The Fort on the Firing Line

By Albert R. Lyman

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Chapter 1

In that silent and sunburned solitude two men appeared from the mouth of the canyon, one of them on a horse, the other afoot. Astonished eyes followed them through the mist of heat and distance while they prospected far out across the valley, to return and disappear in the mountain when the sun hung low in the west. Next day a little company of men emerged from that same canyon, made their way through the sagebrush along the tracks made by the two the day before, and when they reached a stream, they stopped and fell to work at once as if with premeditated plan to make that their permanent abiding place. Nothing like that had ever happened there in all the known ages of the past-white men coming without invitation or permission to inhabit Salt Lake Valley. The Indians gazed in astonishment, dragging their half-filled net of crickets and grasshoppers idly behind them. They must go over there; they must see these white invaders with their animals and wagons and other strange gear. In three days a long stream of wagons came pouring out of that canyon - fifty - seventy-five - maybe a hundred! And a hundred and fifty-a hundred and seventy-five-maybe two hundred white men. They drove their teams of oxen and horses and mules to where the little company had stopped, and spread out there like an ant-hill in a big camp, buzzing with work and strange preparations. That company of white men from the canyon knew that as invaders they would be resisted and possibly attacked by the people of the land. They began therefore at once to build a fort, a hollow square of adobe houses to serve as a place of defense while they established themselves firmly in the area around it.

In the autumn of that year, while the colony worked early and late with an aggressiveness to arouse surprise if not fear in the minds of the staring natives, more people began stringing out of that canyon from which the first had come. Along the twin-wheel tracks worn in the sagebrush the long procession coming, coming-a hundred wagons, maybe more. A thousand people-maybe two thousand! To the Shoshone and his brother-tribes this was a most serious matter, a grave throat to their further possession of the precious hunting grounds which their fathers had given them. But, alas, they lacked the essential strength of union; they had always preyed one on another and still cherished deep hurts and bitter differences. Also they lived like wolves in poverty, never having reserve supplies, but devouring what they found from day to day. To form an effective union and resist the wondrous organization which these intruders operated, was far beyond anything they had learned to do. Through the long cold winter the Indians drew their scanty rabbit-skin robes around them and nursed the little fires in their wickiups while they talked of the adobe fort and its determined builders. From some of their people who begged and spied at the fort, they learned that the strangers wanted to be friendly; but friendly or not, they had come to take the

country; and if more of them came, they would no doubt build another fort and a town around it. When the summer came again, the summer of 1848, other companies did come stringing out of that canyon, startling numbers of them and coming to stay. Scouts from the fort went spying out the country north and south for hundreds of miles, and a good-sized company of them made their way down into Sanpete Valley, built a fort, and made there another beginning a hundred and fifty miles southeast of Salt Lake. Very soon after that another strong company came out from the city springing up around the adobe walls, put up a stockade for defense near Utah Lake, and began there another center to spread in the regions around it. Something had to be done or the Indians would lose their inheritance. With their poor understanding of how weak and disorganized they were, and how potent the arm of law and government among the settlers, they came in the nighttime and drove away a herd of horses and cattle from the new stockade at Fort Utah (Provo). With the coming of daylight, they saw the men of the fort hot on their trail. They hurried into Rock Canyon and made the best defense their weapons and their understanding afforded, killing two or three white men, but losing so many of their own men that they scurried as best they could for the shelter of the brush and willows towards the lake. How sternly they were undeceived by the fight which followed; twenty or more of their braves fell; and the few remaining sneaked terrified away. The families of the dead, facing winter with nothing to eat, saw no better way to survive than to throw themselves on the mercy of their victorious enemies, and when they had been fed and treated with kindness in Salt Lake till spring, the report of it tended to hush the rising call for war.

The year 1851 the Mormon chief, BrighamYoung, sent a colony to build a fort and establish a place called Parowan, three hundred miles south of Salt Lake. These long and aggressive strides to the south, matched by other aggressive movements to the north, caused Chief Walker of the Utes to consider with alarm what was happening to his country, but he considered, too, the warm friendship of these strange white people, and their eagerness to help the Indians, and instead of reacting with hostile gesture, he made a friendly call on the Mormon chief, telling him where other towns could be made, and encouraging the Mormons to spread out and build up the country. The sprawling frontier, extending now in a ragged line for hundreds of miles through wild valleys, rock-ribbed canyons, and over-timbered mountaintops, was reinforced at its most important vantage points with forts, stockades, and other structures of defense. Trusting eyes of children, of the old and the defenseless, peered trustingly from the portholes of sheltering walls at the silent wilderness around them from which unfriendly Indians might appear at any time. It was only the brave or the venturesome who went alone or unprotected beyond the barriers, for whether or not there was open declaration of war, there was always danger. Chief Walker had made wordy professions of friendship, but he was not supreme even with his own tribe, and he might at any time change his mind. The fort was the indispensable protection to each new step farther into the big wilderness, and the extending zone of these protections radiated out from that first adobe fort at Salt

Lake City, like the ring-waves in a pool of water from a falling stone. This fort-zone and its firing line was destined to mature in the north and the west, but in the south and east it was to focus at last in one faraway corner, there to build the last fort in Utah.

This age and its way of fighting had a tremendous lure, not only captivating mature men, but also infusing into its own children an undying love for the thrills of its peculiar warfare. One of its enthusiastic devotees was Peter Shirts, the Daniel Boone of the Rocky Mountains. In the remoteness of the upper Pahreah, east of what is now Kanab, he with his wife and three children turned their house into a fort and fought Indians there all winter instead of moving away for safety as their few neighbors had done. With a love like that for the firing line, it is only to be expected that Shirts would follow it on and on, and that he will be found again trying to find it in the faraway. Chief Walker of the Ute tribe, did change his mind about that peace policy. When he considered the wholeheartedness with which the Mormons accepted his invitation to spread and build new towns, he raised a howl of protest against them, and incited his people to attack the new settlements. In 1853-54, he and his people carried on the war with such fury that some of the new forts had to be abandoned. Yet, however dark they made the picture for the struggling settlers, it was more dark still for the Indians, and they began soon to realize that they were not prepared for war. It was not only unprofitable, but also disastrous, more so to them than to the settlers whom they robbed, and Walker was glad to meet President Young at Chicken Creek and agree to a treaty of peace. That was the official end of the war, though outlaw bands of Indians continued to make raids on livestock and attack unprotected travelers, especially in the southeast. Yet even before the Walker War, and right soon after the settlement was begun at Parowan in 1851, and a little start made on the Santa Clara much farther south, these hardy frontiersmen began gradually to be aware that off to the southeast of them lived a tribe of Indians who were natural robbers, considering it folly, to make peace with any people having valuable substance of which they could be despoiled.

The sturdy explorers and settlers of what came to be called the Dixie Country, found themselves looking away with apprehension at the blue profile of Buckskin Mountain in Arizona. From the dark shadows hovering above it ten thousand inveterate robbers seemed to gaze in eager anticipation at the precious teams and milch cows the settlers had brought with them. These robbers, the Navajos, struck always where they were least expected, and they had made such careful preparation for retreat, they got far away in the rocks before their raid was discovered. Elusive and wary as coyotes by ages of training in their vocation as robbers, they were not striking in reprisal for any wrong they had suffered nor because their country was being invaded, but in long and well-planned expeditions from their homeland they were intent on getting horses, sheep, cattle, anything they could use or sell for gain. They proved to be a more crafty and a more implacable enemy than any the Mormons had encountered in all the mountains and valleys from Salt Lake City to the Santa Clara. While this tribe

from the southeast wore their plundering trails deeper every month, the suffering settlers along the border appealed to their leaders for wisdom and a way to survive. Walker and his braves had been pacified, and comparative peace restored to the settlements, but this Navajo menace seemed ever to be getting into better gear for greater activity. The Mormons had offered peace to the Utes, and sued for peace before taking up arms against them. The logical and only consistent thing now was to send messengers into the distant Navajo country, inviting them to be good neighbors and to have good neighbors, to come over and trade and to live in peace. These messengers were also to visit the Hopis, a very friendly and industrious people whom the Navajos had hated and plundered. But behold, to the Navajo, his most profitable neighbor was the one on whom he could prey to the best advantage. Jacob Hamblin, a great lover of the Indians and an ardent advocate of peace, made the long, hard journey over desert and mountain and river into the Navajo country with his offering of good will to this nation who had been despoiling his people. He was accompanied by Thales Haskell, George A. Smith, Ira Hatch, and others, and they toiled from place to place, seeking in vain to get a hearing. This kind of plea to the Navajos meant nothing but weakness and fear. And when the Navajos observed that these peace envoys consorted with the weak, despised Hopis who were always cringing and pleading for peace, they concluded that the Mormons and the Hopis were no doubt alike, timorous and fearful. The Navajos saw no need to be friendly with any people of whom they were not afraid. Especially should they refuse any obligation of friendship to any tribe or nation on whom they could enrich themselves by plunder. Haughty and vain in their declaration that they had no fear of white men who had failed miserably for generations to conquer them, they spurned and rejected these offers of peace. Hamblin and his companions toiled on from camp to camp till they knew by the sullenness and frowns of the Navajos that their lives were in danger if they went on. They looked for a protected place to stop for the night, resolved if they could to get back to the river and return home. The dry unrelenting breath of desert beat against their tanned faces, and the smell of sheep came to them from hills that had been grazed bare. Distantly to the south the gray monotony of desert was relieved by a blue dome of the San Francisco Mountains, but in all other directions they saw the heat legions dancing above the dull stretch, and mocking images of mirage where the skyline melted away. Writing of it in later years Jacob Hamblin said, "The very heavens seemed to be brass above us. With dark visages and never a word to indicate their intention, the Navajos hemmed the company up against a bluff, compelling them to climb to a little tableland above, where they kept vigil till morning. While they prepared in the morning to move, a young Navajo approached George A. Smith, and in a gesture of friendship asked to take his gun. It had become an aphorism that the Indian who is trusted will not betray the trust, and with this in mind young Smith, trusting and generous, handed over the gun. With the weapon in his hand, and without a word of warning, the Navajo turned the gun on its owner and shot him near the heart.

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Chapter 2

In the year 1851, President Brigham Young sent a colony to build a fort and establish a place called Parowan, thus extending the great Mormon expansion to the south, encouraged by the Ute Chief Walker. Since Chief Walker was not supreme even among his own tribe, it was imperative that forts be built in every settlement. As the thin line of forts began to reach farther and farther into Chief Walker's territory, he viewed this influx with alarm and incited his people to attack. Among the Mormons were those who genuinely loved the Indians and made constant appeals to them. Foremost in this number were Jacob Hamblin and Thales Haskell. Added to the hostility of the Utes were three other adversaries: the Navajos the renegade whites, and nature, which seemed at times the greatest adversary of all.

It was imperative that Hamblin and his company move on at once or they would all be massacred, yet what should they do with their comrade wounded to death? He was in too much agony to mount a horse; he could not last long; yet they had no minute wait. Lifting him hurriedly but tenderly to the saddle, they rode one on each side to keep him from falling, and rushed away while he begged them to lay him down to die by the trail. When the life had gone out of him, they lowered him to the sand, put his hat over his face and left him for the savages coming on their trail. They would take his scalp, mutilate, and insult his body, and leave it to the ravages of birds and animals. His bones were to be scattered and bleach a long time on the sand of this enemy country before they could be gathered by loving hands and given reverent burial in the homeland.

That was the contemptuous answer of the Navajos to the peace offer of a neighbor who wanted to be their friend instead of their prey. They had never been humbled; they felt perfectly secure in their remote deserts and mountains while they devoured weaker or more peaceable people on every side. Now they lifted their haughty heads in exultation of triumph over these peace messengers whom they had thrust violently from their borders. But disaster hung darkly, though unseen, over their heads, and it was in the destiny of the years that they would hail these Mormons as truer friends than they had ever expected to find among the despised race of white men. Hamblin and his company crossed back over the river, followed the long trail over the timbered Buckskins and over the desert to report the Navajo answer to their petition, and what was to be expected from that quarter in the future. O the austere Navajo, relentless and unbending. How and when would he be persuaded to accept ways of peace! The plunderers followed Hamblin's trail homeward and descended again from the forest of the big mountain to raid the herds of the weary settlers. Like creatures that live and work in the night, they skulked under cover and in the darker shadows by day. Woe to the herder who had slackened his vigilance or who suffered himself to be found helpless and alone! And these robbers planned death to all who dare to pursue them with their spoil. But calamity, fearsome and tremendous, struck

suddenly in the homeland, terrifying and scattering them as a pack of rats are scattered from their disrupted den. Their robbing bands came fewer in number now, but they came with the persistency of desperation as if their very lives depended on the nature and quantity of what they could steal. That was exactly what their lives did depend on, and the lives of their wives and children as well. Most of their thousands in home-refuge had been round up and driven away like cattle into captivity. Those who came plundering now were those only who, by their desperate flight, had escaped, stripped and destitute, to the ragged breaks of the badlands where they must survive as thieves or die as outcasts. And now, from that ominous mist over the distant Buckskins, pinched faces seemed to peer from the tall timber in mortal fear of the white soldiers behind them, and in equal fear of the angry sentinels in front of them keeping vigil along the Mormon frontier. Yet somehow, whether by day or by night, they seemed to come riding, riding; and when the darkness and hush of the night had passed, pony tracks on the trail showed that they had come - and gone. Never till now in all the ages past had the Navajos been defeated by their enemies. With vain exultation they related fabulous legends of victory and freedom through long and glorious ages with a God who loved them above all other people. Like birds with hooked beaks who devour weaker creatures, they were despoiling the Mexicans and Pueblos to their southeast and the Hopis to their west when they were first taken account of by authentic history. The influence of Hernando Cortez and his Spanish government reached feebly after them, to find them defiant and unyielding. By 1630, they had become known as inveterate robbers with impregnable retreats.

In 1705, the Spaniards in Mexico had to drop all other business and carry on a series of punitive expeditions against them, which amounted to nothing at all. The Navajos mocked at them and continued their plundering operations with all the persistence and deliberation with which they planted their little patches of corn or cared for their flocks of sheep. Workers though they were from the distant past, their philosophy was to eat at least a part of their bread by the sweat of other men's brows, and no one in the world seemed able to change that ingrown philosophy. Yet to the north of them across the San Juan River lived a people who believed in eating all their bread by the sweat of other men. These people were not workers like the Navajos, but inveterate idlers, no possessions for which the Navajos would be lured over among them. Thus with never anything worth the hazard, nothing to lose and everything to gain, they stole from the stealers. Native to the most impregnable region of barriers which nature had made in the precipitous southwest, they could sally safely out from their defenses to rob or torment the Navajos, and if pursued too closely, they could disappear completely. Once among their defenses, it was death to follow them. These near neighbors north of the San Juan were Piutes, more implacable as fighters, more persistent as thieves, more cunning, more cruel than the Navajos. From the remote past they had been a sharp thorn in the flesh of these desert pirates. The story of their wars, of how the Piutes stole Navajo, women, of how the old San Juan was sometimes their defense and sometimes their betrayal, is a history in itself. It was

in the unfolding of events for this saucy little gang of Piutes to prolong, for more than thirty-five years, the fight of the fort on the firing line.

In 1805, the Navajos aggravated the Spanish-controlled Mexican government to the breaking point, and with an army it invaded their country from the south. Finding them in Canyon de Chelley, it slaughtered twelve or fifteen hundred men, women, and children. Even this terrifying blood-bath gave them but a temporary chill, for the Spanish power in Mexico had already begun to decline, and by 1815, these bandits of the wilderness found no one to challenge their supremacy unless indeed it was that nest of Piutes across the San Juan. No strong power called them again into question for thirty years. Without restraint from any quarter in all that time, the Navajos brought forth a generation of men with hot contempt for any government but their own. They had been a law to themselves for at least three hundred years, perhaps much longer, and they considered themselves free from and superior to all other peoples on earth. They made their raids east and south according to long-established custom, bringing back their spoils and their captives. When their country became United States territory, they challenged at once the authority of the new government, and went on spoiling the Mexicans and Pueblos as before. Who was Uncle Sam to foist his authority and his laws on them? Had they not been mocking at the governments of white men for three hundred years? And the white men had wearied of their defiance and gone away, leaving them supreme on their native sand. Even before the treaty was signed with Mexico in 1848, General Alexander Doniphan had led a division of United States troops into the Navajo country, and had them agree to terms with the new government. Accepting the general's terms was the quickest and easiest way to get rid of him and his troops, but these men of the desert had been free too long to subordinate themselves to any outside power without meeting some convincing display of force. As soon as the general and his army disappeared, the treaty became a despised scrap of paper. They followed their age-old habit of spoiling the people around them, and in September 1849, General John M. Washington arrived with a force to check them, and to arrange what he thought was a clearer understanding. Trustful and patient as Doniphan had been, he effected an agreement without harsh measures. Again when the uniformed fighters disappeared, the Navajos turned with a sneer to their old vocation. The Mormons had recently arrived in Salt Lake Valley, and in the two years or more while they were extending their frontier towards the Navajo border, these men of the desert gathered strength and insolence to offer them a more alarming challenge than they were ever to receive from any other tribe of Indians. The Navajos agreed to no fewer than six treaties with the United States, disregarding every one of them with premeditated resolution. After mocking successfully all that time at the new government, and mistaking its patience to mean its weakness, they had evolved a pitiably exaggerated notion of their own power and importance as a people. When it was told in this country, that Mormon towns, with herds of horses, cattle, and sheep, were filling the hitherto-desolate country north of the Buckskin Mountains, it tickled their avaricious hope of more gain. Easy spoil from a new quarter-they planned the raids which in due time were to

endanger all the settlements of southern Utah. Now besides their old plunder-trails to the southeast, they would have other profitable trails to the northwest. In the deep and obscure windings of the Colorado they would find secret crossings to be used in perfect safety, and from the deep solitudes of the big timber they would descend with surprise on the prey. Ten thousand places of security would await them as they came loaded homeward. The new field offered more than the old field had ever yielded. It was at this dangerously proud day of their history that they murdered George A. Smith and thrust the peace envoys rudely from their borders.

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Chapter 3

In the year 1851, President Brigham Young sent a colony to build a fort and establish a place called Parowan, thus extending the great Mormon expansion to the south, encouraged at first by the Ute Chief Walker. But as the thin line of forts began to reach farther and farther into Chief Walker's territory, he viewed this influx with alarm and incited his people to attack. Among the Mormons were those who genuinely loved the Indians and made constant appeals to them. Foremost in this number were Jacob Hamblin and Thales Haskell. Added to the hostility of the Utes were three other adversaries: the Navajos the renegade whites, and nature, which seemed at times the greatest adversary of all. In cold blood an Indian had shot George A. Smith with his own gun which the Indian had borrowed, and Jacob Hamblin-and his company had been forced to go on and leave his body. The plunderers followed Hamblin's trail homeward and raided the herds of the weary settlers. No treaty with the United States could guarantee settlers from the depredations of the Navajos.

However profitable the Utah field was proving to be, the beaten trails of the Navajo to the southeast were still too inviting and too rich in yield to forsake because of the undeveloped prospects on the northwest. From these trails to the southeast they brought home crops, livestock, children, women. All the promises they had made to refrain from this practice meant nothing to them. It was a rich industry; nothing but force could ever pry them out of it. But from that plundered southeast arose a bitter cry from bereaved parents, outraged husbands, desolated homes. The call of agony reached to the nation's capital demanding the return of their loved ones, even though the nation was in great distress with the Civil War at the height of its fury. Urged and petitioned, the president of the United States ordered a detachment of troops to the distant Navajo reservation. This time, unlike half a dozen former times, it did not come simply to talk about a scrap of paper. Desperate with its own dangers, the government ordered the situation to be handled with firmness. The command of this force fell to Kit Carson who started with it as guide. The particulars of his arrival on the reservation form a long story, but it is worth while to observe that Carson began with generous moderation and would have made peaceful settlement if he had found it possible. It was not possible. Nothing but a very heavy jolt would jar the false and dangerous notions out of the Navajo philosophy. Carson began rounding up the people of the reservation as if they were cattle, and driving them away in herds to Fort Sumner, known also as Bosque Redondo, in New Mexico. With light cannon mounted on the backs of mules, he compelled them to go or die. He chopped down their orchards, burned 796 their houses, killed or appropriated their livestock, and spoiled their fields. Consternation and terror spread before him as in a flock set upon by wolves. In death races over the sand they spread word of his approach, and all who could get away fled headlong. They crawled into dens or deep gulches, they climbed mountains and crossed

streams, anywhere to dodge Carson's grapeshot and keep out of his roundup. Destitute of food, destitute of blankets, they rushed away with their women and children, preferring starvation to capture. Carson took twelve thousand of their people away, leaving the country stripped and silent. The Piutes came in from their hideouts north of the San Juan and gobbled up all they could find. The few thousand Navajos who escaped "The Big Walk," as they called it, dared not so much as look southeast over their beaten trails where the terrible men in blue uniform guarded their fellow tribesmen as captives. Neither dared they go north among the chesty Piutes, nor south into central Arizona where they had made a host of deadly enemies. For these desperate refugees there remained but one possible escape from starvation-that was to follow the long trail across the Buckskins and brave the exasperated guards and herders who stood armed to fight for the flocks and herds of the Mormon settlements. Hence the desperation with which they descended from the tall timber in 1863, to skulk and await opportunity with the lives of themselves and their loved ones hanging in the balance. The raids of these hunger-crazed people in 1864, became worse in '65. They captured a band of horses from near Kanab, and there was no herd too well guarded to discourage their efforts. In one place they fired a stack of grain in the night to attract the guard while they emptied a corral of its horses. Sixteen of the Indians raided Pipe Springs in broad daylight, and the herders barely escaped with their lives.

While the famishing Navajos made existence more difficult every month along the southern border, the Utes and kindred tribes with Black Hawk at their head went on the warpath against the scattered settlements. In 1865-67 his cruel braves compelled the Mormons to abandon twenty or more of their fortified beginnings and draw back from the firing line for safety. Fields which had been cleared and planted with great care, ditches completed by hard toil, dearly-loved homes, orchards, and gardens were left for Black Hawk and his braves to loot or destroy. The true colors of death and terror in the remote settlements will never be painted in their fullness of agony. Nor will it ever be told about the braves who fell fighting for what they thought to be their rights, and the sorrow of those who waited in vain for their return. But Black Hawk and his people had to discover again, as in the Walker War, that they were not prepared to fight. When they had battled the steady and growing resistance of an organized people for two years, the chief was ready to put his thumbprint to a treaty of peace, that he and his people might turn their attention to the more profitable problem of gaining by what the Mormons could and would do to help them. The Walker War and the Black Hawk War, with all the other Indian troubles north and south, had been fought out to a victorious finish, and were matters of history. But the Navajo War, begun before the first one of the other two, and now in its seventeenth year, was far from any visible end, and was growing worse every day. They massacred the Berry family in Short Creek, they ventured north among the settlements beyond where anyone had imagined they would dare to go, and they fought to the death for the bands of horses, the herds of cattle, and the flocks of sheen with which they started back towards their homeland. And now something happened again

in the Navajo country, some tremendous thing which echoed all the way over the big river and the high mountain into Utah, as positively and giving as much alarm as that other echo in 1863, when Carson made his big roundup. For now, the thousands who had been held in humiliating captivity at Bosque Redondo, were released to return to their desolated country. With a very limited stock of provisions and half a dozen sheep to the family, they came sadly back to prey on each other or on their neighbors or to perish of starvation. Hemmed off on the north, on the cast, and on the south as the refugees had been, there was but one direction in which they could look with any degree of safety and that was towards southern Utah where the settlers were already in a death fight to survive. With no alternative but to brave the dangers in that direction or sit meekly down to hunger, hoards of them set forth with stealthy step to find horses, cattle, sheep, anything that would help to keep their bodies and sprits together. It was for them to steal or die, and some of them were to die for stealing, and then the survivors sought revenge for those who fell in the fight.

In the early winter they came again to Pipe Springs where Dr. Whitmore and his herder, Mackentire, tended a flock of sheep. When the Springs were next visited by men from the settlements, wading out there through the deep snow, they found the cabin empty, its supplies gone, its furniture and utensils scattered or missing, Whitmore, his herder, and the sheep gone. They hunted a long time for some trace, wading back and forth in the snow, and then by the feathered end of an arrow, reaching up like a little flag from the wind-swept surface, they uncovered Dr. Whitmore, bristling with Navajo arrows. Mackentire was found under a drift, but the flock of sheep was gone and all tracks hidden under the snow. Others of these raiding gangs were not fortunate in having their tracks covered with snow, and knowing they would be followed, and goaded to desperation with thought of the hungry loved ones waiting at home, they fled with their haul in all possible haste. The men who followed them also had loved ones to be kept from impending want, and when the pursuers overtook the pursued, they fought, fought with the abandon of men who see no other way to live. Being under the necessity of defending themselves and holding their stolen stock at the same time, the robbers were at a distinct disadvantage in the fight, even more so when they were outnumbered, and it frequently happened that the survivors had to fly empty-handed, leaving their dead scattered about where they fell. However, their big, successful hauls of livestock came so nearly being the rule, and the tragic ending so often exception, that the Navajos took heart to apply themselves with vigor along what appeared to be their highway to financial recovery. In 1867, impelled by want, they hid in all the passes leading northward from their impoverished county. They got away with twelve hundred animals in one herd, crossing them over the river at El Vado de Los Padres, while Jacob Hamblin and forty men followed other Navajos to Lee’s Ferry, forty miles below. According to Ammon Tenny, a contemporary writer, the Navajos stole a million dollars worth of livestock from southern Utah in one year – a million dollars worth of horses, cattle, and sheep from impoverished frontier! It was becoming unbearable, yet this exasperated enemy had not yet made its most alarming threat. Tenny declared

they were the only tribe of Indians who fought the Mormons persistently and implacably, scorning all offers of peace for twenty years. Like wolves sniffing for their prey they waited eagerly to pounce on anything they could devour. Not in the summertime only, but driven by necessity, they came in the dead of winter, toiling through or contriving to walk on the snow in hopes of finding something which had been entrusted for safekeeping to the barriers of frost and storm. The Mormon sentinels had to counter all these movements, maintaining their vigil whatever the weather, whatever the cost, mounting in desperation to meet the desperation of the enemy, for they too had loved ones waiting and praying for their success. After some of these bloody clashes on the wild border the Navajos sickened at sight of their dead, and to bolster their courage they brought with them some of their invincible Piute neighbors from the uncharted region north of the San Juan. Seven of these Piutes lay dead on the Trail after one of the flights, and their entrance into the conflict marked a most serious angle to its future development.

