from that
battery would scatter an elephant over
a township.

We loped along quiet and easy until
sun up. The Grindstone Buttes lay
about a mile ahead of us. Looking
back, we saw the Injuns coming over
a rise of ground 'way in the distance.

"Now," says my friend, "I know a
short cut through those hills that'll
bring us out at Johnson's. They've got
enough punchers there to do the United
States army up—starched and blued.
Shall we take it?"

"Sure!" says I. "I'm only wander-
ing round this part of the country be-
cause this part of the country is here
—if it was anywhere else I'd be just
as glad."

So in we went. It was the steepest
and narrowest kind of a canyon, look-
ing as if it had been cut out of the
rock with one crack of the ax. I was
just thinking, "Gee whiz, but this
would be a poor place to get snagged
in," when bang! says a rifle right in
front of us, and in-a-r-r! goes the bul-
let over our heads.

We were off them horses and behind
a couple of chunks of rock sooner than
we hoped for, and that's saying a good
deal.

"Cussed poor shot, whoever he is,"
says my friend. "Some Injun holding
us here till the rest come up, I pre-
sume."

"That's about the size of it—and I'd
like to make you a bet that he does it,
too, if I thought I'd have a chance to
collect."

"Oh, you can't always tell—you
might lose your money," says he, kind
of thoughtful.

"I wouldn't mind that half as much
as winning," says I. "But, on the
square, do you think we can get out?
I'll jump him with you if you say so,
although I ain't got what you might
call a passion for suicide."

"Now you hold on a bit," says he.
"I don't know but what we'd have
done better to stick to the horses and
run for it, but it's too late to think of
that. Jumping him is all foolshness;
he'd sit behind his little rock and
pump lead into us till we wouldn't
float in brine—and we can't back out
now."

He talked so calm he made me kind
of mad. "Well," says I. "In that case
let's play 'Simon says thumbs up' till
the rest of the crowd comes."

"There you go!" says he. "Just like
all young fellers—gettin' hotheaded
right away if you don't fall in with their
plans. Now, sonny, you keep your
temper and watch me play cushion
carroms with our friend there."

"Meaning how?"

"You see that block of stone just
this side of him with the square face
toward us? Well, he's only covered in
front, and I'm a-going to shoot against

that face and catch him on the
glance."
"Great if you could work it!" says I.
"But Lord!"
"Well, watch," says he. Then he
squinted down behind his cover, so



"Well, watch," says he.

as not to give the Injun an opening,
trained his cannon and pulled the
trigger. The old gun opened her
mouth and roared like an earthquake,
but I didn't see any dead Injun. Then
twice more she spit fire, and still there
weren't any desirable corpses to be
had.

"Say, pardner," says I, "you wouldn't
make many cigars at this game."
"Now, don't you get onseny," says
he. "Just watch."

"Biff!" says the old gun, and this
time, sure enough, the Injun was
knocked clear of the rock. I felt all
along that he wouldn't be much of a
comfort to his friends afterward if
that gun did land on him.

Still, he wasn't so awful dead, for as
we jumped for the horses he kind of
hitched himself to the rock, and lay-
ing the rifle across it and working the
lever with his left hand, he sent a
hole plumb through my hat.

"Bully boy!" says I. I snapped at
him and smashed the lock of his rifle
to flinders. Then of course he was our
meat.

As we rode up to him my pard held
dead on him. The Injun stood up
straight and tall and looked us square
in the eye. Say, he was a man, I tell
you, redskin or no redskin! The cour-
age just stuck out on him as he stood
there waiting to pass in his checks.

My pardner threw the muzzle of his
gun up. "D—n it!" says he. "I can't do
it. He's game from the heart out.
But the Lord have mercy on his shuf-
ful soul if he and I run foul of each
other on the prairie again!"

Then we shacked along down to
Johnson's and had breakfast.

"What became of 'Frosthead and his
gang?" Oh, they sent out a regiment
or two and gathered him in—bought
twenty-five soldiers to an Injun. No,
no harm was done. Me and my pard
were the only ones that bucked up
against them. Chuck out a cigarette,
Kid; my lungs ache for want of a
smoke.

[CONTINUED.]

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