Time was to prove that this deeply-straited corner of Utah, with its impassable gulches and reefs and rims was sheltering a breed of Indians destined to defy the orders of the United States forty-three years, when all other tribes had accepted its standards. In a severe winter of the latter “sixties,” with the people of the southern border fighting to hold their own against the Navajos, and both Mormons and Navajos taxing their wits to hold their own against the frost, Hamblin and his men wallowed through snow up to their stirrups in no man’s land, suffering hardships untold. He matched the Navajo use of Piutes from San Juan with friendly Utes from nearer home, and along the wide front they fought battles to the death even when he was not with them. Some of these fights were never reported, for the men to report them fell in the conflict, and when Hamblin saw crows and buzzards circling over some distant place, he went there to count the dead. These scenes cut deeply into Hamblin’s generous sympathies. He loved the Indians; he could see the situation from their angle. No matter that the Navajos had mocked at this offer of peace, murdered his beloved companion, and driven him from their country, his big heart swelled with sorrow when he looked at their dead faces there on the hills. He longed to win their confidence of the Utes, and established peace between them and the settlers. But hunger never sleeps – the war went on. In spite of the vigil of Hamblin and his scouts, including his faithful Ute recruits, the Navajos made a big haul of livestock from Utah in ’68. These men of the desert had spent centuries mastering the art of stripping wary Mexicans and Pueblos of their possessions, and they were not to be balked by such improvised defenses as the Mormons, so lately from the eastern states, had learned to employ against them. The winter of 1869-70 brought hardships on a big scale to the southern frontier, with Hamblin and his invincibles battling bravely to save their much-needed livestock. In the wretched days and nights of his vigil in desert and mountain he contemplated the extreme suffering of his men, the losses his people had endured and must yet endure. He considered also the privations and injustice heaped upon the Navajos for, robbers though they were, they had rights, and their rights had not been

respected. Most of all he dreaded to find those circles of crows and the bodies of men who died while hunting food for themselves and their children. Hamblin discerned that conditions were growing steadily worse, that if something were not done to turn the tide, the frontier would be laid waste, towns would be burned, and the enemy would entrench themselves in all the gulches and mountains. Hoping to Forestall these probabilities he a pealed to President Brigham Young for permission to go again as peace envoy to the Navajos, trusting that now, after they had been so greatly humiliated, they would deign to consider his message. The President approved heartily, told Hamblin to go, and pronounced his blessing on him in this effort for peace. Again Hamblin took with him Era Hatch, Thales Haskell, and other stalwart frontiersmen and missionaries of unfaltering intrepidity, and they went pleading for peace where they had been received with contempt before. They found the Navajos smarting with the memory of what Carson and his troops had done to them, and the years of their anguish at Bosques Redondo. That of itself might have tended to soften their hearts towards the men from the north, but they had other memories, memories of sons or brothers or fathers who became food for crows somewhere north of the Buckskins. Besides the difficult matter of forgiving, as this peace plan required, it would bar them from the chief field of their very profitable industry as robbers. To make things worse, the government agents, thinking thereby to curry the favor of the natives, treated the peace messengers as intruders and swindlers. It began to look as if the sanest and safest thing for Hamblin and his company would be to get back to the river while they could, and return home in safety or hazard a repetition of the tragedy they had suffered there twelve years before. The feeling everywhere present was so bitter against them it seemed unthinkable that they could overcome it, even if they could remain on the reservation.

It would have taken a very bold prophet to predict that within eighteen years these Mormons would have found a place in the Navajo confidence which no white men as a group had ever found before. The Navajos had spit their venom for centuries at the conquering forces of Spain, and they had bowed to the United States only to save their lives when they were outgeneraled and outnumbered, not at all because they had been won as men have to be won before they surrender with their hearts. Hamblin and his brethren had something most potent to offer, and they wanted only a hearing. They knew that love and kindness are the most potent, the most enduring of all forces which change the lives of men for the better; that the methods of conquest which had reduced or exterminated Indian tribes from the Atlantic seaboard to the Rocky Mountains, is the very kind against which the human heart will revolt with its very last failing pulsation. In their travels from one camp to another, the missionaries met only with individuals or with families, finding no representative gathering to hear their plea, or to make any official answer for the nation. Even though they made a friend here and another there, it would still be the work of years to get the Navajos as a people committed to the offer of good will, and in those years the conflict would go on and perhaps develop dreadful proportions. They heard that a great national council had been appointed for a certain day at Fort Defiance, and taking some

of his companions with him, Hamblin headed for the fort, resolved by all means to be heard. He arrived to learn that the program had already been arranged, no place left for him to worm his way in, and the combined sentiment of the eight thousand Navajos assembled was just eight thousand times more against him than he had encountered from individuals on the trails and in the hogans. A certain Major Powell was there, a man of great influence and superior authority, and to him Hamblin poured forth his story with all his splendid power of appeal. Powell was charmed. He called to the big gathering for attention, gave Hamblin a most favorable introduction, and ordered the Navajos to hear his message. Hamblin appreciated that now, after twenty years of futile endeavor and conflict, the great moment of opportunity had come, and with it came the assurance and the composure of the "love which casteth out all fear." Slowly and very impressively he began to speak while the great copper-colored audience gave him the reluctant, momentary attention which the major's order compelled. But the moment was prolonged into a great silence of awe while Hamblin brought all his powers of soul to bear on his plea for peace. He told them the Mormon men and boys wanted to fight, but their leader, Brigham Young, wanted peace. He related the Mormon belief that the Indians are destined to become a great people, that the Mormon scriptures say wonderful things about them, and he invited them to come over into Utah without fear, to work for and trade with the people there and be their friends. His soulful appeal reached their hearts. At least it reached the hearts of the leading men of the nation, and the big chief, Barbecenta, put his arms around Hamblin, declaring that what he had said was good, very good. Then the chief made a strong and impassioned speech to his people, declaring uncompromisingly in favor of the plan which had been offered them. Turning to the Mormons he said he could not speak for all his people, but he would see the missionaries later and tell them more. At the Hopi villages on their way home, the peace messengers were overtaken by Barbecenta and other chiefs, their hearts overflowing with kindness. "We want to eat with your people at one table," declared the chief. "We want to warm with them at one fire, and to be friends." The great danger seemed suddenly to be past, the whole perilous situation transformed in an hour. But wait -the sweet lure of peace and brotherhood had moved some of the big souls of the nation, and they in their zeal had pacified some of the ignorant masses; that was all-their dominant passion of the bloody ages had by no means been purged from the tribe. The hearts of the big chiefs had been moved as never before, and in due time three of these twelve national leaders, with others appointed to go along, journeyed all the way over mountain and desert to Salt Lake City and visited with the Mormon leaders. They ate as special guests at banquets, enjoyed other demonstrations of welcome, and heard assurances of good will from Brigham Young and his immediate associates, to which they responded in pledges of hearty appreciation. Returning home they spread the glad tidings of good will, and told their people to go without fear to work and trade among the settlements. It was really too good to be true, too good to last-a great prevailing tide of ages reversed in a few short weeks. All the same, the people on both sides of the long conflict, weary and disgusted, had the simple faith to accept it for what it seemed to be: the long-sought day of peace.

Up over the trails where they had sneaked in caution before, the Navajos came now in glad companies to trade, to work, to engage in any legitimate enterprise for the things of which they stood in need. They peddled their blankets and their silverware without fear in strange towns faraway to the north, giving and receiving friendly greetings, and everything just seemed supremely wonderful. What a glorious and unexpected transformation for these enemies of twenty years from each side of the big river who had been hating and dreading and fighting each other to the death! Among the thousands who rejoiced, no one suspected that the new accord was resting on a slippery foundation from which it might fall headlong in an hour. Without a word of warning the whole hard-earned arrangement, in an evil moment, was to be upset and go tumbling to the earth; the report of it to send a shudder into every Mormon home from Kanab northward.

Late in the fall of 1874, four Navajo brothers, returning from a long trading trip into the northern settlements, followed the east fork of the Sevier River back towards their reservation. When they camped for the night in Grass Valley, winter seemed suddenly to set in, and snow fell heavily, piling up to alarming depths. Feeling secure in the thought that they were in a land of good will for their people, the boys entertained no alarm at the prospect of their trail homeward becoming impassable. They had stopped in a cow-cabin, affording them ample shelter from the storm which, according to appearances, might continue for days. When it did continue with indications that they might be compelled to spend at least part of the winter right there, they had to meet the problems of getting food or going hungry. Doting still on the belief that they need have no fear of people in the nearby towns and ranches, they planned to butcher a fat calf from the cattle under the trees around them. They would hang it from a limb in plain sight, and when the owners came, which would no doubt be soon, to drift to the winter range, they would understand, and would accept pay for their emergency trespass. Trustful and easy by their warm fire as the storm raged, they ate the juicy beef, and watched for someone with whom to make settlement, for they had the cash ready after their long trading trip in the north. But, alas, their nearest neighbors were deadly enemies. That cabin and the cattle around it belonged to some brothers, who afterwards became notorious as highwaymen and had to be shot on sight. They had no sympathy for the Mormons, no love for the Navajos, and no regard for the long toil and sacrifice by which this blessed peace had been brought about. When these men rode out in the storm to get their cattle and found the boys in their cabin and the beef hanging in a tree, they waited for no explanation but began to shoot. They killed three of the brothers, and the other one crawled away, badly wounded in the snow. 0 how extreme necessity does drive men over the formidable barrier which they thought was impossible to climb! When that Navajo boy afoot, wounded and without food or bedding, had to be killed by these murderers, or face the long journey in this condition, the journey he had hesitated about undertaking with a horse and in good health, he simply did the impossible. He would report to his anxious father and mother; his resolution would allow him to stop at nothing short of it. He would warn his people away from this land of treachery, even though he had to crawl the last

end of the journey and whisper it to them with his last breath. How he ever fought his way through trackless wilderness and winter, mountains, gulches, and deserts more than a hundred miles and got to the Colorado River alive is difficult for anyone to imagine who knows the country he had to cover. And how, wounded, half frozen, and famishing with hunger, he ever struggled through the strong icy current to the east side of the river is quite beyond comprehension. It is said that he crossed somewhere near the mouth of the Trachyte, and he toiled through a more terrible region still, before he reached the San Juan. The Navajos declared he was thirteen days without food or blankets, thirteen days nursing desperate wounds, fighting frost, and making record hikes while he chose his own way mile after mile and broke his path through the snow. When he dragged himself out on the south side of the San Juan, the land of his people, his story and his appearance were like a blaze in dry shavings. The Navajos repeated his words with foam on their lips, and they gathered heat with each relay. The frenzied impulse all over the reservation was to mount in haste, cross the big river and the Buckskin Mountains in a resistless horde, and make Mormondom a blotch of blood and ashes from Kanab to the lakes. It was the hot passion for revenge which, once started on its mad course, demanded a thousand prices for its loss. Furious echoes from the reservation reached into Utah. Even through the winter and over the deep snow came the sound of grim war gathering power to strike. It came to the ears of Brigham Young, but instead of ordering his people to arm for the conflict, he relied on the greater force which had done more for them than arms could do. He called for Jacob Hamblin. He wanted Hamblin, by the use of his superior power, to go at once and turn the surging tide back from its mistaken course - one man to meet and overcome singlehanded and without arms, a furious nation of fifteen thousand or more hot for revenge.

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Chapter 4

In the year 1851, President Brigham Young sent a colony to build a fort and establish Parowan, thus extending the Mormon territory to the south, encouraged at first by the Ute Chief Walker. As the thin line of forts began to reach farther and farther into Chief Walker's land, he viewed this influx with alarm and incited his people to attack. Foremost among the Mormons who genuinely loved the Indians were Jacob Hamblin and Thales Haskell. The Mormons had to fight three other adversaries as well as the Utes: the Navajos, the renegade whites, and nature, which seemed at times the greatest adversary of all. In cold blood an Indian shot George A. Smith with his own gun which the Indian had borrowed, and Jacob Hamblin and his company had been forced to go on and leave the body. The plunderers followed Hamblin's trail homeward and raided the herds of the weary settlers. No treaty with the United States could guarantee the settlers from the depredations of the Navajos. Even Kit Carson who had displaced the Indians had found it impossible to quell their depredations. Black Hawk was finally vanquished, but the Navajo War grew steadily worse. Jacob Hamblin at last won the Indians to peace until four Navajo brothers were attacked by renegade whites, three of the four being killed, and the fourth crawling wounded back to his people with the tale of the attack-which was laid at the door of the Mormons.

The call found Hamblin sick and in no condition to travel. Also, among all the multitudes of men who heard it, there was not one with the courage or the inclination to go with him. To go among that frenzied horde of savages looked like walking into the open jaws of death by ignominious torture. The wild cry of the Navajos for vengeance, as repeated by the Utes, declared that the Mormons by their treachery had brought their blood on their own heads. Sick or well, with company or alone, and though it was early in January with the main grip of winter still ahead, Hamblin staggered out of bed, saddled his horse, and started across the desert, a solitary ambassador of peace to a nation howling for war. When it became known he had gone-gone in spite of his sickness, in spite of a chorus of protesting friends, the ward bishop, actuated by deep love and concern, sent Hamblin's son to follow him fifteen miles and beg him to return. "No, Son," Hamblin answered, the charm of his benevolent purpose like a robe of glory around him, "I have been appointed by the highest authority on earth to this mission. My life is of small consequence compared to the lives of the Saints and the well-being of the Lord's kingdom. I shall trust in him and go on." He went on. His son returned. Thirty miles farther on another messenger came toiling after him, imploring him by all means to come back. He refused flatly and proceeded again, a lone horseman across the desert stretch towards Lees Ferry on the Colorado. In sickness and exhaustion, with limbs chilled and numb, he prayed heaven to spare his life that he might meet the misguided Indians and dissuade them from their rash purpose. When he came dragging into Lees Ferry, his

appearance and the perilous nature of his undertaking enlisted the warm sympathy of the Smith brothers who kept the crossing. Although not of his faith, and having no interest in the orders of Brigham Young, they insisted on going with him. At Moencopi Wash the three men were found by a company of Navajos, austere and silent, who took them prisoner and sent word in every direction of the important capture they had made. A Mormon had been seized for the murder of the three Kacheenebegay brothers! He was the one Mormon most guilty of all, the very one who by his false representations had lured them into the deathtrap at Grass Valley. Their disposition of this one man would be deliberate and intensified in a way to compensate for his being the only one they had to punish for the many who should suffer torture.

It was winter now: these hills which had reeked with the smell of sheep sixteen years before, when Hamblin left his dead companion on the sand by the trail, were no more hospitable in, appearance than on that November day in 1860. The somber faces of these men who talked only among themselves, ignoring all other questions, intensified distressing memories of that awful day. It was necessary for Hamblin to communicate through a Piute interpreter, since he spoke the Piute but not the Navajo language, and he could get no idea of what his captors intended to do. Taking no notice of his queries, other than to make contemptuous comment among themselves, they took him away to a spacious hogan, twelve by twenty feet inside. The Smith brothers stayed faithfully with him, though they were given to understand it was Hamblin the Navajos wanted and not they. Men of the reservation gathered in that hogan till it became stifling with human breath. Great tension prevailed in the stuffy atmosphere-throaty words half spoken, whispers, signs, a general and unmistakable boding of anything but kindness. They made Hamblin know that they held him personally responsible for the murder of the Kacheenebegay brothers in Grass Valley, and demanded to know what he proposed to do about it. They brought in the surviving brother, showed his wounds, called attention to his emaciated condition, and worked themselves into a fury so terrible that the Piute interpreter had no courage to repeat what they said. It became necessary to get another interpreter before they could proceed with the trial, or whatever this inquisition might be called. When Hamblin affirmed that his people had nothing to do with the murder of the boys, they told him he would be willing to admit the truth when they began roasting him over the fire before them. Not allowing a muscle of his face or his body to betray the least disturbance, he clung firmly to his faith in what true love would do, and the potency of its appeal to the better side of men. Even that second interpreter became petrified with terror and dared not repeat what the Navajos told him. When they drafted a third interpreter into the service, he kneeled near Hamblin and asked in a trembling whisper, "Aren't you afraid?" "Afraid of what?" Jacob answered coolly. "Of these terrible men around you," and the Piute's reference to them showed his mortal terror of giving them the least offense, "can't you see what they are going to do?" "I am not afraid of my friends," Hamblin declared, calmly. "You haven't one friend in all this reservation," the kneeling figure half whispered. "Aren't you afraid?" "I don't know what fear is," breathed Jacob

deliberately, clinging to the solid substance of his unruffled soul, for he felt sure that what had never failed him before would be to his salvation in this crisis. "We must be ready to shoot it out," suggested one of the Smith brothers in an undertone, clinging to his pistol and resolved that Hamblin should not suffer while he sat idly by. "No," Jacob answered, appearing to be talking about some commonplace matter, "if we make no start, they'll never find a place to begin."

Plainly Hamblin had some unaccountable lead in the game-some power of soul on which they could not make their intended assault. An intangible breastwork of his love-armor protected him from their wrath, even in their own hogan while the young hot-bloods resolved not to back an inch from their demands. They wanted sweet revenge and intended to have it. More than that they wanted to preserve their field of profitable plunder from the trivial and unimportant benefits of friendship. The Navajos nursed their fury to keep it from losing pitch, and they maintained themselves at the extreme point of violent action as long as it was humanly possible to do so without acting, and then they had to weaken. Hamblin had endured it longer than they could. He had worn them out. Forced to recede from their terrible threats of torture and death, they demanded a hundred head of cattle for each one of the boys who had been killed, and fifty head for the one who had survived. "Tell them I'll promise absolutely nothing for what my people did not do," Jacob ordered, aware that he was getting the whole gang of them under his knee. "Tell them to come over into Grass Valley and be convinced for themselves that the Mormons have not broken faith with them." Slowly, slowly, by the most persistent concentration and resolution he backed them down from the extreme stand they had taken. They would not promise to go over into Utah and prove how much they had been misled, but after they had held him there twelve long, tense hours, from noon till midnight, their frenzy had spent itself to a point where they permitted him to step out into the midnight air. He tried to relax from the tortuous strain and stood gazing in a confused reverie at the faraway stars, while a friendly squaw offered him some boiled meat and goat's milk. He knew he had won them-the thought of it was almost overwhelming. In an ecstasy of wonder and gratitude for the potency of this unique power of human conquest, he poured out his heart in gratitude to the Source of that power. Also he thanked the courageous Smith brothers for their constancy, and he heaved a great sigh of relief when he saw the big river between him and the people whose vengeance he had so narrowly escaped.

From that gaping river gorge he traveled the two hundred miles or more over mountain and desert, and told the people at home to look for the Navajos with the coming of spring. They had refused to promise they would come, but he had foreseen their intention as he told them good-bye. When spring came, some of the leading men of the southern nation appeared at Kanab-Tom Holiday, Husteele, and others, to be conducted to Grass Valley and convinced beyond question that Hamblin's people were in no way responsible for the murder. The blessed monument of friendship was raised again, and its blocks cemented with new confidence. The people of the reservation came again in glad groups to

trade as before. In August 1876, a sizable company of them visited Salt Lake City, and a year later a delegation of fifteen of them made another official call on the Mormon leaders, seemingly fearful they were yet to be victims of some hidden cause for misunderstanding. They met enthusiastic welcome and friends who were glad to see them wherever they went. How refreshing! Sweet peace again, peace made the more sweet by the peril so hardly averted. Yet dark shapes stood nearly visible behind the wings of that pleasant stage, shapes not to be overlooked as they had been before. These few Navajos making the long journey into Utah were the peace-loving, the progressive. Beyond the inhospitable stretch of no-man's-land over which they had come, still lived the persistent spirit of raid and plunder which had defied all outside governments for centuries. This cherished passion of an ancient family of robbers had been intensified as it was transmitted down through succeeding generations, and it was not to be set at once aside by this treaty with the Mormons, any more than it had been set aside by six successive treaties with the United States. Moreover, beyond that hazy stretch of desert and mountain and yawning river gorge, roamed that other fierce people, the Piutes, more to be dreaded than the Navajos, always in poverty from indolence, with nothing to lose, as free and ready always as a wildcat to fight; the tribe who had tormented the Navajos for generations, the implacable warriors who loved the game so well they helped in the raids of the Mormons when Navajo courage faltered. Besides these Piutes, with their impregnable walls and gulches behind them, their country was becoming known as the surest and safest retreat from the arm of the law in all the United States. Desperate fugitives fled to it from many states and territories. Its precipitous terrain bade fair to fill up with the kind of men who shot away the foundation of peace in Grass Valley. If these fugitives from justice should establish themselves in the rocks by these irritable tribes, they would foment trouble more sure and more deadly than the killing of the Kacheenebegay brothers. They might start it at any time, possibly right away, and its red flame would quickly be fanned beyond all control. It formed a most grave situation calling for wise diplomacy. The problem was of sufficient proportions to engage the attention of the general government, yet it concerned no one so much as the impoverished Mormons; no one else was under such great necessity of framing immediate measures against it. Others had not suffered from it enough to appreciate its danger. However straitened their circumstances, and however much the Mormons were occupied already, it was up to them to keep this dangerous element from going on the rampage with greater disaster than ever before.

The Church leaders met in solemn council to consider, and the thing they decided to do to head off the impending disaster seemed altogether weak and out of proportion to the magnitude of the problem. Their announcement was surprising; it was in keeping with nothing but the ethics of that peculiar conquest which is accomplished by the appeal of soul to soul. It took little account of the conventional notion of danger, the strength of arms, the defense made possible by superior numbers. The plan they proposed could hope for success only through the faithful use of the policy which saved Jacob Hamblin from the flames

and made him victor over a nation crazy for war. The decision of the Church leaders was to plant a little colony of Mormons in the very heart of all this incipient danger; right on the turbulent border between the Navajos and Piutes, and squarely on the trail of the fugitive-desperado wolfpack from all over the west. It was a perilous venture, as the years were to prove, its objective to be achieved through great sacrifice, hardship, and danger. With few in numbers and nothing in the way of military defense on which to depend, the little colony would be compelled to hang its hopes of survival on the hand of Providence, and the faithfulness with which it could wield the agencies of peace. Besides the precarious problem of saving itself with its women and helpless children from the wrath and rapacity of these three breeds of savages, its principal purpose was to save the rest of Utah from further Indian troubles by constituting itself a buffer state between the old settlements and the mischief which might be incubating against them. It was to be a shock-absorber to neutralize what otherwise might develop into another war. If any man had been shown the country, and a true picture of the prevailing elements where this peace-mission was to be filled, he would have declared it utterly impossible, even in the forty-three years which the task was actually to take.

The leaders of the Mormon people considered their new plan with great caution from every angle, its difficulties, the dangers it involved. They made no undue haste. Remembering how many of their people had been massacred by Indians in border towns, they resolved to forestall every unnecessary hazard in selecting the place for this important venture, and in the selection of the families whom they would call to do the job. In the spring of 1879, President John Taylor, successor to Brigham Young, called twenty-five special scouts to explore the region from which the trouble might at any time blaze into life again, and to select there, in the lair of these three evils, the place for the important colony. It was to be a strategic location where the right kind of community could serve as a lightning rod to absorb or neutralize such deadly bolts as had been reaching for years with disastrous results to the peaceful Mormon towns in the southern valleys. They called Silas S. Smith, a hardy frontiersman and natural leader, to head the company, and they left Cedar City about the middle of April, crossed the Colorado at Lees Ferry the first of May, and followed a dim road to Tuba City, Arizona, near to the Hopi village of Moencopi where a few Mormon families had settled. The scouts carried much of their provisions and equipment on horses, and most of them rode in the saddle, but they had at least three wagons, and two of the men, Harrison H. Harriman and James Davis had their families with them. According to James Davis there were twenty-six men, two women, and eight children in the company. Besides their string of pack horses and mules they had twenty-five head of loose cattle. Tuba City was the end of every dim road leading in the direction they wanted to go, and very little was definitely known about the region north and northeast where the uncharted course of the winding San Juan River marked the southern boundary of the obscure Piute region. Let no one imagine the Piutes confined themselves to the north side of the river; when Carson and his troops had swept the country, they came over to plunder

whatever remained. They stayed there around Navajo Mountain, and joined the Navajos, when they returned from Bosque Redondo, in their raids on the Mormons. Prudence suggested that the two women and their children should be left with the wagons for safety in Tuba City till it could be known what kind of country and what sort of reception was awaiting off to the northeast, where the scouts hoped to find a way into the southeast corner of Utah.

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Chapter 5

In the year 1851, President Brigham Young sent colonies to extend the Mormon territory to the south, encouraged at first by the Ute Chief Walker. As a thin line of forts began to reach farther and farther into Chief Walker's land, he viewed this influx with alarm and incited his people to attack. Foremost among the Mormons who genuinely loved the Indians were Jacob Hamblin and Thales Haskell. The Mormons had to fight three other adversaries as well as the Utes: the Navajos, the renegade whites, and nature, which seemed at times the greatest adversary of all. In cold blood an Indian shot George A. Smith with his own gun which the Indian had borrowed, and Jacob Hamblin and his company had been forced to go on and leave the body. The plunderers followed Hamblin's trail homeward and raided the herds of the weary settlers. No treaty with the United States could guarantee the settlers from the depredations of the Navajos. Even Kit Carson who had displaced the Indians had found it impossible to quell them. Black Hawk was finally vanquished, but the Navajo War grew steadily worse. Jacob Hamblin at last won the Indians to peace until four Navajo brothers were attacked by renegade whites, three of the four being killed, and the fourth crawling wounded back to his people with the tale of the attack-which was laid at the door of the Mormons. Jacob Hamblin arose from a sickbed and made his way to the Navajos, who, threatening vengeance, spoke so violently that even the interpreter quailed before them. But Jacob fearlessly maintained his ground-the Mormons were guiltless, and in the end he won their reluctant admiration and a grudging promise of peace.

Moving off over the sand and rocks with their pack train towards Black Mountain, the first concern of Captain Smith and his men was to find enough water in the desert stretch for themselves and their animals. The matter next in consequence was to get through the country without leaving any unfavorable sentiment in the hearts of the natives who watched them with distrust from the nearby hills, and came to their camps to look and listen for anything which might bode evil. A third problem was that of calling for their wagons, for which they would send back from their first permanent stopping place. Sometimes the Navajos forbade them to water their animals at the small and infrequent water holes, and the wandering Piutes (also spelled Puiutes, Puhutes and Pah-Utes) contrived to capitalize on their helplessness by demanding extortionate figures for permission to pass through the country. The Navajos had not forgotten Carson and his terrible men and the years of anguish at Bosque Redondo, but it was a bitter memory always echoing with resentment, and not a safe thing for a stranger to mention. They were back now in their native sand hills, reverting exultantly to their former selves, and white men were by no means welcome among them. One day when the Mormons toiled wearily up a sand wash and were about to water their horses at a little seep, the giant Navajo Peokon, ordered them to keep all their animals away from the water. He boasted of being the one who had killed George A. Smith,

and he stood over the water, gun in hand, while the scouts dug a well in the sand below. When the little well was completed and had served the scouts that night and the next morning, they presented it to Peokon with their good wishes, telling him to use it freely as his own but asking him to let travelers water there when they came through the country. This little affair was typical of the many diplomatic strokes which were to characterize the policy and determine the outcome of the mission. It reached so nearly to old Peokon's hard heart that he bade them a pleasant good-bye when they left. Harder hearts and darker days of the future were yet to be relieved by this kind of "soft answer which turns away wrath." At another place the petty Piute chief, Peogament, with a dozen or more ragged followers, demanded a hundred dollars for permission to proceed with their outfit. Captain Smith told his men to take no notice of it, and before they left camp in the morning, they contrived to make some kind of present to every Piute but the old chief himself, who watched the company in silence as they moved away, while his own men grinned at him for his stupidity. This foreshadowed the way of the lightning rod in neutralizing every threatening bolt.

As the scouts approached the famous faraway Four Corners, where Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, and Colorado corner on a pile of stones in the desert, they turned northward from the mountain and toiled down a sandy slope to the San Juan River. One account says it was latter May, another, the first of June, when they stopped on the south bank under a giant cottonwood to ascertain, if possible, just where they were. In their hundred and seventy-five miles of wandering from Tuba City, they had entered a region which on the maps was marked with a blank yellow, and they knew only that the river marked the boundary between the Piutes and Navajos, and beyond that river they could see a big country which they knew was unexplored. From the tribe on the north side they expected to receive a more slim and doubtful welcome than they had enjoyed since leaving Tuba City, yet they resolved to cross, for the place of the settlement was not to be on the reservation, although it could be, and would have to be in the country from which the Piutes had defiantly refused to be moved. Since the San Juan was notorious for its quicksand, the captain sent a man to find a safe ford, and when that man rode out on the north side, behold a lone tent, or wickiup, and in it, not an Indian, but a white man! It was the same man who had in his blood such a passion for the firing line that he and his family had converted their house into a fort and fought Indians all winter on the distant Pahreah. When he discerned that his beloved frontier was slipping away into some distant unknown, he went with a pack outfit to hunt for it in western Colorado, but he answered the lure of unexplored southeastern Utah, and had found his way down to the San Juan and had built himself a canoe. This was the Daniel Boone of Utah, Peter Shirts. He had explored and named Montezuma Valley in Colorado, and thinking this canyon came from the valley where he had been, he named it Montezuma Creek. Borrowing old Peter's canoe to help in the crossing, the scouts moved over and listened eagerly to all that he had to tell them about the country. He had been down the river ten miles to a creek which he called Recapture, and he had intended to do more exploring in his splendid solitude, where he had really outrun

the illusive frontier, but now the frontier had come crawling upon him from an unexpected direction, so he piled his tent and outfit in his canoe and, pushing out from the bank, rode away down the current of the winding river into regions unknown. Old Peter was never heard of for sure again. From the vast maze of deep canyons and high mesas into which his frail bark floated, tormenting echoes have come drifting back at infrequent intervals for more than sixty years. One of them relates that an old man, sick and speechless, was found by two prospectors in Henry Mountains. They could not make out his name nor whence he came, but they cared for him tenderly till he died, and then carried him to Salina for burial.

The scouts made their headquarters where old Peter had been camping, and sent five of their number back to Tuba City for the women and children, the wagons and the cattle. The Navajos disliked the thought of these wagons going through and leaving their ominous tracks across the country. To the Navajos a wagon was tsin-a-paz, the wooden thing that rolls. They could remember seeing wagons among other hateful things around them in Bosque Redondo, and it was not a welcome sight in their homeland. Old Peokon came to the little wagon company and was pleased to discern how terrible he appeared to the women and' children. They relate that he hatefully kicked dirt into their food by the fire, and he took their knives and rubbed their edges on stones. The families had with them a devoted Newfoundland dog of generous size, and when she comprehended that Peokon was offering indignities to her friends, she sprang with a fierce growl and held him in her great jaws. And now old Strong-back, for that is what his name meant, was furious and loud in his demands that he be indemnified in cash for the outrage, and that the dog be killed. It is a rather long and thrilling story, but suffice it to say, it levied a heavy tax on their cash and their diplomacy to get started peacefully forward again. And still they feared that more trouble might come of it and watched in suspense through the following night. In the morning an old Navajo came to them, telling them to harness their horses at once and travel fast, that angry men were gathering behind them. He kept urging them to hurry, and was impatient when they allowed their reeking teams to stop. He stayed along by them with a solicitous devotion, looking back often or scanning the nearby hills. But at length he relaxed, told them they could stop, that they were safe. Then he told them he had been in the Davis home in Cedar City, that they had fed him and treated him kindly, and it was because he remembered and loved them that he had come to keep them from harm. It was after the middle of July that the little wagon-company reached the mouth of Montezuma. The scouts built two log cabins in which the two families were to live near together, and here in this faraway land, on the second of August, Mrs. Davis gave birth to a daughter, the first white child born in this corner of Utah.

Captain Smith and his scouts prospected the country in every direction. Up the river they found a Mr. Mitchel running a little trading post, and eighty miles to the east, beyond Montezuma Valley in Colorado, they found a few scattered ranches on Mancos Creek. Fifty miles to the north, in the center of what was to become

San Juan County, they saw the big grass, the tall timber, the streams, and beaver dams of Blue Mountain. They looked longingly at a level, timbered mountain to the southwest but had no time to go there. From the mouth of Montezuma they explored the country westward down the river twenty-five miles, and stopped short at a place where nature had stood the petrified strata on edge in a fantastic barrier north and south fifty or more miles long. It was John Butler who approached nearest to this rim, and the canyon where he stopped is still known as Butler Wash. But neither he nor any one of the outfit took so much as a peep over the higher barrier at the hidden country, beyond. The impassable miles and miles of this mighty reef presented no problem to the scouts; they simply turned back and worried about it no more. But later on, when a weary band of pilgrims came toiling from the west to the base of this wall, they had to meet the ponderous task of getting over. The big problem of Silas S. Smith and his men was to select a place on the Navajo-Piute boundary for the unusual peace-mission which the Mormon leaders had decided to establish. They considered with care but with disappointment the wide stretches of unusual territory. It presented a hard prospect, rough and wild, as if not intended for civilized man. There were of course no roads, but also no good place nor suitable material with which to make roads, and few streams which did not go dry in the early summer. It was the howling center of remoteness, devoid of all law for ages past, and claimed by men who wanted it to be without law for all time to come.

The Piutes gaped in wonder at the newcomers, the wagons, the cattle, the women and children, but they ate the food offered them and smacked their lips in loud relish. These chesty Piutes were the men who had never in all their history been made to bend for anything nor for anybody. The thought of settling here in their midst, of bringing timid women and helpless children where they would have to be much of the time at the mercy of these savages - the thought of it was alarming. These were the men who knew their native rocks as rats know the holes of an old quarry, and into a thousand of these holes they could dart from sight where it would be suicidal to follow them. They had tormented the Navajos with their cruel tricks, sneaking beyond the river to steal horses, sheep, children, and women, whom they held for ransom or sold as slaves. The river had long since been the place of perilous contact from which the more peace-loving of each tribe learned to keep away, or to approach it with overtures of peace. What unthinkable tragedy would await the Mormons in the midst of these border Indians! It simply didn't do to dwell too seriously on the darker phases of the picture; they had come to find the most suitable place for the difficult work to begin, and after much deliberation they decided in favor of the little bottom where they had found old Peter and his wickiup. The mouth of Montezuma had the advantage of being fifteen miles east of the turbulent point of the main crossing of the river, where men of the two tribes most often clashed, and where the stream of white fugitives flowed northward and southward in a fitful, dangerous current. Having decided on the most tolerable place in the whole intolerable region, and having officially named it Montezuma, they appointed the Harriman and Davis families to become at once the permanent nucleus for the proposed

colony. Harvey Dunton was assigned to stay with them for the present, and the rest of the outfit was to get back to Cedar City where the main company for the colony was awaiting the word to start. Holding the fort in that border wilderness was a fearsome prospect, and the women and children looked longingly after Captain Smith and his men as they moved slowly from view over the sandhills up Montezuma Wash. They braced themselves with the thought and the hope that it would be but four or five weeks at most till the people of the colony would arrive and build all around them. Alas, these fond hopes were to be long and bitterly deferred; in fact they were never, never to be realized, and their eyes were to grow weary watching the hills for the welcome appearance of wagons or horsemen. They were to lie sleeplessly on their pillows listening in an anguish of suspense through many dreadful nights to the weird chant of Piutes around them, wondering in fear if it meant that some ugly plot was forming against them. And winter was to come creeping upon them while they waited, finding them short of the food and short of the clothing which they had expected the people of the colony to bring.

A friendly Indian came one day to warn them of warlike preparations among his people on the river above them, of angry natives who intended to make a raid on the little cabins. For the Davis and Harriman people and their little folk, with the wee little girl born in August, there was no retreat; no road over which they could hurry away, even if they had fat horses and a conveyance in which to travel. They were to stay right there and hold the fort, for Utah's safety from Indian depredations had been transferred to and hung upon this new lightning rod by the old San Juan. The two log cabins were no longer forts in a figurative sense only, for the windows were quickly barred, and portholes made in the walls through which to fire when the enemy appeared. And then they waited in awful suspense with hearts throbbing, and prayers to the Prince of Peace for the preservation of the peace they had come to establish. When the enemy came, stealthily in the night, and their soft footfalls were detected by alert ears, true to the lofty standards of peacemakers, the Harriman and Davis people opened their doors, inviting the braves, warpaint, weapons, and all, into the light of their open fireplace. Astonished at this show of splendid courage, the Indians found themselves disarmed while their bows and arrows were still in their own hands. The great Prince who had declared, "Blessed are the peacemakers," moved the hearts of the savages with love for these defenseless Mormons, and they breathed forth a warmth of love very different from the intention with which they had come. No matter that the keepers of the peace-fort were short of food, they let no one go hungry from their doors. From their little bag of wheat they ground enough in a handmill for their bread each day, and their hearts melted within them when they discerned that the little sack, like the widow's bin of meal, did not diminish though they took from it every day. Harvey Dunton, considering the threat of famine which hung over them, volunteered to go away with his gun, and live by what he could kill or bring back something for them to eat.

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Chapter 6

In the year 1851, President Brigham Young sent colonies to extend the Mormon territory to the south. Those who went had to fight four adversaries: the Utes, the Navajos, the renegade whites, and nature, which seemed at times the greatest adversary of all. No treaty with the United States could guarantee the set- tiers from the depredations of the Navajos. Even Kit Carson who displaced the Indians had found it impossible to quell them. Jacob Hamblin and Thales Haskell genuinely loved the Indians, and time after time won them to a reluctant peace, only to have it broken again because of the actions of the renegade whites. But at last the Mormons had begun their settlement, in the face of Indian attacks and nature.

No mail - no tidings from the world beyond their silent wilderness. What had become of Brother Smith and his horsemen? What could have happened in the faraway settlements of southwestern Utah that no one came as promised? They could only guess with uncomfortable misgivings. They knew only that they had been left to hold the important fort on the new firing line, that they were enlisted in the great cause of preventing war from being carried into the settlements, and they trusted that the great Providence which had preserved their people from many perils through the last fifty years would not fail to care for them.

After a long time a rumor reached Tuba City that the two families had been massacred. It came to the ears of Thales Haskell, and his great heart leaped with anguish. Taking up their dim wagon tracks across the reservation, he determined to know whether the report were true, and to see if there remained anything he could do. When he saw the smoke curling, from their chimneys, he sighed in relief, "Thank God, they are still alive!" When the scouts left Cedar City in April, they traveled southeast and east and then northeast in a great half circle four hundred fifty or more miles long, taking them into Arizona and back again into Utah. When they returned, they traveled north, northwest, southwest, and south, completing a great circle nine hundred or more miles in circumference. From Montezuma they wrangled their wagon and four-horse team over gulches and canyons and rocks for a full hundred miles northward across what was to become San Juan County, a region as extensive as the state of New Jersey. At Blue Mountain they found two big cattle outfits, each with a formidable gang of cowpunchers, and every man carried a six-shooter on both hips besides a long gun under his saddle fender. The cattle owners found it good policy to employ these fellows whenever possible, even though they paid them no more than their board. It was never safe to ask these cowpunchers whence they came and why, whether their names were really Shorty or Red as they were known. They had fled to this remote corner to lie low till the echoes of their depredations should die away, and they were glad to find any activity to relieve the monotony and keep them from starving. Many of them made their initial appearance in the morning,

having arrived from nowhere in the darkness of the previous night. Also, many of them who appeared calm and contented in the evening were nowhere to be found next day. This was the devil-inspired breed to torment the men and women who built San Juan. The scouts regarded them narrowly, trying still to hope for the best, but feeling sure these white men fleeing redhanded from justice, were more to be dreaded than both the native tribes. The captain and his men snaked their wagon down over jungle and boulders on what is now Peter's Hill. They passed the old fort at what was to become Moab and forded the Colorado at the mouth of Courthouse Wash. They forded Green River, and heading south through Castle Valley arrived at Cedar City in October.

The Church with great care had selected sixty or more families to carry out the hazardous mission, and called them to be ready to start as soon as the returning scouts should tell them where to go. When they heard that Montezuma was directly eastward across the big circle around which the scouts had traveled, they resolved to approach it by way of the diameter of the circle, which could not be more than three hundred miles, instead of going by the circumference. It could not take more than three or four weeks, and they would be at their destination and housed before the worst of the winter. No one knew of a white man or anybody else who had ever traveled across that circle nor very deeply into it, but what the difference? The Mormons had found their way across the continent, and never yet a part of the earth's surface through which resolute men could not discover or make a passage. They took it for granted that no such place would ever be found. This select company, poised on the brink of unsuspected distance and difficulty, was about to assume without realizing it, a great part of the evils which had vexed the territory of Utah for thirty years. In whatever refuge these people might build in the distant wilderness, Utah's most annoying Indian troubles were to be focused on them. Some of them had fought in the Walker War and the Black Hawk War, while their helpless ones were safely in shelter behind them, but now they were asked to take their wives and their children and sit down with pleading at the doors of the unconquered Navajos, to placate the incorrigible Piutes, and to convert or to subdue a stream of desperate fugitives from all over the wild west. They started in November, with about eighty wagons drawn by horses and oxen, a sprawling company strung along the road seventy-five or a hundred miles, with little herds of loose stock at infrequent intervals. 0 how trusting their notion of the country through which they were to fight their way! Nobody imagined a place where the ancient Cyclops had ripped up the earth's massive crust and stood the ponderous slabs on edge, forming a region of extravagant contour to baffle human fancy and challenge any kind of travel but that of an airplane. No white man had ever inspected its heights and depths, its bald domes, its vertical surfaces reaching to the sky. The few adventurers who had touched on its ragged edges had failed to read on a thousand towering walls. "Wagons strictly prohibited." All the same they moved off in a long string like migrating ants, holding to their eastward direction as nearly as cliffs and mountains would permit. From Escalante, the last point to which wagons had traveled, their slow moving wheels rumbled off down Potato Valley, as they

called it, away over Escalante Mountain and down into the desert east of Kaiparowitz Plateau.

The six weeks' provisions which had been expected to last them till they reached Montezuma, were getting woefully low by Christmas, so they began parching and eating the corn they had brought along for their oxen and horses. They took these animals away to some distant benches and shelves of dry sand grass, and thus relieved of a lot of daily drudgery, each group of camps set up its social center. "It's a good thing for Utah we had all that unexpected experience and delay in getting into San Juan," said Kumen Jones, one of the scouts and later one of the company. "If we hadn't had that special introduction and been made tired enough to stop at the first possible chance, we never would have stopped in San Juan at all. I'm sure the Church never could have rounded up another company like it, and there would have been no San Juan Mission." Three hundred miles in six months amounts to somewhat less than two miles a day, and this snail's pace accomplished only by tremendous exertion was but one phase of the essential preliminary. Bumping and grinding slowly off over the naked sandstone on the east side of the Colorado River they followed the trail of the four scouts down over Slick Rock, across the gulch by the lake, out through the high pass at Clay Hill, and into the forest of pinions and cedars through the mud and slush of early spring. Where were they in this no man's land? It seemed like a weird dream. One day in a narrow opening of the trees near Elk Mountain, an old Piute rode out of the forest and drew up in utter amazement-his wrinkled old face sagged absently as he contemplated the long string of wagons grinding along through the sagebrush. He wanted to know where they came from, and where in the name of reason they had crossed the Colorado River. Platte Lyman marked out a map on the ground, and indicated the place of Hole-in-the-Rock. The old brave shook his head in disgust. "You lie!" he grunted in his native tongue, "You did not come that way-you could not come that way. No place there for a wagon to come." "I think the old brave knew more about it than we knew," commented Platte Lyman. "There is no place there for a wagon."

The junction of the reef and the river formed a corner, an almost impassable corner, still known as Rincone. The tribulations with which they got out of it are still to be read in a long rude scar up the steep face of the rock. It was all that “Uncle Ben” and his road crew could do at this impoverished stage of the game to cut jagged groove in the rock for the upper wheel, and prop up enough rocks for the lower wheel to keep the wagons from turning over sidewise. As they bumped slowly and fitfully up this which is still known as San Juan Hill the hard rock was stained with blood from the feet and knees of many a horse and ox. The parched corn which saved the people from starving had left their teams thin and staggering. It was weeks before the last wagons struggled painfully to the top of San Juan Hill. The fact is, some of them have not got there yet, and that dim road behind them is still punctuated for more than a hundred miles by crumbling skeletons and broken wagons. On Slick Rock and in solitary places northeast of there, weather-beaten wheels half-buried in the sand, bear mute

evidence of that pilgrim company more than three score years ago. Ten miles east of San Juan Hill, on the sixth of April, 1880, the lead outfits of the procession found a little grass on a river bottom and stopped. Pulled the harnesses from their starving teams, and sat down to rest and think. It was still fifteen miles to the appointed place where Davis and Harriman waited eagerly for their arrival, but weariness had become it determining factor. Some strange working of destiny by simple means, was making a permanent and far-reaching change in the nature of the mission. Exhausted teams, broken-down wagons, empty grub boxes, the intensified longing in the human heart to stop and build the dear shelter called home; all these combined to make a change in the original program. Whether, but for this confirmed weariness and unfitness to go on, they would have traveled right on up the river past Montezuma and off to places more inviting is still a question. As it was, fully half the company dragged on again as soon as they could move, but they passed Montezuma with hardly a look and went hunting for some more pleasant location in New Mexico and Colorado. Most of them made no permanent stops till they got back to their old homes in western Utah. In this Gideon's army, melting away before the fight began, a few remembered still the great trust reposed in them, and cherished the hope of relieving Utah of the troubles which had been coming from this dreaded corner. Having stopped at this first grassy bottom by the mouth of what they called Cottonwood and being unfit to go on, they caught the gripping notion of staying right there to hoist there the essential lightning rod and begin the fight. Two or three families joined Davis and Harriman; twenty-five families stopped by the mouth of Cottonwood and called it Bluff. It is Bluff still after these many years. Yet Bluff was not at all to one side of the turbulent crossing as Captain Smith and his men had intended. It was exactly where the two tribes clashed most often. It was right at the crossroads for the string of fugitives from east and west, from north and south. Like an unsheltered pine on a mountain peak, it stood where it could not miss the fury of the storm. The general contour of the country deflected the stream of all but those with characters of steel from this very point. Yet the years were to prove this the place best suited to the peculiar warfare they had been sent to wage on the three major evils. The years were to see the old San Juan reach out in its wrath and cut away every other bottom along its banks for thirty miles up and down the river. Just why it should spare the limited area at the mouth of Cottonwood where the wayworn travelers stopped is one of the singular phases of this singular enterprise. Sometime in the previous century the river had had its bed where Bluff stood, but it refrained now from that old bed with unaccountable self-denial. Out of the sixty families called, the few who stopped at Bluff were somehow like the strong essence of a solution boiled down, and they faced the formidable business of entrenching themselves between the comfortable towns they had left behind, and the sources from which those towns had long been threatened.

Now that the long talked-of place for the big project had been selected, dignified with a name, and accepted by the faithful few as the strategic point in which to make their heroic stand, Bluff tried to meet at once a formidable swarm of pressing necessities. Their long wanderings had brought them into quite a new

world, pretty much "without form and void," being so nearly detached from all other bases and sources of supply, of information, and possible help whatever the emergency. Their nearest known distributing point, for small quantities, would take a month or six weeks for the round trip. They had no sawmill, no gristmill, no doctor, no merchant, no specialist of any kind. They were surrounded by creation in the raw and must set their own precedents, provide for all their needs. Valuing a man's time at a dollar and a half a day, they had spent $4,800 in labor on their road into the country, and in answer to Silas S. Smith's plea for an appropriation, it was reported that the Territorial Legislature would recognize forty percent of that amount. That much-hoped-for cash recognition seems to have been indefinitely delayed or entirely forgotten, and as Charles E. Walton expressed it, money was a strictly cash article in Bluff. Death had not entered their camps all the long months of winter and hardship on the road; no one had been seriously sick, though two babies had been born near the river, both of them to live and thrive as real children of the desert. Yet the company had no more than stopped at what was to become Bluff when death claimed old Roswell Stevens, a veteran of the Mormon Battalion. There was no lumber within a hundred miles, so from his old wagonbox, scarred and worn, they made a coffin and selected a place for a cemetery. This ready resourcefulness of theirs to meet perplexing situations was taxed by the need of many things. Where should they begin? The task lay shapeless and endless all around them. The Indians from all around, many of the Navajos clad in nothing but a G string, came with fawning smiles and curious eyes to carry away everything on which they could lay their sly hands. The Navajo or Piute not skilled in the essential art of theft, was regarded by his people as slow and stupid. The loss of shoes, knives and forks, dishes, clothing, ropes, axes, or any of the limited supplies and utensils carried away from the camps, amounted to little as compared with the disappearance of teams, cattle, and the dear old cow on which the children depended for their most precious item of food.

The people met under a giant cottonwood known and loved for thirty years as "The Old Swing Tree." They organized a Sunday School; they divided the land; they took stock of their most urgent obligations and assigned to each man the part he was to take. One of the first indispensables was flour; it would have to be brought at once from Escalante, the point to which they had ordered it delivered the previous fall, the flour of which they were so sorely in need at Hole-in-the-Rock. It was dismally more than two hundred miles to Escalante, but over that unparalleled country, and over that insufferable road, the difficulty and the time involved in covering the two hundred miles with a pony team and an old-time wagon, made Escalante more distant from Bluff than London is distant today from Salt Lake City. Persuading four horses to scramble in any kind of order up through that chute at Hole-in the-Rock and at the same time to drag an empty wagon behind them, was a feat of fine engineering for the crack teamsters of 1880. Just how far these new San Juaners had moved away from all the rest of creation was to be impressed upon them by a weary string of unforgettable experiences. It was to become clear to them that Bluff was one of the most

remote communities of civilized men in the United States. A few ranchers on Marcos Creek in Colorado were their nearest white neighbors. Somewhere in the mountains distantly beyond Mancos was a military post, the nearest of its kind from which help could be called in case of trouble. Yet within rifle range across the river from Bluff was the Navajo reservation with its fifteen thousand or more impoverished savages, eking a scanty living from the, sterile sandhills, or stealing it from the outside. To the east and north and west of Bluff roamed the surly Piutes with crisp contempt for white man's law, and for all other law. And then there were those ubiquitous evil birds of passage flying singly or in pairs from the reach of the law in their own country to hide in and make this wilderness a perilous place for life and property. San Juan, one of the most faraway, and for that reason the safest place in all the west for fugitives from justice, was the popular paradise for bad men from everywhere.

The little colony, like a lamb in a pack of wolves, struggled to get on its feet and look these evils in the face. It knew that in an hour it could become a blotch of blood and ashes, and that its murderers could be far away in their most secure retreat for weeks or months before the report of their massacre crawled on slow and uncertain feet to some responsible point on the outside, for the outside then, in point of time as we reckon time today, was thousands of miles distant. The colony had to build homes and make fences; it had to plow at once if it was to raise any garden or produce any feed for livestock that year; and it had to survey and snake a ditch to take water from the river. That ditch had to be dug in the sand, the San Juan sand which was to astonish the people with its treachery. But they suspected nothing then, and fell to work as men who have trusted the earth and found it true. From their regular meetings under the old swing tree, they moved to a roomy bowery made of leafy cottonwood limbs, keeping always carefully organized to make the most of their time. Improvising houses from the crooked, twisted cottonwood logs would have been puzzling enough, even with a few cards for the windows and doors, but with no lumber at all it was a conundrum. So they got out an old whipsaw, dug a pit, and began making green cottonwood lumber. That lumber had to be nailed down solid the minute it came from the saw or it would writhe itself into the Nape of a ram's horn. While some of them toiled on that ditch in the sand like so many ants, others hauled fencing and house-logs, as necessity for many things increased its heavy weight upon them. Some of the already dilapidated wagons sent to Escalante for flour went to pieces in their merciless jolting over the solid rock, and one of them keeled end over end down one of those "slantindiclar" surfaces, scattering its precious cargo in a sickening cloud of white dust in the depths below. It was imperative that some of the men leave the work at Bluff to others and hunt jobs of freighting or delivering railroad ties in the distant mountains of Colorado. And how should they send or receive mail in Bluff? What address should they give, for the luxury of a post office was but a distant possibility? They sent letters with the teams to Escalante, and six weeks later they received mail which had been waiting there since the fall before. When stark need forced some of them to go hunting work in Colorado, they sent letters to be posted at Mancos, and ordered their mail there

from the outside, hoping to have it brought in by chance freight teams at irregular intervals.

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Chapter 7

In the year 1851, President Brigham Young sent colonies to extend the Mormon territory to the south. Those who went had to fight four adversaries: the Utes, the Navajos, the renegade whites, and nature, which seemed at times the greatest adversary of all. No treaty with the United States could guarantee the settlers from the depredations of the Navajos. Even Kit Carson who displaced the Indians had found it impossible to quell them. Jacob Hamblin and Thales Haskell genuinely loved the Indians, and time after time won then to a reluctant peace, only to have it broken again because of the actions of the renegade whites. But at last the Mormons had begun their settlement, in the face of Indian attacks and nature.

No trees shaded Bluff in 1880. The sun beat down on the white sand with terrific force, dazzling the eyes of all who looked from their improvised shelters, and the winds came loaded with clouds of dust and sand from the dry des ert of the reservation. It buried things up as in snowdrifts. Food was always gritty. The settlers had started from southwestern Utah with foundation stock for herds of cattle, and they had brought with them as many good horses as they could afford. It was but a remnant of this foundation stock that had survived the hard winter in the rocks, and these few were indispensable to the life and growth of the colony. Yet all these animals, even the work teams and the milk cows had to hunt for forage away among the unprotected hills, and the range cattle had to be driven to very distant places, some of them beyond Clay Hill. O what a bonanza for these avaricious tribes who had been devouring each other on this borderland for generations! Horses to ride! Cattle to butcher! And the owners of these animals too few in numbers to dare anything but plead and preach -nothing like it ever before around this desolated crossing! Platte D. Lyman wrote in his diary, "We are about to be crucified between two thieves." With dark prospects of being left afoot, they spared one of their number to guard the horses twenty-four hours a day, but no thief appeared while the guard was watching. The hills took on an innocent expression, for the prowlers, peeping from gulches or summits, knew that the best way to beat this game was to keep out of sight. That ditch in the sand, and the new fields with their uncertain old bullfences to protect them from starving stock called loudly for the strength and attention of every able man, and they left the horses for a little while and then for a longer while, telling themselves they would be safe for a day-two days. Their horses were never safe for an hour, night or day, even though the ditch was empty and the fields burning up. Navajo Frank, robust and self-sufficient as a well-fed boar, took up his abode near Bluff and set out to monopolize opportunity as it was opened to him by these strange Mormons. If a horse were left unguarded, he got it. If a milk cow wandered far into the willows, she became his beef.

However, there was a brighter side to this picture, and some people saw in it a promise of better things in the future. Kumen Jones, one of the leading men, went among the Navajos to curry their favor and learn their language, and in his early contact with them he met Jim Joe, a man about his own age, twenty two years, and they loved each other from the first. Changing scenes and vexatious conditions failed to estrange them. Like David and Jonathan they embraced when they met. Jim's people had been trained from birth to steal, and the passion of thieving ran in their blood, but Jim Joe scorned to take anything not his own, or to tell what was not true. The splendid love-tie between these two men constituted the beginning of an important link which was to develop between their white and red brethren. By happy little incidents and by slow degrees it dawned on the toilers in Bluff that these Navajo people were not so bad as they had seemed to be. Among those who came to inspect this strange project on the San Juan Crossing, there appeared at intervals some very wonderful men and women who, without seeming to do so, pleaded the cause of their kinsmen and revealed a delightfully human and lovable side to the Navajo nature. Corpulent old Pee-jon-kalev, pleasant in form and face, came always with a smile or a refreshing joke. Even the children liked to see him. Pishleki, another pleasant and portly personality, made valuable contributions to the cause of good will by his cheerful words and fine sense of humor. An old brave and his grown daughter came quietly through the doorway one day, and stood listening in silence to soft music from an adjoining room. Suddenly the young woman dropped into a chair by a table, and bending over with her head on her wrists, she cried and sobbed like a broken-hearted child. The old man stood regarding her tenderly, and when asked why she cried, he explained that she had recently lost a little boy, and she could hear him calling in the music. An old Navajo mother came into a Bluff home where a weakly skeleton of a baby was fighting for its life with some problem of malnutrition: The Navajo woman bent tenderly over the child, breathing the love and solicitude which only a true mother can know. Next day she came- from her distant hogan with a little bucket of goat's milk to nourish the starving child. She continued to come from day to day with the bucket till the pinched little bones began to be hidden with healthy flesh.

From these unpremeditated pleas from the Navajos for good will, a sense of appreciation and sympathy like an awakening kinship began to grow like a little flower in a choking tangle of ugly weeds. Yet the steady disappearance of horses and cattle was unbearable. The people viewed it with dismay. It would have to be checked or they could not survive. They had no defense but the charm of entreaty as it was supposed to be employed in the new warfare, and it was strangely difficult to employ. At all events, they had not learned how to make it protect their livestock wandering unguarded on the range. With their wives and their children they had staked their fortunes and their lives on this unprecedented venture for the protection of the older settlements, and they hung suspended on their hopes of the Providence which had been promised as their deliverer. How long could it still be delayed before they would starve? Navajo Frank and his pack of greedy rivals gnawed at them every day like coyotes on a carcass, and

the Piutes in general gobbled them up slick and clean with every opportunity. Years of hair-raising experiences in this ancient trouble zone were to prove that these Piutes had been the melting-pot for Indian outlaws from all directions. They had discovered it as a criminal's paradise long before it was recognized as such by white men. It is well the hopeful toilers on the ditches and fences- and nondescript log houses did not see at first this inevitable phase of their monstrous task. Its fortunes good and bad were now all obscured in mists of uncertainty, and like a lamb between two snarling packs it wondered how long it was to survive. The Saints appealed to the Church leaders who had called them, and wanted to know whether, in the midst of all these things, they would still be expected to stay. If they were to stay, how were they to do it? In answer to their petition, Erastus Snow, Brigham Young, Jr., and Francis M. Lyman, came all the long, long way from Salt Lake City to review the situation and to give advice. They reminded the people that in the undisciplined hearts of these two native tribes rankled a savage-something which had menaced the peace of Utah for thirty years. The colony had been planted in this important position to transform them by the magic of kindness. It was intended, and the intention had carried thus far, that there were to be no more Indian scares among the old settlements. It would have been poor consolation to the people of Bluff to have it pointed out that no more Indian troubles in the rest of Utah would almost certainly mean that the quelling of the inevitable passion for war would be at the cost of troublesome times and frequent bloodshed in San Juan with its solitary town a hundred miles from all other white men. Nothing but the kind of magic which saved Jacob Hamblin from the flames could save them from destruction.

To Erastus Snow and. his companions the people poured out the story of their hardships: robbers, white and red, stripping them of their property till they hardly had a horse to ride or a cow to milk. Like great kind fathers the three leaders listened to them as they would to the children they loved, reminding them that a great trust had been reposed in them, and much depended on the success of the mission they had been called to fill. “You are far from the more populous and more prosperous towns of the territory,” they said, “and in your obscurity you may feel that you are forgotten by all the outside world. You may therefore conclude that your work is of no importance. But as the main fort on the front of the firing line, you are acting as sentinel for the rest of Utah. It is imperative that you stay and carry on. You are here to end the costly troubles which have been breaking out for a long time, and to forestall greater troubles which, but for you, will break out in the future.” The people believed and accepted what they said. Their strongest intuitions assured them that merit could not fail in due time to come into its own. "If you are true men," declared Erastus Snow," and if you do your part to uphold this mission, the Indians who are unfriendly to you will waste away." The people believed it. Yet when the three leaders had gone and the inspiration of their personalities could no longer be felt, when the people went from the meeting in the old bowery to find the prowlers still among their cattle, -they wondered how this "wasting away" would be accomplished, and how soon it would begin. If it didn't start promptly and with a vengeance, it might as well

never start at all. The three leaders had directed the people to build a meetinghouse, to stay together, and to make their homes in the form of a fort. The leaders had directed the people not to defy Providence by making places of residence remote from the little community; to be wise and patient in their afflictions and in all their dealings with the Indians; to refrain always from flying into a passion and doing some unwise thing; and to cherish every suggestion of friendship and love which should spring from their more pleasant associations. They built their houses joining in a hollow square covering about three acres, with all the doors and windows on the inside, peepholes or portholes in the backs of the houses look from the fort in every direction. Four heavy gates wide enough to admit a wagon opened into each corner of the fort, and the log meetinghouse stood in the north center looking south.

It was in that square with doors and windows on every side that the writer of this story first became aware that he was a living being in a most wonderful world with other living beings. The memory picture of that old fort is still vivid in his mind with the log walls, the dirt roofs and the quaint old-fashioned windows and doors all facing the big log meetinghouse as if in the attitude of worship. When Silas S. Smith, returning from petitioning the Territorial Legislature, caught up with his company settled at Bluff, he brought with him an authorization and appointment for the organization of a county to be named from the river, San Juan. But the order to organize, maintain, and finance any kind of civil government with laws and standards in this rendezvous of thieves and murderers was about as easy to give and as difficult to execute as the fabled order of the rats to bell the cat. All the same, the invincible spirit which had dared to ride on a rickety old wagon and yell orders to a four-head team of clumsy oxen while they dragged that wagon along a perilous trail over a "slantindiclar" surface, was not going to turn pale and surrender at the thought of hoisting the banner of law in a den of thieves. They organized a county with Bluff as its county seat, the home of every one of its officials, and practically the only permanent community within its wide border. This, however, is not forgetting that Montezuma, fifteen miles up the river, still had half a dozen families and hopes of carrying on. And now, with the little new organization hatched out in the doubtful shelter of the log fort, must they keep it hidden away there, and its existence a kind of secret lest the bullies and gunmen ride over it roughshod and rush it before it could get feathered out and develop its fighting spurs? To announce itself openly would be to flaunt the red rag in the bull's face, a challenge to the rule of anarchy where it had boasted of being supreme. And where would it get revenue to power its projects, enforce its orders, and build up the country? The big cattle kings that had come into the county from Colorado and located at La Sal and Blue Mountain, the formidable outfits with their gangs of terrible gunmen, had yelled their exultant farewell to taxation when they crossed the line, and they had surrounded themselves with fighting elements calculated to frighten any assessor from venturing into camp. The new county appointed Lemuel H. Redd, Jr., assessor and collector, who taking with him Kumen Jones, went to the cattle barons to assess their livestock. They told him with a confidential sneer that no taxes would be paid. "I'm going to

assess every horse and cow in your outfit," Lem Redd declared, aggressively, "and when the time comes, I'm going to collect every cent of it." He felt in his hands the splendid power of the big cause he represented, and when the time came, he collected in full. That was victory number one on the new firing line, but the enemy had been taken unaware, and would fortify more carefully for the future.

Besides the political organization which had been made for San Juan County, the visiting brethren from Salt Lake City had organized San Juan Stake, with Platte D. Lyman as president Thales Haskell, loved and trusted for his courage, his wisdom, and his unfaltering fidelity as an aid to Jacob Hamblin, was called by the Church to be interpreter, diplomat, and mediator between the people of the fort and the native tribes. Haskell was the soul of loyalty. He regarded his life and his ability as a trust reposed in him for the good of the needy wherever he could help them. He feared God too much to deal with any degree of unfairness, but if ever he feared the face of any man who walked the earth, nobody found it out. With solemn words of firmness and love he went to Navajo Frank and other chronic thieves, his gray hair and white beard in fitting accord with the dignity of his message. "Do you rob your friends?" he asked, in genial tones of familiar confidence, for Haskell knew the language of the natives as well as they knew it themselves. He knew them better than they knew each other. "We are your friends," he went on. "We have come a long way to sit down by you and help you. Why do you reward us evil for good by stealing our horses and cattle?" Some of them protested their innocence; some of them laughed mockingly. "If you steal from us, you will die," Haskell declared, solemnly. "Remember what I tell you." But those who had been stealing, stole again as industriously as before. Frank specialized in the business, in spite of Jim Joe, Tom Holiday, and other big souls who were in sympathy with Haskell and his people. They could remember the terrible corral at Bosque Redondo, half a generation before. Yet in these strange white people of the fort they had discovered something surprisingly different: the unusual lure of love, the winning of entreaty, the absence of threats to employ force. But the oldest brave among the Piutes had never heard of his people being corralled or of being brought back from the rocks where they fled redhanded with scalps and plunder. They had never known a Basque Redondo; they had never been punished in any way for their boldest outrage against human rights. They had always been supreme -they were still supreme. They mocked at Haskell and helped themselves with impudent banter.

Yet there were exceptions, even among these insolent Piutes. They cannot all be named here, but it would be unfair to overlook a certain slender youth in his early teens, a boy known as Henry, who caught the charm of Haskell's fervent words and was a true friend to Haskell and his people then, and through all the changing scenes of the years. Erastus Snow's counsel to stay together met with willing response; it was what the people wanted to do, what they had been doing, and yet a solitary deviation from that rule was destined in a few years to result disastrously and imperil the life of the mission. For the present, however, when

they rode the range or followed the long winding freight road, it was in numbers of two or more, and vigilance became a habit even while they slept. They had to unite on their ditch, their buildings, and all their enterprises, whether in and around the fort or distantly beyond it. They could not fence their fields separately but in a community enclosure. The passion for individual gain was lost in concern for the general good. When they planned a store, it had to be a cooperative institution: The San Juan Co-op, known as such with good credit. Their molasses mill and all their machinery of any size were community property. Difficulty and danger from all around compelled them to unite in one harmonious family, living in one circular house. Bishop Nielson. The head of the family, counseled them in all their affairs, helped them to make their decisions and adjust their difficulties. The sorrow of one was the sorrow of all, the success of one the joy of the community. They had gay parties and dramas and dances. Old Brother Cox and his fiddle helped to amplify the chivalry they had evolved at Hole-in-the-Rock, and it became more chivalrous with cultivation. It is not to be implied they had circular house. Bishop Nielson, the head of the family, counseled them in all their affairs, helped them to make their decisions and adjust their difficulties. The sorrow of one was the sorrow of all, the success of one the joy of the community. They had gay parties and dramas and dances. Old Brother Cox and his fiddle helped to amplify the chivalry they had evolved at Hole-in-the-Rock, and it became more chivalrous with cultivation. They believed they had been divinely guided to this strategic location for the sake of their important assignment. A wise Providence was delaying the day of their prosperity till they had established themselves in the hearts of most of their enemies. Their foundation stock of horses and cattle which should have increased and given them a claim to the range, had been reduced to a sorry trickle, and the range had claimed by the big herds from Colorado. They crowded out from the most profit, able areas of the country they had come to inherit. But the most stubborn adversary with which they had to contend, it might even be classed as enemy number four, was the San Juan River, implacable, unconquerable, on whose sand they had built their fort. That restless, roaring, moaning, gnawing old river had raged back and forth from cliff to cliff in that valley from the dim ages of antiquity with never a challenge from any source. It had been undisputed proprietor of the sand along its banks; it had ground that sand fine in its own mill and laid it down on one side or the other of its right-of-way while it took an excursion to the other side. It would of course come back, and anyone found squatting on its property would be duly evicted. That long ditch the people had made by their hard toil in what they trusted to be good old terra firma and the fields they had plowed and fenced and planted-in all this they were trespassers; that sand belonged to the river. The river made frequent demonstrations of how, in a few short hours, it could gather up its deposits and carry them away to occupy the place where they had been. At any unexpected hour, morning, noon, or night, behold, the ditch was empty, and following up its bank they found the river rippling gaily where the ditch had been a little while before. After the first year they discarded as worthless all the stock they had worked up in the ditch, and began again exactly as if there had been no ditch at all. The loss was distressing to contemplate, yet they were destined to

discard the stock in that ditch again, and still again after twenty years. They had saved seven hundred acres from the ravages of the river, and when the cost of their discarded ditch was divided by that number, it showed a tremendously high cost for water and little to show for it. Disappointment, loss, humiliation, and poverty continued as the stern schoolmaster teaching ethics of the new warfare to the people of the fort. It was borne in upon them that Bluff was not essentially an enterprise, but a mission; not a project for making gain, but for making sacrifice. It was generating in them the kind of gratitude which, when at length it saw their accounts crawling slowly up from destitution, would give special thanks and pay extra tithing.

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Chapter 8

In the year 1851, President Brigham Young sent colonists to extend the Mormon territory to the south. Those who went had to fight four adversaries: the Utes, the Navajos, the renegade whites, and nature, which seemed at times the greatest adversary of all. No treaty with the United States could guarantee the settlers from depredations of the Navajos. Even Kit Carson who displaced the Indians had found it impossible to quell them. Jacob Hamblin and Thales Haskell genuinely loved the Indians, and time after time won them to a reluctant peace, only to have it broken again because of the actions of the renegade whites. But at last the Mormons had begun their settlement, in the face of Indian attacks and nature.

When the people of Bluff celebrated the first anniversary of their arrival, a practice which Bishop Nielson insisted on as long as he lived, their progress towards mastering the big objectives had served only to reveal the hugeness of the work before them. It meant the taming of fifteen thousand savages who saw themselves facing an invasion of white men and the prospect of losing their place and their liberty as a nation – fifteen thousand primitive souls as fickle and as imaginative as children, and as ready as a nest of hornets to get all worked up and swarm out to war. How could a handful of impoverished people so much as begin on such a labor? This wild nation, hotheaded and superstitious, might rise up at any time in a frenzy of anger, obliterate the helpless fort, and race on with red hands to the unsuspecting outside. Right at this time, although the celebrators in the fort knew nothing about it and were not to know for weeks to come just what had happened, the Piutes were staging a bloody massacre at Piute Springs, east of Blue Mountain. The fierce particulars of the murder could cause no surprise to the people of Bluff, but they had no inkling now of what was going on, and they celebrated the annual date of their arrival in peaceful ignorance of the black could soon to reach over them, cherishing still the fond hope that destiny would favor them on this forbidding front. While they danced and sang and related the good fortunes which had attended their efforts thus far, the Piutes robbed and murdered three men at the lonely Thurman horse ranch sixty miles away, and then headed with their plunder and the stolen band of blooded horses off in the direction of Bluff and the more inaccessible parts of the county. Five miles from the fort they appeared suddenly with their great drive of horses from a ravine, and seeing the herd of horses belonging to the Mormons, and guarded by a Mormon boy, they circled the herd in to their roundup, and sent a bullet whistling over the head of the herder, as he, Joe Nielson, raced like the wind, dashing pell-mell down the narrow trail in Cow Canyon, and through the gateway of the fort when the sun was dipping low on the horizon. His report spread consternation and alarm. Their herd was gone in a body, taken from their guard in broad daylight. Except for a few ponies and two teams they had been working, they were afoot.

Long shadows from the setting sun stretched across the fort, carrying gloomy forebodings along with them. Even if they could mount all their men and go in pursuit, it would still be a dreadful hazard. Of their thirty men and boys, some were freighting between there and Durango, some away at work or hunting lost cattle, only a limited number at home. Suppose they could mount and arm twelve men – what could twelve men do to take their horses from that unscrupulous gang of robbers? The recovery of these horses would be a miracle, nothing short of it. Also, if twelve men were to be sent for the recovery of the horses, who would guard the fort with the women and children left in terror and suspense? Notwithstanding all these terrible "ifs," they must have their horses. The women were no less resolute about that than the men, and no doubt equally capable of carrying on the warfare which was comprehended in the plan of the mission. Furthermore, and more important if possible than the horses, the Piutes must never see them show the white feather. Their prestige with these insolent Piutes must wave on high as their banner till such time as the Piutes could appreciate and respond to friendship.

In the stillness of that April evening, eleven men rode out through the west gate of the fort, and the dull tread of their hoofs on the sand died away in to the ominous silence of night. Wives and mothers and children laid their heads on sleepless pillows, listening in dread to the solemn and portending sounds of night – echoes in the towering cliffs – the moaning of the river, and the doleful barking of dogs in the Navajo camps beyond it. If they dozed in all those restless hours, it was to dream visions of torture, blood, their loved ones lying prone on the sand. When morning came at last, no tiding had come from the eleven who rode out through the west gate and away into darkness. Joe Nielson had observed that the Piutes were headed westward, perhaps for Butler Wash, and that was the objective of the men who started from the fort. They rode quietly and in single file along the sandy trail up Cottonwood Wash: Lem Redd, Jr., Kumen Jones, Platte D. Lyman, Jess Smith, Amasa Barton, Orin Kelsey. The complete personnel of that party is not on record. After traveling four miles in the darkness and stillness between the high cliffs of Cottonwood, they crossed a sandy bench to the northwest and stopped on a hill overlooking a valley by Boiling Spring. Across from them on the long sloping rock above the spring, they saw a community of fires, like stars in the darkness. Faintly on the night wind as they listened, they caught the weird chant of the Piute war song. It rose to their ears and died away on the wind, but they could mark the heavy beat, the lusty volume of many voices-the spirit of exultation, of defiance. The big drive of horses was perhaps scattered between them and the fires, but it was too dark to hunt among them. They would have to wait there till morning, and to get along without fires since that would advertise their presence to their enemies. Shifting from side to side in their saddles or standing by while they gazed at the dread lights in the distance, they speculated on their chances of getting their horses without being shot to ribbons. Yet, they had firmly resolved to have those horses, for without them they would be stranded, afoot, helpless. No time now to change their minds

about it; any lack of firm answer to this bold challenge would shatter their prestige and leave them helpless at the mercy of these murderers. Every one of the eleven men was armed-a gun, a pistol, or both. Yet everyone knew, no matter how stoically he refrained from saying it in words, that his firearms, in the jeopardy which daylight would bring, were but a mock and a menace to any hope of victory with the shoot it-out ethics of the old warfare. If, in the morning, the Piutes failed utterly to consider their helplessness, to remember that they wanted to be friends, and to make generous exception accordingly, then their doom was sealed, as was also the doom of the defenseless loved ones waiting in fear and anxiety at the fort. Furthermore, if there were not some benevolent Deity fighting their battles for them, then the whole scheme of the mission was folly and madness personified.

The gray dawn showed the valley full of horses as they had expected. And with the dawn the campfires on the rock blazed into new life, voices could be heard and the barking of dogs. The Bluff men rode down from their place of long vigil and began gathering their horses out of the scattered herd. Sharp eyes from the camps spied them in their first motion, and down from the sloping rock with angry yell, hair flying wildly behind, came twenty or more Piutes on their cayuses at top speed. With drawn guns they dashed up to the men of the fort, demanding that they get away from the horses and be gone. The men of the fort demanded their horses; they would have them; their resolution had been crystallizing all night: and they could make no compromise. They intended to get their stolen animals or fight to the last man. The possibilities, even the probabilities, looked perilous indeed, but the loss was already perilous. Their failure to meet this sharp issue would mean utter failure of their entire project in San Juan. Guns flashed into position for use. Old Baldy shoved a triggerless forty-five calibre six-shooter against Lem Redd's stomach and was ready to discharge it with a stone he carried for that purpose. Lem Redd held his pistol in position to kill the Indian if he started to bring that stone into action. Jess Smith and Amasa Barton had countered other Piute guns with their own to make any killing a mutual affair. Just a thin jiffy was all it lacked now-the weight of things infernal hung suspended on a hair. If the hair broke, it might rid the world of a dozen Piute braves, but it would surely stop at nothing less than the slaughter of every white man in the valley, and then it would turn with fury on the fort. Where was the magic now to save them from doom? This crisis had come like a whirlwind, leaving no chance for any interfering influence. Suddenly a voice pierced the morning air, loud and long and shrill. Its urgency of tone, almost superhuman, and vibrant with command or appeal, arrested every motion, checked every breath. High on the rock above them they saw the slender figure of the youth, Henry, his arms extended, hands outstretchand head thrown back as he poured the strongest emotions of his young heart into the fresh morning air. "These are our friends!" he shouted in his native tongue, "Don't hurt our friends! Give them their horsesl" It was that dignity of command to which men yield instinctively even though they may hate themselves for it when they lapse back to the vicious level from which it raised them. The cocked guns lowered from their death-set aim-the spell was broken.

Twenty braves , stood by in silence while eleven Mormons selected their horses from the numerous band, even horses which the Piutes had stolen long before and had been using as their own. In that band with which the Indians had come were many blooded American horses. The Mormons knew now that something was surely wrongl And those Piutes had harness-straps, work-horse bridles, clothing, and other things which they must have taken by a raid on some ranch or town. One of them had a watch. They also had money, great wads of it, and no more notion than a baby what it was worth. One of them gave Jess Smith twenty-five dollars in greenbacks for a wide-rimmed hat. Another gave fifty for a similar hat without the least idea how much he was paying. They made lavish offers with worthless printed matter which they took to be money. The fact of the matter was, a Mr. Smith, a horse-buyer, had come from somewhere in Colorado accompanied by a Mr. May, to buy Mr. Thurman's horses, and had brought with him money for the purpose, checks not being as acceptable in faraway San Juan then as now. For some time the Piutes had contemplated Thurman's fine horses with the worst of intentions, but when they became aware of the money carried by Smith, they figured the plum was ripe for plucking, and they left no one alive to tell just how it was accomplished. After the killing they ransacked everything looking for money which they could not tell from other paper.

The gentle spell of that youthful voice from the high rock was too fine a thing to linger long in the hearts of Henry's people, their hands reeking with blood. By the middle of the forenoon they had reverted to all the deep grooves of their savagery. As they moved on up the valley of the Butler, driving their stolen horses and loaded with their plunder, they found a few cattle belonging to the people of the fort, and some of these they shot to see them fall, and others they caught and tortured and mutilated with savage delight. They raced back and forth over the hills on Thurman's horses in a drunken fit of jubilation. They went by their secret trail into the fastnesses of Elk Mountain, known at that time to them only, and they waited there a month hoping someone would be foolish enough to try to follow them. During all this time a gang of cowpunchers and soldiers hunted to find where they had gone, and in May they found them at LaSal. In the fight that followed the Indians made a big killing, fourteen to sixteen men, and lost but one of their own number. Besides that they got away with the horses, the saddles, the pack outfits, and about everything the cowpunchers had brought with them. Having spent the spring and summer with their raids and their fights and the prodigal disposition of their rich plunder, they returned in the fall to the fort with the glory and satisfaction of having killed more than seventeen white men since the first of April. They still had hats, clothing, saddles, guns, horses, and money they had gained in the fascinating game of murder. When the arm of the law failed to reach out and demand the stipulated price of the good time they had been having, they became more chesty than before, more insolent, more ugly, more dangerous as neighbors.

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Chapter 9

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The second year of the fort, like all its early years, was a year of major calamities. Exasperated to the limit, Haskell sought out Frank, and warned him again in solemn words, "If you don't quit stealing our horses, you'll die." Husky and rugged with never a pain nor symptom of decay, Frank laughed loud in contempt. The Mormons could never spring any such cheap scare as that on him. In bantering gusto he went right on with his thiefly enterprise. Haskell went also to the camps of the Piutes-it was with bowed head, slow step, and stooping with age, his hoary hair in full keeping with one who pleads. He told them why his people had come: "We were sent all this long way to be your friends-to help you, to show you a better way of life." He spoke their dialect as one born among them. He knew their customs, the meaning of certain tones and gestures which gave color and force to their speech. His words were few, and he drove them in like arrows by the courageous glance of his penetrating black eyes. He even knew how to be silent in the Piute language, which may seem like a contradiction, but his timely silence added double potency to what he said. He knew the resistless power exercised by Jacob Hamblin when their pathway was dark with danger and death. "If you steal our horses or our cattle, you will die," he affirmed, nailing them with his unblinking gaze. They flinched. They felt the thrust of his unusual power, the majesty of his prophetic appearance. Some of them declared they had never stolen from his people; some of them hung their heads in silence.

In the midst of the growing season, that year, with crops of corn and cane giving bright promise of cow feed and molasses in the fall, the ditch broke in one of its bad elbows three miles up the river. The ditch, in this nearly-level valley, was five miles long, and even with that length it had very little fall. That was five miles of daring challenge to the age-old supremacy of the San Juan-more than the river had ever endured, more than it would endure then. So it spit out its thick blue the freight up the hill on his back, sediment to fill the ditch up, and not content with that, it reached out through its sand to a big section of that ditch and licked it up clean. The fields of precious crops began to wither. Much of Bluff's man power was in Colorado or elsewhere working for provisions or trying to save the

remnant of their cattle, and the withering had to continue, no matter if they might wring their hands in anguish at sight of it. Flour sold in Durango that summer for sixteen dollars a hundred. If the trail over which they hauled it with their pony teams all the way to Bluff be taken into account, the journey required more time then than it now takes to circumnavigate the globe. Not only was that flour an indispensable item of food in Bluff, but the sacks in which it came were also a big item of clothing. It was a common joke that on the underwear of children you would find in red and blue letters in spite of the washings, "Pride of Durango." A freight-team consisted then of never fewer than four horses, very often six, and seldom with one wagon only. The "trail-wagon" arrangement enabled the freighter to make the steep hills by taking one wagon at a time, where otherwise he would have to unload and carry an extremity to which all freighters had to become inured. With their "three span and trail," they followed that devious old track to and from Durango as if their very lives depended on it. The fact is that as their San Juan Co-op became a paying institution through the purchase of wool and pelts and blankets from the Navajos, and the sale to them of merchandise from Durango, freighting, was one of the very important factors on which the lives of the people did depend. That break in the dangerous elbow of the ditch could not be repaired in time, and the fidgety old San Juan, chewing ever with unsatisfied cravings on its banks, ate away a merciless stretch of ditch and reached for more. It not only slicked up that segment of ditch, but it also took away all the land for a long way where a ditch could be made and boiled victoriously against the valley wall, a hundred rods of smooth, vertical rock. Sickening prospect! No more water that year. Apparently no possible way of getting water along there again. And that would mean the end of Bluff. Yet the river was not one of the three evils they had been sent to overcome; they were compelled to fend themselves from it while they fought, but it is still a blustering outlaw while the other three have been licked to a whisper. It mattered little that no one could break the contrary old San Juan of its mean tricks, but if a pirate's empire should take root on the river's banks, and if the two wild tribes should be left to spread their de- predations beyond their homeland, that would matter much to all the surrounding states and territories. If the scum of the earth should be allowed to collect in the impregnable rocks of San Juan, it would be the most dreadful den ever known since the time of the old buccaneers.

One day in September two fellows came riding in through the gate of the fort on jaded horses. They wanted to trade horses, though they saw no horses in the fort. They contrived by sly and apparently indifferent questions to ascertain where the horses of the people were, and nobody realized till afterwards that it had been made altogether too clear that most of the Bluff horses were in Butler Wash, and that the wash was ten miles off to the northwest. The strangers rode leisurely out through the gate and headed without concern for nowhere. Two weeks later some of the riders came in from Butler Wash to report that the horses for which they had been sent were not to be found. By "cutting a sign" twenty miles wide, the hunters found at The Twist the dim tracks of horses going westward which they believed to be their own because of a solitary mule track among them. What

should they do? Following these tracks into the maze of trees and rocks was dangerous business, but without these horses everything at Bluff would be brought to a standstill. They were needed at once to begin on the ditch, if ever they were to begin again at all, and if they made no start again at the ditch, they would need these horses to get them out of the country. Hurrying home the hunters reported to Bishop Nielson, and he advised that they follow the tracks very slowly, keeping safely behind till the thieves reached the towns in western Utah where help would be available in making the arrest. Lem Redd, Jr., Hyrum Perkins, and Joseph (Jody) A. Lyman were to undertake this dangerous assignment. Friends and loved ones watched the three men leave the fort and ride off over the sandhills to the west. All they could do was to watch with aching hearts, realizing that the three men might follow the tracks a month or six weeks and return in safety after all that time, or they might be waylaid in three or four days and lie wounded or dead a month or six weeks before a searching party would go to find them. When Lem Redd and his party took up the trail at The Twist, they wondered that the tracks were so much more fresh on top than at the bottom of the hill. At Cane Gulch and other places beyond they were disturbed at the increasing newness of the trail, and they waited deliberately at different places to let the two fellows get well beyond the river before they appeared at the crossing. The crossing now was not Hole-in-the-Rock; the rains had scooped the deep cleft clear of all its hard-shoveled sand, played havoc with "Uncle Ben's" peg-anchored dug-way along that "slantindiclar" surface, and no wagon was ever to slide down nor to toil up through the chute at Hole-in-the-Rock again. A place had been found thirty or forty miles up the river near the mouth of Bull Frog at what came to be known as Hall's Creek, and the crossing that was improvised there by the two Hall brothers, was known as Hall's Crossing. Approaching this Hall's Crossing after making what they thought was sufficient delay, when the men from Bluff reached the east brow of the cliff overlooking the Colorado River, they saw one of the horse thieves and his string of stolen horses leaving the west bank. That was a strong signal to the men from Bluff to go into the delaying business again, for there were still seventy-five miles of uninhabited wilderness between them and the first little frontier towns west of the river. So they deliberately killed time in getting their outfit across; they traded stories with the Hall brothers and learned all they could about the thieves, imagining all the time that those thieves were hurrying away, now that they had seen someone in pursuit.

When at length the three left the river, they decided to make still another delay for good measure, and coming to a little cutoff trail across a gravel bench, they dismounted and sat down to play jacks, a popular way at that time of disposing of unwanted minutes or hours. The thieves had not known of this cutoff, and had followed the wagon track out around the rocky point of the bench, which was at what could be called the toe of a kind of horseshoe bend in the road. The fact that the thieves had lost time in following that long crook in the wagon track, made it all the more necessary to give them extra opportunity to get a good head start. The two wanted no head start, and refused to take it. When they saw the

big rocks at the point of the bench, they decided that was their ideal place for an ambush. They took their horses and outfit on a safe distance farther, tied them all to some brush and trees, and went back afoot with their guns to the big rocks at the point to wait for the men whom they had seen as they left the river. When that jack game had given the outfit ahead ample opportunity to a good distance in the lead, the Bluff men rode on across the gravel bench, and at the other heel of this horseshoe bend in the wagon track, they ran right into the whole outfit of the thieves-packs, horses, everything but the two fellows themselves and their guns. The Bluff men cocked their guns, rode into the outfit and loosed them all from the trees and brush, and started back with them in a rush for the river, while the horse thieves waited eagerly behind the big rocks at the point of the bench. Down Hall's Creek in a thundering herd Lem Redd and his companions drove their horses to the west bank of the river, and pre- pared to get them across with all possible speed to the east side. But the roar of violent hoofs on the gravel drifted away to the ears of the thieves behind the rocks, and they crept cautiously out to investigate. Finding that cutoff trail and the deep-cut tracks leading back to the river, they knew they were afoot, no blanket in which to sleep, not a bite to eat. They ran frantically towards the crossing and sneaked into some thick willows to fire on the boat. Lem Redd, cool and resourceful. had anticipated this very thing, and he lay hidden with his gun to protect his men while they worked. When he saw the willow moving, he sent a bullet in there, and the two sneaks got back. Then the five men worked in feverish haste to get everything, including the belongings of the Hall brothers, to the east side of the river, before the thieves could fire on them from some other quarter. Leading a string of horses behind the boat, they shoved out into the river with the last load, the coast apparently clear. The towering wall of the river to the west of them reached up and up, sloping gradually near the top to a half-level brow from which the base of the cliff was not visible. The middle of the river was the nearest point to the bottom which could be seen from the top. When that last boatload of men and swimming horses reached the middle of the big stream, two shots rang out above them, and two bullets struck in the boat-seat, barely missing one of the Hall brothers where he sat pulling at one of the oars. Lem Redd, wary and watchful, was ready to return the fire at once, but shooting with a pistol and. from the unsteady boat he had little chance of hitting one of the two heads peeping from the top of the rock so far above. His shooting did, however, have the merit of keeping those two cowards from staying up in sight long enough after their first shots to take careful aim. The two first bullets striking so near to that oarsman threw him into a panic of alarm, and springing from his place he ran to the other end of the boat, leaving the boat to begin turning aimlessly in midstream, and drifting towards a pass between vertical walls below, from which they could not return. A few minutes more and they could not possibly make it to the bar on the east side but would hit the smooth wall, and nothing could save them from the narrows and the rapids of the winding canyon below. As well be shot as to drift around that bend and capsize in a whirlpool! Lyman and Perkins had their hands full with the swimming horses, and an oar going on one side of the boat only. Lem Redd grasped the situation-something drastic had to be done at once. He had unusual power of

rising to emergencies, and turning his gun on the oarsman he ordered him on pain of immediate death to get back to his oar. They headed again for the bank with a fighting chance of working their way through the current to a landing, and they strained at the oars till the veins stood up big and blue on their temples. All this time the bullets came whistling down into the water or in the boat with such accuracy of aim as they dared to take in the face of Redd's vigilant fire. The thieves fired thirty or more shots while the boat was on the water, although it was a big target as seen from above, it was moving, and its return bullets prevented any careful aim. But the minute the boat struck the bank, it became still, and the return fire stopped, for all five men were busy getting the horses out of the water and the boat anchored. With less fear now of getting hurt by the hot lead from Lem Redd's pistol, the two fellows above took more deadly aim, and one of their bullets shattered the bone in Jody Lyman's leg just above the knee. The four dragged him up a sand bank towards the willows, while bullets from the cliff whined into the sand around them as fast as the thieves could shoot. When the men reached cover, panting and out of breath, they got safely out of sight and lay still till dark. As soon as the night was too thick for them to be seen, they gathered their horses and packed up, while the thieves called through the darkness from the other side of the moaning stream, begging them to come over with the boat. They made no answer, no light, and no unnecessary noise. When they lifted Lyman on his horse, he fainted with pain, and they had to hold him in the saddle while they moved slowly off to climb the rugged east wall of the gorge and head slowly away into the dry shadscale desert towards Bluff a hundred miles distant.

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Chapter 10

In the year 1851, President Brigham Young sent colonies to extend the Mormon territory to the south. Those who went had to fight four adversaries: the Utes, the Navajos, the renegade whites, and nature, which seemed at times the greatest adversary of all. No treaty with the United States could guarantee the settlers from the depredations of the Navajos. Even Kit Carson who displaced the Indians had found it impossible to quell them. Jacob Hamblin and Thales Haskell genuinely loved the Indians, and time after time won them to a reluctant peace, only to have it broken again because of the actions of the renegade whites. But at last the Mormons had begun their settlement, in the face of Indian attack and nature.

Eight miles out over the torturing up-hill-and-down, the wounded man in agony begged them to stop, and they camped on a-bleak slope with no shelter from the wind that night nor from the blazing sun next day. They had nothing at all to relieve the torture of that ghastly wound-they hadn't so much as a drink of water to give him. They thought best not to go back with a bucket to the river, and the nearest water in any other direction which they knew, was seven to nine miles away. The Hall brothers had come with them, and, in the early morning, one of them started with a bucket for Lake Gulch, the other one tended the horses, and Hyrum Perkins started for Bluff to bring help-a wagon-a doctor or a nurse and first-aid material, for the wounded man could not be moved again on a horse. Lem Redd gave all his time to his suffering companion, but there was little he could do to soothe the pain and no materials with which to dress the wound, full as it was of splintered bone. In the afternoon of that first day on the shadscale slope, the shattered limb became swollen and discolored, and in spite of all they could do, it seethed with maggots. Their supply of rags possible for bandages were almost minus to begin with, and the prospect looked dark indeed. Even if the desperados did not find their way to the east side and follow them, it still looked impossible to keep Lyman alive till help could come. The fact of the matter is, the thieves did find an old boat, but instead of getting across and trying afoot to overtake the outfit that had left on horses, they went down the river, and one of them reached Lees Ferry, carrying the guns and the clothes of the other. In that shadscale camp with nothing to look forward to but the arrival of a wagon from Bluff, or to the arrival of the dread shadow with his scythe, Jody Lyman seemed to have but few wretched days left. His leg, twice its natural size, and seeming to be already in the first stages of decay, looked like a death warrant without appeal. One man spent his whole time carrying water from Lake Gulch, faraway over the rocks and sand, and yet there was never enough in camp. They pondered deeply for something on which to hang their hope; experience had taught them how Providence can intervene at the last minute; but there seemed to be only one way for him in this wilderness, and that was to send an angel from heaven. But he had angels in other places than heaven, and he sent one of them. Up over the

dreary profile of that shad-scale ridge appeared a band of Navajos, old Pahlily in the lead. Riding straight to the distressed camp and swinging down from his cayuse, he took the situation in at a glance, his eyes bright with interest and sympathy. "What are you doing for this man?" he asked in his native tongue, and Lem Redd gave him to understand he did not know what to do. "Where do you get your water?"
he inquired in kind solicitude. When he was told they carried it from Lake Gulch, he smiled pityingly, and calling for their bucket, he handed it with a word to one of his men who trotted off over the hill and returned in fifteen minutes with the bucket full of water. The Navajos knew from smooth rock in that direction there should be water pockets still full from the last rain, and the hole they found is still called Jody's Tank. Bending low over the wound, the brave examined it carefully, "Go, gather some leaves of the prickly pear," he ordered, "burn the needles off, and mash the leaves into a pulp. Put a poultice of this on the wound." It worked like magic; it kept the wound in healthy condition; and in due time a wagon came and ground slowly back over the long, long road to the fort. A sorrowing company came out on the sandhills to meet the wagon, and as they heard the story of what had happened, the details of murder premeditated and carefully planned, they saw the hideous outlines of problem three as a thing more to be dreaded than they had supposed. These cutthroats would plan to take their scanty means of support wait deliberately to murder them if they tried to recover it.

The people of the fort could not wait in ambush to kill. Lem Redd could have killed the fellows there in the willows, but he took care not to shoot near them. These killers, like snakes in the grass, had a frightful advantage, and were more to be feared than either one of the native tribes. Yet in this latest tragedy there was one bright spot: They saw old Pahlily and his followers saving a man of the fort from certain death. The people liked to hear it, to tell it. Some of the more hopeful one even foresaw a time the Navajos would help drive the outlaw element from the country. What a thrill it would have been then to know how nearly that dream was to come true. But it was not true so far-the big cattle companies at the base of the mountain were still giving work and shelter to the fugitives, and they gathered like buzzards to an ill-smelling carcass. They stole from the companies, of course; they stole continuously such things as they could take out of the country, and in a small way it saved the people of Bluff. It was the policy of these cattle companies to curry the favor of these desperados in self-defense. The people of the fort could not afford to encourage them at all, and this withholding of encouragement tended to breed the hatefulness which is to be expected in the hearts of thieves.

Jody Lyman lay helpless in Bluff a long time before he was able to limp out on crutches. His leg was always crooked, always a source of serious trouble, and agonizing up operations were performed to re- move some lingering splinter of bone. He was the first martyr in the war which was to end all Indian troubles in Utah by establishing law and order in San Juan County. True, he lived thirty years or more after that time, but it was a living death, and when the end came, it

was the direct result of that bullet. The thief had caused a long delay to the repairs on the ditch by running away with the Bluff horses, and it was some time in October before the citizens of Bluff could begin looking again at that hundred rods of river where the ditch and had been, and plan either on making a ditch there or on moving out. The very life of the mission hung on that hundred rods of seeming impossibility. The bishop declared firmly they would entertain no proposition involving the abandonment of the mission. He said they must make the ditch, that they would make it, all difficulty and other trouble notwithstanding. They began in the fall, building down the stream from the place where the river surged in against the cliff, and building up the stream from where it turned out from the cliff. With such cottonwood logs as they could find up and down the river, they would build in the water a kind of house twelve by sixteen feet, weighting it down a piece at a time with stones, and filling it in with brush and rock. With the one house filled in and covered with earth, they would move out on it and build another house in the water beyond. In this way they built houses from above and houses from below till their buildings met in the middle of the hundred rods of lost ditch. With this foundation standing five feet above the river, they scraped in sand and earth along it to make a bank, had the cliff for the other bank, and called it a ditch. It took them all winter to get it ready for the water, and that section was known for years afterwards as The Cribs. Some parts of it cost fifty dollars a rod, valuing work at going wages. They figured that with the completion of The Cribs, they had overcome the most serious difficulty of their ditch in the sand. They were to find out that it was the beginning of a long program of worse things still.

Up the river twenty-five miles from the log fort, stood Mitchel's trading post. His son, Herndon, along with a Mr. Myric, had been killed on the reservation in the winter of 1879-80. The old man credited the Navajos with the murder, and down in his heart he cherished a pronounced bitterness to- wards them. The Piutes, ten times more insolent than the Navajos dared to be, had no better standing at the post than the tribe across the river, and relations between them and Mitchel were always badly strained. In the spring of 1882, they suddenly reached a breaking point when hot words led to a flourish of guns and then an exchange of shots. Mitchel ordered a detachment of soldiers to come posthaste from Fort Lewis for the upholding of his dignity and the maintenance of his rights. The Piutes withdrew in ugly humor to register their fuming emotions in the indiscriminate slaughter of cattle belonging to the people of Bluff. Nothing could be more disturbing to the Navajos than the appearance of soldiers on their border, and when the uniformed fighting men came into view, they drew back with their livestock towards the interior of the reservation. But they found. it a difficult matter to crowd with their herds onto the ranges of their self-assertive neighbors, and a comparatively easy matter to move over to the range of the peace- pleading Mormons, and their sheep began to strip the country around Bluff of every spear of grass. The mission was always woefully vulnerable to the bad humor of all the unprincipled men and all the un- stable elements around it, yet how- ever discreet and diplomatic it had to be to keep in good favor with the savages, it had all the same, to maintain an aggressive fight every day and night

to hold its own and to outgeneral the surprise plots being framed against it. These flocks of Navajo sheep took a stranglehold on them which they knew they could not survive for many weeks. It would deprive them of horses to work or to ride, of cows to milk, and it would constitute a precedent which could not fail to starve them out of the country. The Mormons met in council and decided to send a man at once to the nearest Indian agent on the reservation, begging that the sheep be called back to their own side of the river. In an hour of dark discouragement their representative returned, re- porting that the agent had informed him in surly tones that the Navajos had as much right to graze the north side of the river as anyone else. Were they whipped? Would they have to give up; and go, leaving their hard-earned Cribs and fields and homes and hopes and move out? They would surely have to find a way to move the invading sheep or move themselves.

They met in council again. They prayed. Then the bishop and his co-workers seemed to rise to the occasion with wise suggestions, and with inspiring resolution. They would go boldly over the head of that Indian agent who had pronounced against them, but they would go humbly as on their knees in distress of pleading to higher authority, praying for deliverance from this unbearable imposition. Everybody in the fort prayed that their delegate would have charm to win favor. When word came that the higher authority had listened with sympathy and ordered the intruding sheep back to their own territory, deep gratitude prevailed in the fort. The San Juan Co-op, with its slow-crawling freight outfits of six- horse pony teams and two wagons, traveled back and forth regularly over that long slim road to Durango, and it gradually became a substantial source of revenue. Their increasing trade with the Indians gave each stockholder a freighting job at regular intervals. They loaded out with pelts and wool and blankets, and loaded back with flour and merchandise for themselves and for the store. The business looked so promising that William Hyde put up a store on the river ten miles be- low Bluff, at what is known as Rincone, the corner where the pioneer company had to make a road up San Juan Hill. This Rincone store, although it was begun with the best of intentions, was contrary to the advice of Erastus Snow for the people to stay together. However much justification there seemed to be for making the store at the time, it was destined to result in the greatest tragedy of the mission. These stores with their tempting display of goods, and their indispensable custom of barter and pawning, became danger points of contact where unforeseen friction might develop explosive temperatures on short notice. The Indians would crowd the store lobbies, look-ing for anything on which they could put their sly hands, and trouble would have started often with the Navajos but for the influence of men like Jim Joe. Once when five dollars went mysteriously from sight, and every Navajo in the store swore he was innocent, Kumen Jones sent for Jim Joe who listened indignantly, and going with long strides to the store made Long John return the money. The face of Jim Joe, full-blooded Navajo, with light-brown eyes and eagle-beak nose, was always welcome in Bluff. Holding to standards of honor high above the masses of humanity whatever their shade, he was yet, like other reformers, able to make

but little impression on his own degenerate people. Both tribes made it an essential part of their business to steal when-ever they could find or make an opportunity. They preyed on each other as they had done for ages along the river, especially around this crossing, but the Mormons had livestock and imported goods which were peculiarly attractive, somehow more worth taking, and they hadn't learned to keep watch on their pos-sessions day and night. Also the Mormons did not go on the warpath because of their losses. Old Nucki, the picture of guile-less honesty, would inquire often how many days it was till Sunday, and being pleased with the old man's interest in matters so important to them, the people would aways tell him. How foolish they felt when they discovered his reason for wanting to know, for they discovered that he was driving away their cattle and butchering their milk cows while they were worshiping unsuspectingly in the old log meetinghouse. Not only impious Frank, but the long-faced Nucki! It was still a vexed question whether the little flower of friendship could survive among such rank thistles as this.

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Chapter 11

In the year 1851, President Brigham Young sent colonies to extend the Mormon territory to the south. Those who went had to fight four adversaries: the Utes, the Navajos, the renegade whites, and nature, which seemed at times the greatest adversary of all. No treaty with the United States could guarantee the settlers from the depredations of the Navajos. Even Kit Carson who displaced the Indians had found it impossible to quell them. Jacob Hamblin and Thales Haskell genuinely loved the Indians, and time after time won them to a reluctant peace, only to have it broken again because of the actions of the renegade whites. But at last the Mormons had begun their settlement, in the face of Indian attack and nature.

The Piutes grinned their perfect security and took every un- guarded thing they wanted. The coming of the Mormons to their country was a most fortunate windfall which they intended to gather in spite of Mormon protests, Mormon guards, and Mormon herders also, with extra contempt, in spite of imaginary evils which Haskell had predicted upon them. Erastus Snow had predicted that the unfriendly Indians would melt away, yet the most unfriendly of them were enjoying good health and unusual prosperity. They lived easy and fat and fearless. Their grand champion, Frank, was the image of Navajo affluence. But the end was not yet. These vessels of tribulation, called to the peculiar mission of "turning the other cheek also," and acting as the indispensable shock absorber between Utah's older settlements and a pack of threatening evils, were destined to be brought low many times within an inch of their lives, but never to perish under the heel of their major enemies. True, they had not yet conquered the first of those enemies, but they were to fight on and on, panting and persisting and praying on the edge of despair. The changes which come in human fortunes may be by slow and imperceptible degrees, but there are times when they come with stunning suddenness. That is the way they broke on the despoilers of the fort. A big Navajo came slowly on his pony from the way of the river. Carefully and pantingly he dismounted at Haskell's door and went stooping inside with feeble step. It was the grand champion, Frank, his vigorous physique blighted like a squash in the frost of October. Something in the nature of quick consumption had made his great lungs cave in as a deflated balloon, and he wheezed and gasped for enough breath to keep him alive. "Tell your God-" he gasped, in desperation of appeal, and paused for more breath, "tell your God I've quit stealing your horses." "Until you get well?" asked Haskell, without looking up. "Tell him if he'll let me live, I'll never touch any of your horses again," and Frank leaned despairingly on the table as he delivered the last words of his appeal. A strange and deadly malady seized Norgwinup's two roughneck sons, and left them stark and stiff by the fire in the wickiup. A cold chill ran through both tribes. While the chill lingered, half a dozen other inveterate Piute thieves met with heavy misfortune or death, and some of Old Frank's most ardent disciples suffered

surprising reverses. Frank lived ten or fifteen years after that, a poor, broken, humbled wreck of the splendid figure he used to be, and he had a story to tell about the fury of the Mormon God and his love for his people.

Cattle and horses were safe for the present, so far as the Indians were concerned, but in as much danger as ever from thieves. As the immunity from arrest in San Juan was whispered more widely in the realm of crime, the stream of "white trash" swelled in volume. If they could just reach the borders of San Juan, they could work in safety for a grubstake with one of the cow-outfits at Blue Mountain, or at the worst they could appropriate a fresh horse, or hide among the rocks eating somebody's beef till they could go farther. From San Juan they could skip in any one of ten directions with nine chances to one of not being followed, and then with a sure chance of obliterating whoever might be so stupid as to follow them. With a pistol on each hip and a long gun under their saddle-fender, they stopped frequently at San Juan Co-op for coffee and bacon, appearing from nowhere and vanishing into the same place. Every good horse not being watched or hidden in some terrible gulch, or on some inaccessible mesa, vanished with mysterious suddenness never to be seen again. The men of the fort clung for their very lives to all the cattle and horses they could save from the prowlers, but they had no summer range. It was hard on cattle to live through the warm months in the low country, and then have to winter on the hills they had grazed bare. This, even without any other of their hindrances, would prevent them from increasing their herds. Blue Mountain was claimed by the aggressive cattle kings who had come in from Colorado, and they would endure no crowding. LaSal, too, besides being rather too far away, was taken by them, and the flat-topped Elk Mountain, fifty miles to the northwest of Bluff, was claimed and monopolized by the Piutes. It was their sacred hunting ground, a reserved area of primeval wilderness such as their fathers had enjoyed before the invasion of white men. Also, it was a safe and ready retreat after the punitive expeditions they had made and would yet make against those white invaders.

If the San Juan Mission were ever to succeed as a buffer state, to endure as the lightning rod for catching and neutralizing every blast of fury before it could cross the Colorado River, and if the mission were ever to become sufficiently strong and influential to soothe and tame the source from which the lightning generated, then it would have to lift its head above the sluggish tide of poverty. If it were ever to master its three major adversaries, it would have to have more cattle, and that meant a summer range. With this vital phase of the situation in mind, Platte D. Lyman, Joseph F. Barton, and Orrin Kelsey rigged out with pack horses to explore the mountain, known to the Indians only who guarded its trails from all intruders. Those trails had not yet been found by the outside, and the Piutes intended they should never be found. The Elk Mountain is a tableland, and much of its precipitious rim length is difficult or impossible of ascent. The Piutes occupied the three valleys east of the mountain, and they made it their business to see that no one passed through to climb the steeps west of them. Platte Lyman and his companions succeeded in getting into First Valley without being

seen, but when they undertook to climb the mountain, there was no trail, but a steep surface of rugged rock. Tying their horses to the cedars, the three men scrambled up afoot to the top and found a wonderful country of tall timber and waving grass, rich underbrush, and flowers. They walked all day, going as far as what is now known as Wooden Shoes, and returned in the evening enthusiastic over the prospect. They got back to Bluff without being seen by the Piutes, but their tracks through that sacred solitude nettled the Indians, and their resentful responses along with other worries and surprises hindered the Bluff men for months from exploring further.

When, after a long time they were free to go again, Platte Lyman, Kumen Jones, and Hyrum Perkins succeeded only in getting into the edge of First Valley before the vigilant Piutes rushed out and formed themselves into a dark half circle across the trail ahead of them and back along each side. Every one of those dusky faces was hard and unyielding; not one of them would answer a question nor speak, but among themselves. They simply sat there on their cayuses looking as grim and terrible as they could, a silent and fearsome protest against any admission to their sacred mountain. The three men, exercising such benevolent chivalry as they could with an adversary frozen to silence, turned back around one end of the half circle and rode forward again, hoping to follow the trail they were on to the top of the mountain. That trail led through the cedars to Second Valley and on to the ridge of rocks and trees to the north, but there it had been camouflaged with jealous care: a web of tracks in all directions, no trail at all, and they stopped in bewilderment looking for a possible way to go. Then out from the forest around them came the slender Piute boy, Henry, riding a lean roan colt; Henry, whose honest, youthful heart, like a gem nestling, with crude stones, had made glad response to Haskell's fervent words. Hurriedly in an undertone he directed the three men where to go, and when they turned to ask him more questions, he was gone. Yet again when they paused in perplexity, he appeared as before, showed them the way and vanished in a. clump of cedars. Up along the narrow backbone, hidden by the trees, and then along the shelf to what is known as Dwarf Spring, he directed them, riding out many times from the cover of trees and brush and dodging from sight lest his people should know the part he was taking. He led them to Kigaly Spring, and to the other good springs of the mountain, his copper face agleam with the radiant light of friendship. The three explorers camped at Kigaly Spring, and in the evening that ugly half circle of Piutes from First Valley, having followed them up, came stringing down through the quaking asps and stopped silent and sinister around their camp. With their dark faces set in harder lines than they had worn in the valley below, they appeared to be resolved on some vengeful action. Henry was not with them; he had been in sight but a few minutes before and was no doubt watching from cover. The three explorers took silent account of what this demonstration was intended to suggest, and what it might really mean. They considered how they were beyond the end of the known trail and fifty miles from Bluff, and how Bluff was three or four times that far from any help on whom they might call in case of trouble. They could appreciate also how serious this matter was to the Piutes

who, if they allowed any invasion of their retreat, would lose their precious hunting-ground and be overrun by the outside. Their appreciation of this very thing showed in their angry faces, and they had nothing to fear from any method by which they might want to register their objections. It was their own world where they were and had ever been supreme. Uncle Sam's laws could not reach them whatever they decided to do. Fighting silently a battle for calmness within, yet hiding all outward signs of the conflict, the scouts searched their souls for all the strategies of the new warfare. The prime objective just now was not to get a summer range for the people of the fort, but to foil what might be death in this. trackless mountain. They talked freely with each other about things in general, preserving an appearance of complete unconcern. Moencopi Mike was the leading spirit of the gang-he with the Berkshire boar neck and the one who, according to the sworn statement of the Navajos, had murdered Mitchel and Myric with his own hand. He glared at the three men with muddy eyes, toying all the time with the stock of his pistol as if about to take it from the holster. Mike's men stood waiting for his initial word of beginning on the big things he had boasted he would do, but whether or not his gang was aware of it, he was exerting himself to his utmost in an unseen conflict with these bold invaders. It was that inevitable contest which begins the moment when eyes of enemies meet. Mike glared at them and searched eagerly for any tremor of fear, for the least sign of any weakening under the weight of his wrath and could find no fit moment for his initial growl. They were simply wearing him out with their stubborn composure, and finding it impossible to maintain such a mighty pitch without it even being recognized, and his dignity about to shrink in the estimation of his waiting braves, he signaled them to move on, and they camped in a grove of oak fifty yards down the canyon. Henry came down the hill over their trail as if he had been following them and joined them where they seemed to be holding a powwow. Mike had to make some face-saving explanations; he had met with something unexpected, and in spite of all his boasts, his men had to watch in vain while he did nothing. In half an hour he came back along to where the three men had camped, still with no word to say, apparently hoping to take up the fight where he had left off, to inspire the fear and find the opportunity of redeeming his dignity of leadership. Platte Lyman spread a big slice of bread with homemade molasses and held it forth to him without a word. And without a word Mike took it and closed his ponderous mouth over one wide corner. It made but a few bites for him, but he got a second and a third slice, munching them with audible relish. His dark countenance changed, there was a weakening around the corners of his wide mouth, "Nini tooitch tickaboo," he grunted. (I like you.) Full of bread and molasses, he sauntered away to bring the other Indians and talk it over. As the night winds moaned over them through the tall pines, they reached an understanding in which the Piutes agreed to a certain price for the use of their mountain. But besides the stipulated amount which they knew would be paid in liberal measure, they had dreams of finding fat cattle and valuable horses in the thickly-wooded canyons of their retreat where they could enjoy much desirable privacy in helping themselves. It was easy to track a thief on the half-naked

desert hills, but not in the thick grass and flowers of the mountain, and the years proved that the Piutes had not dreamed in vain.

By the spring of 1883, Bluff ditch with its cribs, its washouts, its breaks, and its indispensable cleanings every new moon from the silt spit into it by the path of the river, had cost the people $69.00 an acre for all the land they still had left to cultivate. That amounted to $48,300.00 for their seven hundred acres. Their tithing for the previous year was $760, about $25.00 to the man. Even then it was not intended to represent a tenth of their gain; part of it was deliberately paid on loss for better returns next year. In the spring of 1884, Mitchel, who ran the trading post twenty-five miles up the river, suddenly broke off friendly relations with the Indians again, and ordered soldiers to his assistance. This time it was a killing, and the Indians received the blame. In a quick minute he touched off the Indian situation in San Juan where it was most desperately inflammable, the fighting zone where Utah's Indian annoyances had all been concentrated. The very first howl of the trouble rode at once on the wind to the most remote camp. The Navajos moved back twenty miles from the river to their mountains, but the Piutes registered their response by killing more cattle, painting their faces in hideous colors, and bellowing their war chant all night in eager relish of the prospect. Although Indian wars had become a thing of the past in all the rest of Utah, San Juan was still the delicate safety valve where, if the pressure became too strong, it could blow off without disturbing people on the outside. That Mitchel trading post, getting hot and smoking at every change of the moon was a source from which a disastrous flame could start suddenly and spread soon to the faraway, if not checked in its early stages. For the best good of the Indians, and the welfare of everybody concerned, the way to head off these wild starts, with fairness to all, was the way Hamblin had headed them off, and brought them, by good will and kindness, to his way of thinking. There was always the Indian's side to the trouble, a side which no fair mind could ignore. The diligence with which Hamblin always took that side into careful account was the main source of his power of persuasion. All the same, how was Bluff with its wretched ditch in the sand, its pony-teams, its tribulation with a complete circle of enemies, and its accumulation of poverty, ever to soothe the wild native passion when once it became inflamed? The colony was distressed and afflicted with unending commotion. A weight of gloom like dark shadows hung threateningly over them in its great isolation. The gloom was not only in their world of thought, but black clouds above them also poured out torrents of rain on their mud roofs, and the water came drizzling through on everything in their homes. It rained all over the wide river basin above them, and the river roared more and more angrily over its bed of quicksand and climbed its banks with startling rapidity. The people felt great anxiety for those of their number who had been caught by the storm on the range or the freight road, and they kept a close vigil day and night lest the river should sweep them away. Yet the wrath of the torrent was no more to be feared than the wrath of the Indians because of the soldiers and the popular way of soldiers with women. The Piutes chanted their war songs from dusk till dawn with an eagerness to see the trouble develop, but the Navajos kept far back to the

south of the river. Anguish of dread dragged on the heart throbs of helpless women and children in the mud-soaked fort-anguish smothered to silence lest it should be intensified by expression; dread of violent man and violent elements, painted Indians, desperate white men loaded with guns, the wicked old San Juan making war on its banks with dreadful flotillas of driftwood and seething depths of quicksand! Bluff was pitiably at the mercy of a multitude of enemies, but to its stalwarts it was at the mercy of God only. Necessity of food, clothing, and many things called men away to the range and the road, no matter the hazard; and families without their protectors lived ever in grave concern. On many a terrible night the writer's mother knelt with her children and prayed heaven to temper the fierce elements and to soften the hearts of the Indians towards the helpless little townspeople. No prayer was complete with these vital matters omitted. While the rains descended and the floods came, that detachment of soldiers continued near the Mitchel post, and the Navajos kept away from all their visible territory across the river. Something ominous hovered over their empty dwellings and silent campgrounds. Rumbling echoes drifting back from the hills where they had gone sounded not like fear, but rising anger. Navajo Jim Joe and some of the wise leaders might be able to discern between the peaceable people of the fort and the hostile men from the outside, but the hotheaded masses could be guided by nothing but their craving for revenge. The river was too terrible for them to cross in the night, and at its present fury they would not brave its current in the daytime. So the people watched the rising flood and sent their anxious gaze searching through the storm for any sign of hostilities beyond it. In the darkness they heard above the steady purr of the rain and the roar of the flood, the strong voice of a man, calling-calling. The voice echoed in the cliffs; although they, could not make out the words, it alarmed them, for it seemed to come from the other side of the stream. They approached through storm and the night as near as they could and shouted asking who spoke, and what was wanted. At length by supreme effort the voice made its message clear: it was Jim Joe; he had come back through the darkness from distant camps to tell the people of his friend, Kumen Jones, that they need have no fear of the Navajos, but to keep away from the fighting men so they would not be mistaken for them. What a relief! The heathenish chant and the wild yells of the Piutes echoed still in the cliffs around Bluff into the late hours of night or early morning, but the Mormons had learned to count on a certain immunity from their wrath. This northern tribe had among them certain brave souls like Henry who had already restrained them in a wild moment, and they were more susceptible to his gentle suasion than their war songs would suggest. They contented themselves in killing more cattle, stealing more horses, and making themselves chesty and offensive by looks and words. The cowmen, the soldiers, the fugitives skulking in the hills, figured it risky, business to venture beyond protecting walls without ample guards, yet they all considered the people of Bluff to be in no danger at all.

Kumen Jones and his wife, returning from attending conference in Salt Lake City, heard in the north end of the county that there was serious Indian trouble. At Blue Mountain they met the big English cattle baron, Harold Carlisle, and asked, "Is

there any danger from the Indians?" "Not fo' yo' so't," drawled the old man. It was a most remarkable state of affairs, this collection of Utah's thirty-year-old Indian annoyances all tucked away into the remote southeast corner of the territory, for the vital issue to be fought out there to a finish by a handful of poverty-stricken toilers wading through deep tribulation and sinking often to the brink of despair. The storm center of the whole territory was the solitary fort in San Juan, obscured by magnificent distances from every other civilized community, and the only one of its kind still surviving in the west. To the obscure, yet indispensable guardians of this pivotal point, it was a matter of wonder that they should enjoy favors and immunities seemingly in excess of their importance. Besides the killings in the reservation and along the river, besides the murders at Piute Spring and at LaSal, there was at least one secret murder of a white man in Wooden Shoe Breaks, and the end was not yet, with more murders ahead. Jim Joe's promise of safety to the people of Bluff if they would stay near home, meant no cooling-off of the war spirit on the reservation. Aflame with indignation, Jim Joe came to confer with his friend, Kumen Jones. "They have insulted us as a people by their treatment of some of our women," Jim declared, meaning the soldiers from nearby Mitchel's store. "We can't stand it. If we are men and not children, then we must fight." Kumen Jones threw' his arms around Jim Joe and regarded him with sympathetic eyes, "You can't do it, Jim," he declared, "You must not think of doing it. You will be as a weak child in the hands of a powerful man. It would be the greatest mistake you could make." "But our women! Our girls!" and Jim's light brown eyes blazed fiercely with his gesture of hot resentment. "I know it, Jim!" and Kumen Jones looked his keen understanding through sympathetic tears, "It's too awful, but you go hack and tell your people not to think of such a thing as trying to fight the United States. That would be the end of them. Tell their old men to tell them about Bosque Redondo, and that to fight again would be worse than that." Jim shook his head bitterly; it cut deeply into his great sense of justice to pass such base insults without registering any of the indignation he felt. Yet he could not doubt the word of his friend, and springing to the back of his mustang, he rode away to quiet the cry for revenge.

In that spring of 1884, the uncommonly heavy rains swelled the old San Juan till it reached the top of its banks, and still it rose. It reached out with great arms across wide bottoms where, judging from the size of the giant cottonwoods, it had not run for at least a century. It ripped into sandhills where no one imagined it could possibly go. It swept away the houses of the people still remaining at Montezuma, and it whittled that Bluff ditch into a hopeless wilderness of mud and gullies. It buried the fields half-way up the fences under a blanket of sand and clay, and it stood two feet deep in some of the homes of the town. No ditch for that season-no crop! The "white trash" among the hills became more daring, and the Piutes, to say the least, were no better than at the first. Neither had any permanent improvement become noticeable among the Navajos as a people. Surely the mission had failed; it had butted against the impossible; the Mormon leaders had underestimated the difficulty of the work they had assigned. The people of the mission were reluctant to report again to the Church leaders that

the task was too hard, but they were distressed, afflicted, at the end of their resources. They reported the condition of affairs as they stood, and devoted themselves to saving what they could from the wreck while they awaited the expected permission to look for places to make peaceful homes beyond this disordered borderland. They believed that they could find in any direction a country better adapted to human habitation than this sand-bed in the midst of ten thousand thieves. Joseph F. Smith and Erastus Snow of the General Authorities made the long trip from Salt Lake City to inspect again the important outpost. They gazed with amazement at the havoc of the flood. They heard about thieves, desperados; remoteness of isolation with no roads on which to get out; the heard of the festering elements a ways ready to explode on shoe notice at this unsheltered end of the trail. They showed their sympathetic comprehension of all these thing, yet when they spoke to the people assembled in the old log meeting house, they said in substance. "We love you for the heroic part you have taken; you have made a wonderful beginning towards a most important work; and if it is no more than you can endure, we release you with our blessings to go, but we cannot give up this essential post. Those who go will be blessed, but those who stay will be doubly blessed." The unexpected assurance and positive promise in that last sentence, as the people listened, fell soothingly on the sting of their disappointment. Somehow it was the main thing they heard. The General Authorities promised the people that if they would stay, they would become prosperous; their fortunes would change for the better; and in due time they would accomplish all the major labors for which they had been called. To Bishop Nielson, then in poverty with the rest of his people, they promised plenty of means if he would stay at his post without compromise. Feeling repentant for having faltered, and accepting the assurance of final success, the men of the fort agreed to stay and tried to imagine themselves going to be successful over all their ugly adversaries.

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Chapter 12

In the year 1851, President Brigham Young sent colonies to extend the Mormon territory to the south. Those who went had to fight four adversaries: the Cites, the Navajos, the renegade whites, and nature, which seemed at times the greatest adversary of all. No treaty with the United States could guarantee the settlers from the depredations of the Navajos. Even Kit Carson who displaced the Indians had found it impossible to quell them. Jacob Hamblin and Thales Haskell genuinely loved the Indians, and time after time won them to a reluctant peace, only to have it broken again because of the actions of the renegade whites. But at last the Mormons had begun their settlement, in the face of Indian attack and nature.

After accepting this latest call to stay, the twenty-five or thirty A men still on the job set out to hold the fort regardless. They took stock of the dismal wreck where their $48,300 ditch had been, a ditch-site not so good now as when they began on it in the spring of 1880. Where it was not obliterated by the force of water which had swept it lengthwise, it was gutted across by a hundred streams which had roared down on it from the cliffs. Bishop Nielson limped out over the devastation and called his people to begin on it again. They shoveled the smelly sediment out of their log houses, slushed up the chinks again with mud where the water had melted it from the walls, and moved back inside. They dug the shocks of corn out of the thick layer of mud and sand which the flood had laid down around them, hoping to use some of the corn for pig-feed, and they threw more dirt on their roofs to repair the leaks through which the rain had dripped dismally on their heads for weeks. Sustained by some unexplainable assurance of safety in the midst of all these dangers, they broke up the square of log houses where they had been cooped up in discomfort four years in the fort and built on their town lots separated by streets. This, however, did not mark the end of the Fort on the Firing Line; San Juan, the appointed incubator of Indian troubles and troubles in general, was destined to be hatching them out at frequent intervals for forty years to come. The bishop had the men survey again for a ditch; most of the former ditch had been rubbed completely from the picture, its course untraceable, its altitudes changed by the flood. They went up against it with teams and scrapers and shovels, keeping a sharp watch all the time on their horses. Those restless Piutes simply itched for some kind of rousing racket to relieve the monotony of the long stretches of peace, which somehow were unduly prolonged by these tame, compromising Mormons. They wanted, most of all, a nice lib tie war with its crop of free horses, free guns, loot, and license. To bid for such a harvest they would have to go where it was to be found and watch for opportunity. So they pitched their smoke-begrimed wickiups in a sprawling group near to one of the big cow-camps at what was called South Montezuma Creek, now Verdure, and got promptly into a fuss with a hotheaded cow-puncher over a stolen horse. Rip-roaring and uncompromising with a passion for

flourishing the ivory-handled six-shooter he carried on his hip by day and kept under his pillow at night, the cowpuncher shot one of the Piutes in the mouth as he contended angrily for the horse in question. That shot was the match to the powder. That Piute, known as Brooks, with the torturing bullet hole from his palate to the back of his neck, became ample stimulus for immediate war, much more so than if he had died, as men with that kind of wound are supposed to do at once. The sprawling group of wickiups disappeared, and the Indians sank from sight with a suddenness to astonish that cow-camp on South Montezuma. Two fellows gathered the outfit's horses and rushed them into a corral. But the Piutes bad not by any means taken their departure, and they had not gone too far away to bombard that corral. When they tore loose with a roar, and their bullets whistled and rattled among the poles of the high fence, the fellows dodged and scooted to drop behind the first shelter they could reach. Joe Nielson from Bluff had been riding with this outfit, and fearing that if the Indians saw him with them now they would react with more impudence towards his own people, he proposed to go home, and fearing for his safety if he went alone, a cowboy named Fred Taylor went with him. They slipped carefully away down the creek and rode all night, warning the people at Bluff of what was happening at the foot of the mountain above them. The rest of the cowpunchers at South Montezuma didn't get away so easily. They contrived to shove their horses into an arroyo till the firing let up, and then they dumped their beds, their grub, and some of their most important valuables into a new wagon with a double- bed box, hitched on two span of big mules, and started by way of a very crooked wagon-track, not a wagon- road, for Bluff, fifty miles away. They huddled their horses in a jostling herd around the wagon, figuring it would tend to protect the spirited team and the unsheltered driver. On a brisk lope they went two miles to what is now called the Salt Lick and began to think they had dodged the trouble by a narrow margin, but right in the bottom of that little Salt Lick Valley, a pandemonium of shots broke loose from the clumps of oak on three sides of them. The big mules dropped in their harness; the herd of saddle horses stopped with a snort, milled, and scattered. Panic reigned supreme. One man was struck in the hip with a bullet and another in the foot, and everyone socked the spurs to his horse and "quit the flats." Riding warily out from cover, the Piutes rounded up the frightened horses and gathered around the new wagon and its dead mules. They ransacked everything to the bottom of the box and left the outfit in flames. Then they moved off deliberately with their big haul of good saddle horses towards the well-known and beloved rocks of their Elk Mountain, and their places of absolute security beyond Comb Reef.

As soon as the cowboys could collect their wits, they got in touch with other men of the saddle and inducing a company of soldiers to go with them, they took up the trail west of Salt Lick. They discovered with surprise that the Piutes had not hurried away as they had supposed but were waiting confidently among the tall timber for them to come. When Piute scouts told them the white men were on their trail, they moved off to the west, keeping tauntingly and mockingly just out of rifle range, and leading the furious posse into dangerous regions with which it

was not at all familiar, and through which it had no business to follow. Across Elk Mountain they followed and down the west side into a precipitous strip of territory known now as White Canyon. It was mad temper rushing in where wisdom would fear to tread. The Piutes knew every foot of that country; they knew from the first where they were going and where they would send that mob of cowboys and soldiers back the way they came. The "Mericats" knew nothing at all about the cliff-bound traps into which they were being led nor where that game of "follow-jack" was suddenly going to stop. They simply followed the tracks, and when the outfit in head plowed up the dust with bullets too near in front of them, they took the hint and traveled more slowly. On the south wall of White Canyon at what is known now as Soldier Crossing, the Piutes stopped on a high shelf and called mockingly for the mob to come on. That was for them a very generous way of announcing that they wished to be followed no farther, but the rearing pack at the foot of the hill misunderstood the signal and spurred on to the foot of the steep trail. The wonder is, since it was the Piutes' own chosen game, and since they had stacked the cards to have it all their own way, they didn't dispose of every white man in that reckless gang and thus make another prize collection of choice horses, guns, high boots, and wide hats for the big carnival for which they were preparing. But savages are governed by extravagant beliefs and incomprehensible superstitions, and it is inexplicable why they refrained from taking the big prize when they had maneuvered it within their easy reach. Instead of letting the eager cavalcade of bluecoats and cowboys come on up the hillside to where the last frantic one of them could have been finished off like a rat in a trap with not the least chance of defense, the Indians shot the two men in the lead at the bottom of the trail, a cowboy named Wilson and a soldier named Worthington, and the rest of the posse fell back to the shelter of a little ledge of rock.

In the narrow shelter of that little rim, the fuming, outgeneraled company waited all that hot July day, listening in helplessness to their wounded companions calling ever more faintly for water. When the shadows of night made it safe for them to move, they began meekly and sorrowfully to follow their tracks back to South Montezuma. From Soldier Crossing the red-handed victors crossed the country southwest through a maze of cliffs and gulches supposed to be without any trail at all, and entered the country east of Hole-in-the-Rock by the mysterious lake, where the Bluff people had hidden most of their cattle in what they thought was safety. In the heart of this remote wilderness on the grassy shore of the strange lake, which the Piutes called Pagahhrit, and which they regarded as the inner sanctum of their ancient retreat, they held a wild celebration. They danced and sang and exulted with savage shouts which echoed and re-echoed in the naked cliffs. They glutted themselves and their yellow dogs on the choicest cuts of beef from the best animals of the range. Yet the number they could consume in their most riotous extravagance, was small indeed compared to the number they shot for the love of slaughter, leaving them untouched to rot. When it was known in Bluff that this gang had gone south from White Canyon, the people feared for their cattle, and arrived at the lake to find it

stinking from the big celebration. The celebrators had gone, leaving no track to show how or where they had found exit from this rimmed-up corner. Some of the Bluff men gathered up what was left of their cattle and drove them out, but others saw nothing to be gained by moving. "Why leave this place?" they argued, "Where, in this Piute-infested region, can we find anything better? It'll be only a little while till these fellows have another fuss, and they'll go plundering wherever they please, for now we know they can go anywhere." Time proved that the Indians had crossed over into the impregnable fastnesses of Navajo Mountain beyond the San Juan.

During the winter of 1884-85, the builders of the fort made again what they called a ditch, a channel in the sand with such little fall to the mile that the blue sediment in the water filled it to the level in a few weeks. When spring came with its unfailing sandstorms from the southwest, they turned the muddy water in that sand channel, plowed their sediment-enriched fields, and the situation had half a notion to look lovely. They had been promised prosperity, and they believed it had begun. What a gloomy world this would be if hope should fail to tread the heels of disaster! Yet it was to be a long time before things really did look lovely, to stay looking that way very long at a time in Bluff. Into that situation which was half inclined to look lovely, came a disturbing report of a man named O'Donnel, who had come from somewhere in New Mexico with a big flock of sheep to skin the hills of every bit of feed in the vicinity of Bluff. It was the same strangle-hold that the Navajos had taken on them three years before, but in that case it was possible to get relief by pleading on their knees before various agencies of the government. No government agency had any right to move O'Donnel and his sheep. According to law he had much right as anyone else to the grass and forage around the remote little town; and, if he took a notion to stay there, he could not be molested in that right, though it starved the people to death. He knew his legal prerogatives as a citizen; he had found a good range covered with grass and flowers after the big rain; and he was resolved to avail himself of all its benefits. Bishop Nielson called a council, and they considered the crisis from every angle. It was an ugly prospect-they couldn't drive the fellow away at the point of a gun as the cowmen to the north of them would do at once if they were crowded, and the idea of buying him out seemed like "the longing of the moth for the star." They racked their wits in vain for a better way, and then they sent to ask I for O'Donnel's price. His figures staggered them-they seemed out the question. O'Donnel knew they could afford to pay more for his sheep than anyone else would pay, and they could not afford to let some other buyer get ahead of them, for then they might fare even worse. He knew he had sufficient leverage to pry them right out of their homes and away from about everything they had in the world if they refused the sum he saw fit to name. The people of Bluff simply had to be rid of those sheep or abandon their homes and go. And they had resolved not to go, but to stay and hold the fort regardless. O'Donnel seemed to know that, and he had more deadly grip on them than the Navajos had taken.

The bishop sent a boy around asking the men of the town gather again. They knew he was resourceful, and they tried to guess what he had to propose-he would perhaps have some of their most apt diplomats go and plead with the fellow to move to some other place. When they met at his home in the evening, the little room became still with expectancy as the old man arose and looked at them with studious appraisal. "Ve vill puy de sheep," he announced.

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Chapter 13

In the year 1851, President Brigham Young sent colonies to extend the Mormon territory to the south. Those who went had to fight four adversaries: the Utes, the Navajos, the renegade whites, and nature, which seemed at tines the greatest adversary of all. No treaty with the United States could guarantee the settlers from the depredations of the Navajos. Even Kit Carson who displaced the Indians had found it impossible to quell than. Jacob Hamblin and Thales Haskell genuinely loved the Indians, and time after time won them to a reluctant peace, only to have it broken again because of the actions of the renegade whites. But at last the Mormons had begun their settlement in the face of Indian attack and nature.

The silence which followed was broken only by the quick-drawn breath of twenty men in blank surprise at the bishop's tremendous decision. Yet he had considered it all very carefully in connection with the good standing of the San Juan Co-op with the banks in Durango, where so far they had refrained from borrowing as invited. At his suggestion the co-op assumed the heavy obligation, bought O'Donnel's sheep and began the Co-op Sheep Herd, which they moved from Bluff to better range farther away. With their right to Elk Mountain secured from the Piutes, they devoted the north half of the mountain to their sheep, the south to their limited number of cattle, too few to make good their claim to the amount of range they hoped to use, and, behold, the big L C Outfit with its numerous herd, was rapidly getting into all range not already in use. Every Piute knew where the lack of a blind trail made it best to travel that way in the nighttime. They knew it so well and resorted to it with such telling frequency, they would have stripped the colony to the bone if they had not been checked every so often by some thought-provoking event. When Navajo Frank's splendid figure caved in, when Norgwinup's two roughnecks met sudden and mysterious death, and a dozen other thieves came to their disastrous and unaccountable ending, the industry of something-for-nothing suffered a sharp setback. It took almost a year for it to start back on the road to normalcy, and Haskell had to repeat his warning to maintain half-livable conditions. Mike, with the wide mouth and the Berkshire-boar neck, was a would-be chief. He carried the proud distinction, no matter who the real killer might have been, of having come away with the outfits of Mitchel and Myric while they lay in two red heaps behind him. His ravenous appetite was in sharp competition with his dignity as chief when he ate the long slices of bread and molasses at Kigaly, and then went to pacify the rest of the gang. From his habit of following blind trails and making his major movements in the night, he became a wool merchant, coming in every day to the San Juan Co-op with a blanket full of wool which, when they had weighed it and paid for it, they dumped with other wool in their log warehouse. But somehow, Mike's wool did not increase the amount, and the store manager, Lem Redd, was puzzled to know how it could be. His observations led him to set a wolf trap in the wool under

what appeared to be a loose chinking in the wall. Next morning Mike stood there with his arm through a hole in the wall where the chinking had been removed, and he was very much at a loss for words to explain the wherefore. When Lem Redd opened the hard jaws of that trap, Mike hurried away with his swollen fingers into retirement. He had no wish to advertise just how ignominiously his racket had failed. Yet he who had ever made such vain proclamations of his exploits, could not keep his part in this fool's game from the listening ears of his rival chieftains. They gathered to his retreat and viewed him with depreciative eyes-he had been caught in a trap the same as a coyote. It was too much for his outraged pride-he, the imperious killer! The consumer of abundant bread and molasses while the dupes of his tribe waited on empty stomachs for his brave command to hostile action! "Wait till they pay for this insult!" he roared, "If they refuse the money-" he struck his right fist into his left hand and then drew his fingers across his throat in terrible gesture, "I'll wear their scalps on my belt! They can't do this to me!" Terrible words. Maybe Mike was still the great fury they had taken him to be; maybe he was even more. Like a roaring lion he came to Bluff, and with terrible visage he demanded a thousand dollars indemnity. It was to be forthcoming at once – something terrible would happen if they delayed the payment. He went from house to house growing more eloquent and more awful with his story as he repeated it, and some of the women became alarmed at his threats. He met Haskell. The old interpreter's predictions of evil had nettled Mike when they were made, and he had discounted their unfailing fulfillment. Misfortunes had come to some of the trouble-makers, but it was accidental; they had not come and would not come to Mike, yet his jaw dropped lower and lower as Haskell recounted to him just what happened and how. "Wasn't Hatch shot to death in a card game on Peter's Hill?" Haskell demanded, and Mike admitted in a low grunt that it was so. "Wasn't Tuvagutts killed by lightning on the jump near the Cribs?" Mike hung his head still lower. He remembered it. "Where's Sanop's oldest boy?" and Haskell's black eyes were boring right into Mike's tortured soul, "Yes, you do know-you know he died in prison. And you know his brother was killed by some of your people in the big rocks south of McElmo. Norgwinup's boys doubled up and died like poisoned rats; Bob died; Grasshopper was killed. They were thieves, every one of them, just like you, and in a little while you are going to follow them." These things had not happened at once, but they had come since Haskell sounded his solemn warning. Mike knew about every one of them, and he stood speechless in dread contemplation. "You won't have use for any thousand dollars," Haskell pursued, intensifying Mike's terror of impending doom. "Dead men let the money fall out of their fingers." Without another word the old man turned away, and Mike gazed despairingly after him while he licked his wide lips and closed his mouth with emotions baffling to his speech. Sometime before the light of the following morning, he followed a blind trail on the slope towards Navajo Mountain.

The store which William Hyde began at Rincone, ten miles down the river from Bluff, had been slowly growing in prosperity in spite of Erastus Snow's ban on isolated dwellings. Amass Barton married William Hyde's daughter, Parthenia,

and became interested in the store. In 1885, Barton became the owner of the store; at least he became the manager and the clerk, and he moved there with his wife and child to attend to the business. In taking this dangerous step Barton was not acting in defiance of any standard set up for the safety of the colony. From becoming interested in a small way, he had assumed one obligation after another until it seemed only sane and sensible to go there and give his investment personal attention. Also he may have considered it no longer necessary for the people to huddle together, since they had seen fit to move out of the fort. Barton was a man of unusual strength and energy, large and magnetic, a talented builder and mechanic, and just the kind of man to develop a new country. With untiring effort he built a neat, commodious home from the crooked logs he could find along the river, and he made an attractive store building, warehouse, blacksmith shop, and other substantial conveniences. He devised a treadmill in which he had a donkey lift water from the river for his well-kept garden. Rincon, in Spanish, means "corner." This corner is formed by the right-angle junction of Comb Reef with the gorge of the San Juan River. It is the corner from which the travel-worn company from Hole-in-the-Rock had so much trouble getting out in the spring of 1880. Barton's operations in this cliff-bound rincon began to make the very name a suggestion of neatness and beauty, for at his artistic touch the junction presented a unique and pleasing contrast to the bald, gray cliffs all around. His store like others of its kind, ran a pawn business instead of a credit account. A Navajo could pawn a gun, saddle, or anything else at a stipulated value, and draw goods up to that limit. The pawn could be renewed with a stipulated
deposit, but anything left after a given amount of time was forfeited. The system was rich with possibilities of unpleasant misunderstandings even with good Indians, but with bad Indians it was a handy leverage for all kinds of mischief. A Navajo known as Old Eye, from having lost one eye when a flying gad struck him several years before, had worked often for Barton at Rincone, and had often looked longingly at the display of attractive goods in the store. When he went back to his little sheep herd in the reservation, he somehow evolved the wild notion of carrying the
goods away from the store. This idea was no doubt inflamed, if not really suggested in the first place, by a certain young bully with a bad face, who was keen for the venture. Rincone was remote and unprotected, and they could get far away before anyone came after them. Better still, they could do it in such a way that they would seem to be justified. However, that robbery notion got such a hold on Old Eye, who had been a friend to Barton from the day of their first acquaintance, he planned with the young bully to rob the store, and their plan looked neater in anticipation than it ever looked as a fact.

It was early one morning in May that the two Navajos came up from the river to Barton's place on the shelf and asked him to go with them into the store. Old Eye said he wanted to redeem some jewelry which had been pawned there by his squaw. The bully accompanied him, and when they got in the store, Old Eye demanded the return of the jewelry, offering for it nothing as a renewal of the

pawn but a broken pistol of small or doubtful value, which Barton refused. Precedent had given the store-man full right to refuse anything offered in exchange, but Old Eye was vitiated with eagerness for the robbery and had lost the good will of their former associations. Being in prearranged accord with his companion of the bad face, he objected hatefully to all of Barton's offers, while the young fellow waited silently for the situation to develop as planned. Barton detected something very wrong, but he knew no fear, and he never became a victim to excitement. The disagreement was still but an unpleasant simmer when Mrs. Barton called him to breakfast, and the storeman, following his custom took his two customers to eat with him. When they had satisfied their appetites, they returned with him to the store and renewed their contention where they had laid it down. Becoming aware that the trouble in the store was reaching a dangerously high pitch, Mrs. Barton went over and asked what she could do to help. She had recently become mother of her second child and was hardly fit to be out of bed, and her husband was annoyed that she should walk so far, so he assured her he was perfectly able to handle the situation, and he asked her to go back to the house. She returned as directed, but she still watched and listened, and she knew also by her keen instinct that something terrible was about to happen in the store. Concealing a pistol under her apron, she went again - matters were even worse than she had expected, yet she knew the sight of that pistol would do no good unless she used it at once with deadly accuracy. She hesitated, and then ran back in desperation to the house where her mother, Mrs. Hyde, waited with the two small children. Barton had tried to put the two fellows out of the store, a task to which he was fully equal physically, but the bully, with treacherous preparation, had lassoed him around the neck, jerked him down on the counter, and was choking him to unconsciousness. When the terrified women heard a shot, Mrs. Hyde ran to see what had happened. They had dragged Barton over the counter and into the doorway where he lay unconscious, face downward, and Old Eye jumped astride his back to hold him while the bully got a pistol into action. The shot the women had heard had apparently gone wild, and the bully was in a state of great excitement. Mrs. Hyde's appearance upset him all the more, and raising the pistol quickly, he fired, missing his mark again, but hitting Old Eye near the heart. Old Eye jumped from Barton's back and ran round to the back of the store building where as subsequent events proved, he dropped dead. Although the bully had slackened his rope to use the pistol, Barton had not recovered from the choking to know he was free to move, or to realize what was going on. Seeing his terrible blunder, the bully thrust his pistol against Barton's head and fired, and was about to fire again when Mrs. Hyde pushed him away. At this he rushed around the store building to see what had happened to his one-eyed companion, and what he found made him more a fiend than before. Returning with frantic stride, he thrust the old lady roughly away, and shot 'the prostrate man again in the crown of the head. The mischief was done! The report in the reservation would be like a blaze in the dry grass. The bully shouldered the body of his companion and staggered with it down from the shelf to a boat at the water's edge. Getting the corpse to the south side he dumped it on the sand and ran, to disappear in a grove of cottonwoods. He would of course report to his

people that the Mormon storeman had murdered Old Eye. Old Cheepoots and other Piutes had watched the whole affair without taking any part, and to them, the desperate Mrs. Barton and her mother turned for help. With her two babies, the youngest little more than a week old, they were there alone at the mercy of the soon-to-be enraged nation of Navajos. Their nearest friends, very few in number, and with no power to meet a horde of furious savages, were up the river at Bluff, ten miles away - ten long miles over rocks and sand to her nearest friends, and indefinitely farther to any adequate help! It would take at least ten days to bring a force to protect her and the little town which would now be equally in danger. Mrs. Barton gave Old Cheepoots fifteen dollars to ride like mad with a note to Bluff-to ride faster than he had ever ridden before. The old Indian took the money, sprang to the back of his cayuse, and vanished. The women got the other Piutes to help carry Barton to the house and lay him on a couch under a shed by the door. He was not dead; he seemed to be partly conscious, but the bullets entering the back of his head had lodged behind his eyes and made him blind. The women gazed often in anguish of suspense at that boat across the river, and sent their despairing glance hopefully to the sandhills where Old Cheepoots had disappeared. But why begin looking there so soon? He couldn't yet have got a mile away and would be picking his way along the dangerous trail over the cliff above the river. Their fate was in his hands, hanging on his honor-Piute honor. Possibly that was an attribute of minus quantity. He had his money, and he might go as slowly as he pleased or not go at all, feeling sure that no one would be left at Rincone to accuse or blame him. Possibly his cayuse would fall headlong in its inordinate haste and break its legs among the big rocks. Possibly their fate was hanging on a race between that red-handed bully, and the best old Cheepoots could get out of his thin yellow pony. The old man might run his horse to death and still fail to have someone at Rincone before the women and babies would be butchered. In one of their fearful glances at the boat and at the cottonwoods where the bully disappeared, they saw six tall Navajos coming with rapid stride. Their step suggested anger, violence. With but a passing glance at the prostrate body of Old Eye, they quickened their movements, piled into the boat, rowed with quick stroke of oar to the north bank and headed up the hill to the stricken home where the agonized women waited. Could it be possible that help from Bluff was anywhere near to save them? No, thinking about it calmly, they knew the old man could be no more than half-way at best.

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Chapter 14

In the year 1851, President Brigham Young sent colonies to extend the Mormon territory to the south. Those who went had to fight Four adversaries: the Utes, the Navajos, the renegade whites, and nature, which seemed at times the greatest adversary of all. No treaty with the United States could guarantee the settlers from the depredations of the Navajos. Even Kit Carson who displaced the Indians had found it impossible to quell them. Jacob Hamblin and Thales Haskell genuinely loved the Indians, and time after time won them to a reluctant peace, only to have it broken again because of the actions of the renegade whites. But the Mormons persisted in their settlement, in the face of Indian attack and nature.

The six tall Navajos came up the hill, their guns in their hands, and straight towards the shed where the women bent over their prostrate protector. If the Navajos discovered that Barton was still alive, the best to be hoped for was that they would shoot him to death, even if they spared the rest of the family. Whispering frantically in her husband's ear, Mrs. Barton urged him to close his eyes and appear to be dead. He seemed lost to all that was going on around him, yet he closed his eyes and lay perfectly still while the six fierce men lined up over him, looking for any sign of life. The women watched in killing suspense-what if they should feel for his pulse! No, their pronounced superstition forbade them to touch the dead, and after leaning carefully over him and seeing no signs of life, they turned their ravening eyes on Mrs. Barton. She was young and fair, and she tried with terrified eyes to read their intentions. "What do you want?" she asked in their language, hiding her emotions as best she could. "The store," one of them demanded, with a gesture meaning the key. She gave them the key and left them to take what they pleased. The robbery Old Eye had planned went forward wholesale while he lay sprawling on the sand where the bully had dropped him. The six men in eager haste carried the goods from the store in backloads to the boat, rowed them across in load after load, and stopped only when one of their vigilant sentinels warned them in a loud call that horsemen were approaching from Bluff. Cheepoots had honored his trust with all diligence. Platte Lyman and Kumen Jones came loping over the sandhills where the old man had disappeared, reaching the store before it was thought possible they could have received the word. When Cheepoots rode his lathering cayuse into Bluff with Mrs. Barton's note, he found but six men in town, and by three in the afternoon all but one of the six had gone to Rincone, figuring that was the place of greatest danger. Somehow they clung to the belief that the town was immune to attack. Immune or not, Bluff that afternoon became terrible with forebodings. Only one man to protect it, and the Navajos probably working themselves into a fury as they threatened at the time of the murder of the three brothers in Grass Valley! Time dragged painfully, the long shadows reached out as indicators of fate. Towards evening Bob Allan came from Rincone bringing from the bishop a suggestion - that all the families of the town gather together at one home for the

night. Bob left again to warn his father and others camped in Little Valley east of Elk Mountain, and night came on with but a solitary male sentinel in Bluff. The women and children carried their bedding to the home of "Aunt" Kisten Nielson, spreading them down all over the floors of the two rooms, and then around the house on the outside. Some of these women expected to be massacred before morning, and one of them dressed her children in their Sunday clothes, figuring, by some strange philosophy of desperation, that this would be the most fitting way to meet their doom. More gloom came with the darkness. That one remaining man, Peter Allan, stood guard with a gun over the thirty women and children who sensed now, more than ever before since they had come to this fort in the borderland, that just across the river within sound of their voices, lived fifteen thousand or more unconquered Navajos, who had terrified southern Utah at intervals for a quarter of a century and who could be inflamed in an hour to a white-hot fury by the merest trifle. Those Navajos believed now that a man of the fort had killed one of their number, and what extravagant revenge they might claim was hard to guess. Whether the hours of the night became still or whether they were disturbed by sounds echoing in the cliffs, they were all ominous and slow in passing. The mothers listened and peered mistrustingly into the darkness.

Next day men came in from the camps, from the freight roads and other places in answer to the call of night riders who told them of the danger. Everyone felt grave concern for what might happen. Then onto that stage of dreadful things pending, came a well-meaning actor, who threw the builders of the fort completely off their guard. Amasa Barton lingered a week before he died, and in the first half of that time the men from Bluff kept fearful watch over him, and all the time they kept a vigilant eye on a mob of Navajos peeping from the cliff beyond the river. In the broad light of one of those May days, instead of in the nighttime, as the watchers had feared, they saw a man come straight down from that mob to the river, to the boat. He made no effort to keep out of sight; he rowed with deliberate stroke to the north side, and climbed to the shelf to where the weary watchers sat by the dying man. It was Tom Holiday, one of the important chiefs who had been twice to Salt Lake City at the invitation of Brigham Young and John Taylor to hear and subscribe to peace treaties between his people and the Mormons. Impressive in size, magnetic, and intelligent, he marched boldly up to the Barton home, gave them friendly greetings and asked what the trouble was all about. They told him what had happened, showed him the unconscious man, and assured him they had no desire for anything but peace, not the least preparation for anything but peace. "I have been telling my people you are our friends," he said. "I told them you have always been our friends. I told them to go home and let the matter pass. I shall go back and send them home." He returned to the boat and up to the hiding mob from which he came, and very soon it was apparent they had all gone away; none of them could be seen. The crisis seemed to be past. When Barton died, his funeral was held in Bluff without fear of further trouble from the Navajos. Men returned to the freight road and the camps to take up their work where they had dropped it. Tom Holiday, Jim Joe, and the cream of the tribe lived on a plane high above the unprogressive herd. In the emotional hearts of that herd rankled

memories and traditions of wrongs they had suffered; wrongs real or imaginary which had never been duly avenged. The soldiers of Spain had shed their blood, but the Navajos had taken two drops of Spanish blood for every one they gave, and they had driven the Spanish power from all countries adjacent to their own. The United States had driven them away and shut them up like cattle for three years-the memory of it was a sting! The mention of it an insult! These Mormons had shed their blood in many a shameful fight beyond the big river, and now they had come to shed their blood right at the nation's door. The three brothers had been massacred in Grass Valley! Tom Holiday and other old cranks had tried to explain that somehow it was all right, but it was all wrong. The Navajos were in no humor to admit anything was right where Navajo blood had been spilled. Old Eye had been shot through the heart in a Mormon's store, and they were asked to believe it was done there by one of their own people, and a friend to the murdered man. How ridiculous! The chronic agitators waved their firebrands and raised a war whoop. It stirred the blood of fighting generations, and they painted their faces in hideous colors, seized their guns, and rode away in a jostling gang for the detested little colony. Danger, prolonged and intensified, had bred courage in the builders of the fort, not only in the hearts of the men, but also in the hearts of women. It was often their duty for long periods at a time to man the fort, to be its watchmen, to preserve the vigil which was ever the price of their peace. It was a woman who first sighted that dreadful horde of a hundred Navajos - riding in fury towards Bluff. It was a woman who soothed her terrified children and ran to calm the little folk who had been left alone across the street. It was another woman, Mary N. Jones, known to the Navajos as Estomuskeezy, who answered their call and met them in the street, to laugh banteringly at their painted faces and feverish excitement, and to ask in their own tongue what kind of joke they had come to play. She was the plucky interpreter and clerk and diplomat for the San Juan Co-op. Without "Aunt" Mary, and other women with her courage and resourcefulness, Bluff's assignment in the wilderness never could have been filled. Yet Aunt Mary, from her varied experiences with the Navajos in the store, could not fail to recognize this as a grave threat of violence to the helpless little community. In these hundred men, surrounding her with their guns in their hands and glaring uncompromisingly down from their saddles, she saw the im placable spirit which had resisted Spain-the wrath and resentment of a people unconquered by three years of captivity. This was the crisis hour of a generation; the fort must hold its own today or it could be a fort no longer. If the peculiar ethics which saved Jacob Hamblin from the flames could not be successfully invoked for this situation, the fight of the years was ignominiously lost. Estomuskeezy contrived to send for her father, Bishop Nielson, and for her husband, Kumen Jones, two of the only three men to be found in Bluff or in its nearby fields. Until they came, she wielded the charm of her calmness on the restless mob.

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Chapter 15

In the year 1851, President Brigham Young sent colonies to extend the Mormon territory to the south. Those who went had to fight four adversaries: the Utes, the Navajos, the renegade whites, and nature, which seemed at times the greatest adversary of all. No treaty with the United States could guarantee the settlers from the depredations of the Navajos. Even Kit Carson who displaced the Indians had found it impossible to quell them. Jacob Hamblin and Thales Haskell genuinely loved the Indians, and time after time won them to a reluctant peace, only to have it broken again because of the actions of the renegade whites. But the Mormons persisted in their settlement, in the face of Indian attack and nature.

The aged bishop came limping alone to meet them. He made no undue haste. Tired and stooping
from his work, his step was as slow and as deliberate as at other times, his head leaning forward, the wind playing with his gray hair. "He is not afraid," Aunt Mary heard them say one to another.
Calmness and unfaltering trust prevailed in Bishop Nielson's bowed head. He had been in greater perils than this-with the perishing handcart companies on the plains in subzero weather; he had felt the torturing fingers of death and had seen it bear down the loved ones all around him. His resolute escape from its grasp had left him with that splendid calmness known only to those who have con tended long and bitterly. His composure was not due to any misunderstanding of the deadly intent this painted mob had in its heart. He knew that the mission faced its supreme moment. The issue of Indian wars for more than thirty years and the welfare of unsuspecting homes far away hung on the success or the failure of this forced contact. The hopes and objectives of toiling years hung on the outcome of this meeting between a crippled, defenseless old man and a hundred armed savages raring" to fight. From another direction came Kumen Jones, and together they waited for the mounted mob to deliver the message which was of such tremendous import that it took a hundred men with their most deadly weapons to bring it. They began hissing forth their accumulated wrath, two, three, half a dozen all at once in angry excitement. A Navajo seemingly had been murdered by a Mormon - shot through the heart in the white man's store! Another Navajo was reported to have been compelled to kill the Mormon in self-defense. The Navajos were ready to fight - right now! They were not sheep to be struck down without protest. Their murderous howl swelled in volume as if it were never going to listen for an answer but would imagine its own answer and go into action. How humiliating all this would have been to Tom Holiday or to Jim Joe. The bishop and his interpreter stood unmoved as if they might be waiting for a little gust of wind to die down before proceeding. Observing the calm faces of the two men and looking in vain for them to shout their protest, the din subsided till one of the older men ordered the others to be still. "We are ready to talk with our friends," the bishop announced, through his interpreter, "but friends do not cling

to their guns while they talk. We have no guns. If you want to talk with us, go stand your guns against the wall and then sit with us here in a friendly circle." What a tremendous order for the fight-hungry hundred, hugging their weapons and eager to begin. Yet the quality of courage which could face them with no arms at all, had a strange and unmistakable edge over their dependence on horses and numbers and guns. They could recognize the old man's superior position, and it dampened the spirit of their hostility in spite of themselves. They had less to say, but they still sat doggedly in their saddles. With equal resolution the bishop stood unyielding, one hand resting quietly in the other, and not the least symptom of any compromise. Whenever they became still enough to hear him, he repeated that there would be absolutely no discussion of the affair except in a friendly circle without weapuns. He told them he was not there to light nor to take part in any hot argument. That this was the supreme moment of the years, Bishop Nielson sensed with all his being, and stood like a statue while mothers and children waited in torture of uncertainty to know what was going on, what it could mean, and how it was going to turn. No military force could save the situation by any interference now, even if it were coming on the run. Any outside interference would rob the little colony of the thing it had to do; it must save itself if it was to survive. Recognizing that there was something strangely impregnable about the stand the bishop had taken, a few of the older Navajos dismounted, leaned their guns against the log store, and sat cross-legged on the sand in front of the two white men, where the conversation was entirely too low for the ears of the braves still sitting stiffly in their saddles. With growing curiosity to know what was being said, more of them stacked their guns and sat to listen. The conversation in that circle was very earnest as indicated by motions and gestures of all who spoke. What could that old man be saying for himself? The eagerness to know what he was saying brought all the rest of that hundred men down from their horses, and stacking their guns they came as near as possible, to hear every word. "The Mormon captain sent us here to live with you in peace, to tell you a better way than to fight," the bishop repeated through his interpreter, Kumen Jones. "We do not fight; but we belong to the United States government; we pay taxes to it; and if you want to fight, we can send the word, and there will be an army here right away. Do you want to live with us in peace, or do you want to fight?" "No, no!" interrupted the older men, raising their hands in protest, for they could remember Kit Carson and the years of humiliation at Bosque Redondo. The younger men sat unmoved. All they had seen of Uncle Sam was the little detachment of fighting men who had answered Mitchel's call for help, the bold, fresh fellows who had taken such unforgivable liberties with the Navajos. They despised those fellows as crawling snakes, but they had little notion of how many more of them Uncle Sam could send. "Your friend, Old Eye, was not killed by one of our men," declared the bishop, and then he told them how it happened, and told them to ask the Piutes who watched the whole affair. The little town on all sides waited breathlessly for some indication of what was happening in the prolonged conference. The young hotheads of the hundred made hateful charges and accusations, but the calmness of the two white men acted on them as sunshine on a frozen bank. Then some of the older men began to beam in glad

surprise at what they discerned in the bishop's tone-his firm and steady stand for something better. There was in it some unusual charm they had never known before. They repeated his words to the younger men and began to argue for him more determinedly than they had argued against him, while he stood quietly by and watched them champion the cause for which he had been fighting against the tide. The violent storm was passing; the sun was breaking through the dark clouds. Some of the older men jumped up and extended their hands, "Sekiss! Deigese sekissf" (Friend! Friend indeed!) they repeated as they clung to the stiff fingers. Then others of them caught the spirit, thawed out, and shook hands. A wave of good will like a burst of light passed over them; they all crowded forward declaring in positive terms that what the bishop had said was very good. The soul force which had carried Jacob Hamblin's words to the heart of the big chief Barbecenta at Fort Defiance had found its way again through the voice of this old man from Denmark to the hearts of a hundred Navajos painted and ready to fight. This was the stock of fighters who warred with Spain for three hundred years, refusing to be subdued ever when a multitude of their people were butchered in canon de Chelle. This was the people imprisoned fox three years, to remember it with bitter resentment and to look daggers at whoever was mean enough to mention it. They had met a new force, a resistless force never to be forgotten, something which their remote ancestors might have known and long since forgotten. It had brought them down from their high horse; it had conquered them with a tender hand whose grip they loved. When some of them offered their hands again and said good-bye, the bishop stopped them, "Don't go now," he said, "stay with us till tomorrow. It is late; you are hungry; some of you have come a long way." "Ha la na sekiss!" some of them broke forth in pleased astonishment. They would stay; they wanted very much to stay. "You can be our guests and eat our food while we tell you more of the kind words the Mormon captain told us to give you," and the bishop asked them to wait till the people could bring them things to eat. He ordered a fat steer for them to butcher; he ordered flour, bacon, and other things from the log store. They built their campfires all over the street, and as they roasted their beef and baked their bread, chatting and laughing as a great company of merry-makers, the gray-haired man from Denmark limped back and forth among them, saying the words and making the pleasing impressions they were to remember always. When they mounted their ponies after breakfast next morning, they insisted on shaking hands again. We are friends-always friends," they repeated as they rode away. This was victory number one, the dawn of a new and better era, never to slip out of memory in all the thrills and terrors yet awaiting the struggling fort-builders on the bank of the faraway San Juan. The builders of the fort had reached the responsive heart of the wild Navajo. And the wild Navajo, long misunderstood and cruelly punished, had found in this strange people on his border, the important thing for which he had been hunting and hungering without knowing what he wanted till it was forced upon him. That hundred men, with a new story to tell, returned to the reservation breathing glad confidence where mistrust had rankled before. They would never again challenge the Mormons who had sent this colony to their uninviting border. Hamblin was dead, but the pleasing spirit by

which he pleaded for and offered peace, would go on and on. From that day, when a Navajo saw a stranger in Bluff, he would inquire of one of the old settlers whether the new man were a Mormon, or a Beelicon. If he were not a Mormon, they regarded him with the persistent suspicion they held for the white race whom they had been fighting for centuries. Another problem was swelling like a mountain stream after a heavy shower; horse thieves, train robbers, red-handed killers of men and the worst desperados of the western trails following the beaten path through to San Juan. They swarmed to the cow-camps at Blue Mountain, riding banteringly and defiantly with 'a six-shooter on each hip and a Winchester on their saddles. From a dozen states they gathered as by some common impulse, yet so far lack of employment and lack of welcome tended to hold them away from Bluff. But Bluff was not to enjoy its immunity as in the past; a change was already in the offing. The underground trail from Texas, kept always hot by men who were hunting the safety of distance, became so much traveled and so much in demand that a cattle outfit of the Lone Star State came with something less than three thousand head of typical Texas longhorns to make their headquarters in San Juan. Their great bawling herd, a mile long, came straggling down the river through Bluff-yellow cattle, white, black, brindle; all of them starving and hollow from the long trail; all of them coyote-like in form, little better in size. And horns! such a river of horns as you might see in a nightmare-horns reaching out and up, out and up again in fantastic corkscrews. The children of Bluff laughed at the sight of it, but their parents looked on with alarm. The snaky little bulls, narrow and sunburned, could compete successfully for existence with goats on a rock. They were to father the incorrigible "pinion-busters" for which the San Juan rough country would sometime be notorious. This indestructible Texas stock would crowd the Bluff cattle against the rims, starve them to death, and predominate over them by their native toughness. The men who followed that bawling herd, who urged them on with Comanche yells and unspeakable names, who swung their lariats or fired their pistols, were even more unpleasant to see and to hear than the cattle they followed. These cattle had come ostensibly to occupy the vacant sections of the range, but in reality they had come to occupy the range. They drove through town and on down the river ten miles, making their winter camp at the lonely Rincone cabins, left now to neglect and decay. With never a thought for the people who had been toiling for eight years to establish themselves in and make this stubborn solitude a livable place for civilized man, this outfit from Texas appropriated the range in all directions. With their red branding-irons they printed in big letters on the left side of every calf, beginning somewhere behind the ear and stopping somewhere short of the root of the tail: E L K M. That was supposed to make it perfectly clear from the left side of the calf that it belonged to The Elk Mountain Cattle Company. And then to make it clear from the other side of the calf whom it belonged to, they whacked the right ear off close to his head. They foresaw that their program would involve the question of meum and tuum with confusing frequency, and they intended that meum should always be the winner. This Texas outfit came with more uncompromising nerve than the builders of the fort had found before in all their eight years on the front. They had been greatly concerned to retain

enough range from the big expanding L C outfit for the increase of their little herds, and now they were to be crowded into the rocks by this E L K M Company. It was a prospect to inspire anything but good will for the present or hope for the future. When O'Donnel planted himself in their dooryard with his sheep, he was generous enough to leave a possible way of escape, and they bought him out. This Texas outfit had no thought of selling; they had not come to sell but to establish a permanent business, to capitalize on the needs and the services of desperate men coming from everywhere. The fellows who came on the run with just one thought in their distracted minds: to keep out of sight, to dodge starvation till the smoke of their mischief could blow away would give the Texas outfit their services; in fact, they would give anything they had to be kept from arrest, to be safely concealed or directed beyond the reach of the law. A big adjunct to this cattle business would be a thriving hotel or roost for men who found it necessary to depart suddenly from Texas or from any one of a dozen other states or territories. This shelter for buzzards at Rincone was advertised in the underworld as the surest of all retreats, a stopping place with competent guides, shrewd spotters, and a thousand impenetrable dens in which to hide. No warrant of arrest had ever been served here, and any man who could ride a horse could get at least his board. Responding to this unusual prospect, great flakes of human scum came floating in from every direction. Some of them arrived by pre-arrangement in the nighttime, held whispered confabs with some trusted ally, and rode on in the darkness. Bluff and its cattle had to take what this swaggering Texas outfit left them – there was nothing else to do. It was only by keeping a sharp lookout and making aggressive claims that the people of Bluff kept from being wiped off the map. It was imperative that they have one or more of their number riding the range all the time, and they had to ride and camp and associate on more or less equal terms with the vitiated hands of the Texas outfit and the L C outfit, who were receiving five or ten dollars a month, or possibly only their board for their services. The newcomers aspired to set the pace for everything in San Juan. industrial, civic, and social, not omitting the dances and the ward gatherings in the log meetinghouse, where they were as welcome as an invasion of skunks. Once when a dance was ready to begin, they arrived on the lope at the door, a jumble of chaps spurs, red bandanas, and wide hats. They trailed in through the doorway as fresh and as much at home as if each one had received a written invitation. They carried their six-shooters on their hips, wore their lung spurs. The appearance of this self-invited gang brought the party to an astonished halt, men drew protectingly to their wives, boys to their sweethearts. It simply wouldn't do. Every man and boy with the courage and purpose of the fort in his veins resolved it should not be tolerated. Bluff might be the back of the backwoods, and its social customs might be ten years out of date, but the standard was not to be compromised, The womanhood of the fort was as free of stain as the desert flowers around it, and the spirit of the fort resolved that the birds of the underworld should not compromise the sacred standards by taking part as equals in that party. But what was to be done? These desperate fellows would be furious at any public show of disapproval - they might make serious trouble, now or in the future. Let them think as they pleased and do their worst;

this was no place for compromise; the fortitude which could face a hundred bloodthirsty Navajos to save the lives of the community could face any lean-brained challenge to its cherished standards. The floor manager, for no dance went on in Bluff without a supervisor who had standards and backbone, approached the most prominent figures of the gang, and told them quietly that their participation in the activities of the evening would not be tolerated. As the word was passed among them, they exchanged questioning glances and glared with indecision at the silent, waiting crowd. Some of them seemed to blush, but others longed for the courage to do something spectacular. The wild elements of their resentment sputtered and hung fire as something about to explode. After whispering back and forth in confusion, they turned and went swaggering towards the door, the tread of their heavy boots resounding like hoofs on the silence. Reaching the outside they mounted in jostling haste, jingle and rattle of stirrup and squeak of leather, and lighting astride their horses they headed away on the keen jump, firing their pistols, and piercing the night with hideous yells. The spirit of dancing had gone from the log meetinghouse-everyone paused indignantly as the roar of the coarse insult reached their ears. The firm stuff which had stopped the intruders and turned them back, raced after them in the night and warned them never to try that shooting act in the streets of Bluff again. Just what would happen if they did, they were left to guess, or learn by experience if they had to know. They cursed and mumbled, but were left to think it over and use their best judgement.

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Chapter 17

In the year 1851, President Brigham Young sent colonies to extend the Mormon territory to the south. Those who went had to fight four adversaries: the Utes, the Navajos, the renegade whites, and nature, which seemed at times the greatest adversary of all. No treaty with the United States could guarantee the settlers from the depredations of the Navajos. Even Kit Carson who displaced the Indians had found it impossible to quell them. Jacob Hamblin and Thales Haskell genuinely loved the Indians, and time after time won them to a reluctant peace, only to have it broken again because of the actions of the renegade whites. But at last the Mormons had begun their settlement, in the face of Indian attack and nature.

Two nights later they stood around a campfire at Rincone, their thoughts about that dance still echoing in boasts and protests. "We let 'em down easy that time," one of them repeated, "but when they insult us again, we'll shoot out every lamp in the hall." Kumen Jones had been riding with them that day in the interest of the Bluff cattle, and he listened till the babble of brave words died down like a falling wind. "Look here, you fellows," he broke forth, "do you think your brave yells and your shooting frightened any man in Bluff? It may have startled nervous women and timid children. Everybody else that heard it felt nothing but disgust." They opened their eyes at him in quick astonishment. "You call yourselves brave men," he went on. "it takes your kind of bravery to frighten the weak and the helpless. If ever I saw a bunch of cowards, it's right here." An indignant hush settled on the circle in the glow of that fire and they searched one another's faces as if to demand, "Are we going to stand for that?" If they were not going to take it and call it good, then they had to have among them at least one man with the sand to say so, that the others might muster the fortitude to endorse his objection. But the courage which rests on its own honest feet is very different from the kind which hangs for dear life to a gun. Kumen Jones, unarmed and unafraid stood there before them with more security of position than any one of the blustering gang who had substituted a gun for the grit which was not to be found in his anemic anatomy. "Every man and boy in Bluff," Jones went on without fear of being answered, "who heard you shooting so heroically there in the night to torture sick folk and children had just one impulse, and that was to get his gun and shoot straight at you. You can thank your good fortune they had better hold of themselves than you have of yourselves or that is exactly what they would have done." They looked daggers at him in disarmed hesitation and he met their look without blinking. They had their glittering six-shooters on their hips, the brave six-shooters which soothe the coward's yellow nerves and bolster him in the cheapest kind of lie about his own pusillanimous self. If Jones had only had a gun, it would have given them excuse to act, but he had no gun, and they hated themselves and each other because they had to listen to him in silence. Among that nonplused gang glaring through the firelight at their solitary accuser, was a

little fellow with a sense of humor, and with the courage to speak. "Well, sir. Mr. Jones , " he admitted reflectively. I think you have it doped out about right. No man's goin' to any kick out of scarin' sick women and little kids." No other one around that fire indulged another brave gesture. They conferred in low tones as they scattered off to their blankets. They had sought the sheltering walls of San Juan to escape the laws of the United States, and they could not permit a little backwoods town to force any of its discipline upon them, even for the brief time they might want to stay. If
They couldn't be the lions in that log meetinghouse and carry on like a stampede of steers down a box canyon, then they would have a dance of their own and set a style so dashing it would have to become the role. When they stayed in Bluff, they ate at the home of Grandfather John Allan and made his place their headquarters. They decided to stage their dance in his dooryard. He was old and stooped and weary with the weight of strenuous years; surely he would have no temperament to object, even if he failed to see that objecting would injure his hotel business. But John Allan, however stooped and jaded, had the fighting fire of old Scotch clans in his blood, and when he saw that dance getting up steam in his dooryard, he rushed out there like a roaring lion. The old man had no gun; he was small in stature. His hands were stiff and bony and laced over the back with big blue veins like ropes, but his words in broad Scotch left no one in doubt about what he meant. "Gang till the street!" he ordered, "I'll no bear it a minute!" That dance bogged down right there in muttering surprise. But at the foot of the mountain the lawless group was taking its own gait, with mocking contempt for the hands reaching in futility from the distant outside where men had highways, railroads, telegraphs, and a degree of order.

The Church Authorities, in their solicitude for the mission and its difficult problems, called the bishop of Huntsville, Francis A. Hammond to preside over San Juan Stake. Coming at once, he took studious account of the distressing situation and discerned that of the three major labors assigned to the mission, the first, the winning of the Navajos, had in a great measure been accomplished. It was hardly thinkable that this could have been done if Bluff had not been in such close Proximity to its first problem. It seemed therefore probable that the building of other outposts near to problem two and problem three might be the best way to their solution. President Hammond went with a pack outfit, taking some of the leading men of the colony with him, and explored along the eastern side of the big San Juan territory, looking for strategic places for outposts. He proposed that they build one post on White Mesa, east of the Piute stronghold in the Little Valleys and another post at the base of the Blue Mountain where the pirate empire was taking more definite shape every day. Building and manning the two posts at one time proved to be more than the colony was prepared to do; in fact, the prospect of undertaking a start among that horde of roaring outlaws at the base of the mountain was sufficiently terrifying of itself, and White Mesa was for the time being forgotten. The new outpost in a beautiful prairie stretch east of the mountain was named Monticello. To the matter-of-fact mind it was folly, pure and simple, "a gleam of hope in a maze of danger," a little squad of mice

appointed to teach the cat better manners. Yet the new warfare could not be safely appraised by the old standards-it was built on the unpredictable possibilities of what faith can do faith, that impelling power so generally discounted in the human soul which bears it on to its noblest achievements. When the president called men to go and dig in and establish themselves at Monticello, they gathered up such equipment as they could prepare and started, Frederic I. Jones in the lead, with Charles E. Walton, Benjamin Perkins, Samuel Wood, Nephi Bailey, and others in the procession. They faced difficulty and danger from the very first day of their beginning, for Monticello had to fight its own battles, stand on its own feet, and carry on if it was to survive the herd of ruffians waiting and resolved to ride over it roughshod. That much was clearly understood by the brave men and women who answered the call. By their magic of unusual diplomacy they were supposed to bring law and order into that howling chaos. A winding wagon track over sandhills and rocks, through stretches of sagebrush and across precipitous canyons, extended through the fifty miles of solitude between Bluff and Monticello. Communication between the two places was infrequent and uncertain and although they cooperated as best they could, each center was still in a remote world of its own. The cowpunchers east of Blue Mountain regarded the building of Monticello as an unwarranted invasion of their territory; the log houses and pole fences built on their trails, a violation of their fixed rights. In answer to the first objection to their impudent ways, the raced back and forth through the streets firing their pistols in quick staccato and sending their gorilla yells to die away on the prairie. They never missed a chance to show how quick they were on "the draw,“ flashing their guns into action with every chance of making a display and emptying every chamber in a noisy twinkling. They drove away horses and cattle; they carried off saddles, bedding, guns, anything they could reach, mainly to discourage the spectre of law, incidentally for the amusement of gain. They got away with much of the first crop of grain raised at Monticello. The big objective of these new builders was to establish laws but for the present they had difficulty enough in holding their own and surviving. All the cattle companies in the county could not employ, even for their board, a tenth of the birds of passage around the mountain, yet not one of them went hungry or without a horse and outfit. They
lived fat and flourished, and their numbers increased. Sarah Jane Rogerson, one of the plucky women who faced the perils of early Monticello, relates that one night when the cowpunchers "shot up" the town, she counted seventy-five of them by the light of their guns as their horses jumped single file over a ditch on the public square. They had come to this rendezvous from states as far away as Kansas and Washington. With their spotters and bribe-takers and their alliance with the system at Rincone, they felt a degree of security and intended to preserve a maze of confusion from which officers of the law would be glad to get away alive. They abolished government so completely there was nothing to hinder them from killing each other on suspicion for the fun of it, and the fellow fawning at a man's elbow was often more to be feared than an officer sniffing on his trail. They fought out their differences to the death, no one to pity the victim or punish the victor. Just how many of their numbers they eliminated in their camps

and secret places is but a guess. And it could not be related that they were followed by any penalties of the law. About that time in a perfunctory court procedure one of the jurors assured his friends, "Whoever comes before this jury is innocent." Mons Peterson's little store in the corner of town had recently shipped in a few bottles of liquor to be used in cases of sickness. The cow-punchers had heard of it, had insisted on sampling it, and had fumed and cursed when Peterson refused. They would sample it now, regardless. Straight to Peterson's store the whole howling gang of renegades rode whip and spur, ordered the flasks from their hiding place and passed them around with lavish hand. They were already well loaded with liquor they had brought to the ranch, and Peterson's medicine left them fully primed for the big demonstration. It began with a jargon of yells and shots in the air as they stood there in the storeman's dooryard, for his store was his home, and he had rushed his family away when he saw what was coming. The renegades began shooting every can of fruit, every can of corned beef, every can of baking powder, anything and everything they found on the shelves of the store; they took hundred pound sacks of sugar to the door, slit them from end to end with their knives, and scattered the sugar all over the yard. They did the same with salt, grain, flour, everything in sacks. They threw slabs of bacon in the air and shot them and ransacked the store for anything else on which to dissipate their exploding energy. One of them ran with a bolt of calico out to his waiting horse, wrapped the loose end of the bolt to the horn of his saddle, and dashed up the street, while the bolt unrolled to flutter like a long ribbon on the wind behind him. Others followed; it was too smart a trick for one man to monopolize; and the bright colors rippled in long banners or caught on the pole fences at the corners of the streets as these madmen raced up one side and down the other, skinning their throats to make all the noise possible. They raised their Comanche voices in echoing exultation. They fired their brave six-shooters. The people of the town staved behind their log walls, praying that no stray bullet would find them. To some of them it was terrible and among those who suffered in helplessness was the sick wife of Bishop F. I. Jones, who had for some time been confined to her he bed and lay now in anguish of suspense lest someone would be hurt. The bishop waited there with her, chafing under his conscientious scruple which held him from answering the outrage as his nature demanded. In the evening, as many of the cowpunchers as could still ride returned to Peterson's store and bringing in all the horses that could get through the doorway, fed them hay and grain on the counter, and spreading whatever they could find in the way of blankets on the floor; they sank down to sleep in the part of the house where Peterson and his family had been living. Returning fitfully back to consciousness at a late hour next morning, and sitting up on the hard floor to rub their eyes, one of them remarked that the cast-iron kettle on the stove was the only thing in the place which had not been shot and a fellow snatched up his gun and blew it to bits. They had pulled off a whale of a party; Blue Mountain had seen nothing like it ever before; and as they rode away in the middle of the forenoon, they agreed it would not be the last of its kind.

The fortunes of the struggling outpost at Monticello were vital to the people at Bluff as part of their own mission. The two places kept as closely in touch as distance and the ruggedness of the country would permit, the quickest communication being the time it took a good horse to run fifty miles. One July morning, with the first nimbus of day appearing over the cliffs east of Bluff, a rider came at a fagging trot from the mouth of Cow Canyon, his horse covered with lather and ready to drop. He had come since midnight from Monticello, and he had a story to tell about wild men and whiskey the most dreadful of all combinations.

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Chapter 18

Bluff listened with tingling ears: the log meetinghouse at Monticello had been the scene of a pioneer dance, the anniversary of the arrival of the Saints in Salt Lake Valley more than forty years before. That past event was very significant to the brave pioneers in their isolation at Blue Mountain - they had featured it in a parade; they had sung about it, listened to an enthusiastic oration; and now they were dancing in the midst of their hardships as their ancestors had danced on the plains en route from the eastern states. To the bad men of the hills, that celebration with its well-executed program of order looked too much like the coming of the hated law. Their dominant impulse was to spoil and devour it, to ride over it, trample it underfoot. With no courage and no excuse to make an aggressive beginning on such a harmless gathering, they smothered with whiskey what little intelligence was still functioning in their vitiated brains, and headed for the dance. A fellow with red eyes and flushed face staggered into the hall and, seeing that his presence was not relished, he drew his gun and ordered everybody outside. There in the moonlight he harangued and threatened' them, declaring in awful words he would kill anyone trying to leave the crowd. His close friend tried to reason with him. "Listen, Tom," pleaded Joe, "Nobody here wants to hurt you." But Tom ordered Joe not to come a step nearer. "See, Tom, I have no gun," Joe went on, confident he could get him to release the terrified crowd with its innocent people, its women and girls, on whom this was a most cowardly imposition. The thing
that makes a man better than a brute was missing from Tone's disordered brain. He growled another order to come no nearer or be shot through, but Joe still counted on their friendship and acquaintance of the years and tried to make his reasons clear while the crowd caught its breath in suspense. A terrible figure, Tom stood there in the moonlight gesticulating with his glittering pistol, shouting his incoherent threats and orders, while the dancers in gay attire watched him as a master tragedian on a stage. Yet this was no drama of things pretended, but a life-crisis of stern reality. With gasps and screams they saw the madman turn his gun on his trusting friend and shoot him to death before their eyes. Into the cries of hysteria and fright, broke the loud boom of a big gun from another quarter, a shriek, a hush, and words whispered quickly by white lips, "They've killed Aunt Jane!" A man intending to shoot the murderer and release the crowd had fired accidentally and shot Mrs. Jane Walton near the heart. She had barely time to turn to her son and tell him she was hurt before she fell dead in his arms. Confusion and consternation reigned while the frenzied Tom mounted his waiting horse and dashed away. The quick beat of his hoofs died in the distant night, and he was gone. Ready confederates covered his retreat, gave him full protection of their empire, and he was never brought to judgment, punishment, or even trial. Major problem three towered big in fiendish majesty over the people who marched with bowed heads in that slow funeral procession. The people of Monticello had few cattle and no respected rights on the range. The hills

swarmed with "rustlers" waiting for any horse or cow left out of sight. 0ne fellow starting with half a dozen cows made a remarkable record the first season--one of his cows had thirty-five calves! He had an ingenious trick of making a calf lead willingly behind his horse, and every calf he found old enough to live without its another, he led away to be adopted into the numerous family of one of his prolific cows in his hideout down among the gulches. The Texas outfit with their scrawny livestock, every animal displaying the imposing placard: E L K M, on a thousand hills had made aggressive claim to the best springs on the mountain and the best water holes on the winter range. Hot on the trail one day came an officer from Texas - he had traced his man here, but whether the man was still here peeping from cover
or whether he had gone on, the officer could not find out. The outlaw had vanished among the devious hallways of Hotel De Rincone and was not to be found. What were the eager officer and his deputies to do? When they had investigated, they discerned that the only safe thing to do was to go back at once empty-handed to Texas. They went. An empire was forming in San Juan County, Utah: a pirate's empire with one capital at Rincone and another at the base of Blue Mountain. It was building and growing strong with the dangerous material chased out of the surrounding states and territories. Every day on jaded horses, new subjects arrived at this, the most faraway and the safest retreat from law in all the southwest. Other officers carne with lathering horses on hot trails to San Juan and headed down the river. What was the use? They had chased the rat down a hole, and if they ventured into that hole, they would never come out. They knew that much by the looks and the squeaks of the rats playing and watching there on the surface. All that remained for them was to go back in disgust to Texas, to New Mexico, or Arizona, without bringing back a much-wanted desperado. All through the western states people heard and believed that there was what they called a "Robber's Roost," an organized gang of outlaws with a headquarters somewhere in southeastern Utah. They were known to have a rendezvous at different places of remoteness in Wyoming, Colorado, and other states and territories, but their active operations in the region of Henry Mountains gave the impression that their center of activity was somewhere in the broken county north of there, possibly on the Dirty Devil or the lower San Rafael Mail service of that day was slow and infrequent. telephone non-existent, and false reports taught men to discredit nine-tenths of what they heard. The public was not ready to believe that San Juan County, Utah was the inner and untouchable sanctuary of a far-reaching system, and that all underground railroads and blind trails led, as necessity demanded, to these impregnable rocks where no arrest had ever been made. In desperation the people of Bluff sought out the owners of the E L K M cattle and asked them to quote a price, but they only smiled in smug amusement. Sell out their hotel? Not on your life-it was the waiting heir to all of San Juan County. Bluff was to be absorbed as one of its lesser assets. Things looked bad, and a dark shape was appearing on the distant horizon which threatened in its development to sweep the whole troubled region. A bill had been introduced in Congress providing that San Juan County should be given as a reservation to the Piutes and that all white settlers and stockmen be moved out.

The Piutes had long since been appointed a reservation in Colorado, and had been ordered and then urged to go there. To the orders and to the urges they made flat and uncompromising refusal. They had also invited the Utes from their Colorado reservation to come and join them, and it had seemed about as much as the government could do by threats, and by sending special committees and army officers to San Juan, to induce the runaway Utes to return home. And now, after the seeming inability of Uncle Sam to get the Piutes to take his orders, he seemed to be obsequiously proposing to give official approval of their doing just as they pleased. The Piutes smiled exultantly when they heard of this extraordinary proposition, and selected the homes in Bluff and in Monticello which they would occupy when the settlers were kicked out, and they boasted of how they would run things in the undisturbed ways of their ancestors.

Somebody took pains to keep them informed, or misinformed, about this pending bill, making them worse neighbors than they had been before. A year passed-two years. The Texas outfit refused to talk sale. Why should they? Every month saw them more firmly established and better known to their profitable customers of the "underground" from half a dozen states and territories. Their business looked better all the time. The builders of the fort saw in it a picture dark indeed. They had won the Navajos, and among them they had found many pleasant acquaintances. Yet the Navajos, however valuable their good will and their confidence, represented but the first of the three major problems set for the mission to solve. Yet by some unfaltering intuition of fidelity the people clung to their two forts, cherishing their promise of ultimate triumph. They toiled on for their livelihood and ate their humble bread under the humiliating leer of cowpuncher-thieves who rode arrogantly about on their stolen horses, with their wide hats cocked banteringly on one side, and their flaming bandanas in jaunty style around their necks. The day of the desperado cowpuncher was nearer to its close than anyone imagined. When the pendulum of human fortune has swung as

far as it can to the right, it must swing back to the left. That pendulum had reached its ultimate limit on one side in San Juan, and a change was inevitable. Two daring robbers held up and stripped a Denver and Rio Grande train and then sank from sight in eastern Utah. State Marshal Joe Bush took up the tracks and followed them beyond the watching eyes of the waiting world into the remote and obscure San Juan. At Bluff, Bush called for men to go with him, yet he wanted more than men: he wanted a strategist to outwit the smooth thing which had cheated every officer who followed a criminal into San Juan. Somebody awakened that day to the greater meaning of Bluff's victory over Problem One, the winning of the Navajos. Kumen Jones had cherished the hope that Jim Joe would sometime help to save his own people and to save the Mormons as well. So he proposed to Joe Bush that the hunt be turned over to Jim Joe. Jim grasped the idea in a second. When he and his sleuths cut across the wide region at the mouth of Chinalee, they picked up the tracks of the robbers, and led the marshal over them as fast as any bloodhounds could have gone. Astonished to see horsemen coming over the sand behind them, the robbers climbed up into

the rocks where all who followed them would have to pass single file between two great boulders, where one man with enough ammunition could dispose of a regiment. Jim knew just which men to move and which to reserve. Stringing his sleuths out on the trail behind him to advertise their numbers for the benefit of the men up in the rocks, he figured that he had told the robbers in the plainest words, "Shoot a Nava Navajo in this reservation, and your cake is dough, and you know it." Then he climbed right up that narrow trail, stalked boldly between the big boulders, and called to Joe Bush to come on without fear. He marched up to the robbers with a boldness that changed their blood into streams of ice, and all the time he held his gun leveled upon them with uncompromising purpose, and called back over his shoulder to the marshal asking. "Shootey? Killey?" (Shall I shoot 'em? Shall I kill 'em!) But the robbers, reaching frantically for the sky, made it very clear they would not have to be killed nor to be shot; they wouldn't so much as hurt a little chicken. They wanted very much to live, and they stood with ashen faces and trembling hands while Bush put irons on their wrists and their ankles and had them march meekly down out of the rocks. He took them back up out of the rathole: he took them away out of San Juan. Gunmen of the underground had been arrested beyond Rincone-they had been taken away out of the country and brought to trial. The Navajos and the Mormons had become allies---hat would it mean? The builders of the fort took heart. They told Bush about the cattle rustling. When he returned from the north, Bush rounded up the rustlers. After this, the very mention of the name Jim Joe was welcome. If Kumen Jones had never done anything more in San Juan than to discover and get response from this magnificent Navajo, he would still be one of the most important builders of the country. Instead of fearing the Navajos any more, the builders of the fort doted on them, felt more secure because of them. The E L K M company could depend no more on finding men to work for their board or ten dollars a month. Times had taken a terrible change; their hotel business was shot through, and the owners of the Texas outfit began to think that possibly they could do better somewhere else. They offered to sell. The figure they quoted was a big one. Bishop Nielson took the matter home with him for the most careful consideration, and when he came limping back next morning, he told them to buy. The deal was closed. The last of the Texas outfit rode away; the echoes of their offensive operations died in the cliffs; the wind blew their tracks from the trails; and a sweet hush settled down on the hills and the camps where they had been. From the sources of unexplainable fortune, a new element entered forcefully onto the scene. It was drouth, more blighting and more persistent than anything of its kind they had known in San Juan. The old-time rains which brought the big floods and made big grass on the hills seemed to be a thing of the past.

(*The Improvement Era*, March 1950)

CONCLUSION

The colorful history of the San Juan country of Southeastern Utah has long been a favorite with the Era family of readers. For the more complete story of Posey, see the serial, “The Outlaw of Navajo Mountain." by Albert R. Lyman, beginning on page 598 of the October 1936 issue of The IMPROVEMENT ERA. Additional details of the San Juan colonization may be found in the continued story, "Hole in the Rock," by Anna Prince Redd, beginning in the January 1947 ERA, page 16.

Thieves, drouth, dead markets, a bill in Congress proposing to oust them from all their possessions, and now the prospect of building the cribs again on a costly foundation which at best was but a temporary structure and might be rendered useless at any time! Men dropped their hands and relaxed in despair. Yet in the face of all these discouragements Bishop Nielson advised his people to stay, reminding them they had two big, unattained objectives yet ahead. "I've helped to pioneer six Utah towns," he said, and I'm too old and worn-out to begin again. The only move to which I look forward now is the move I shall make when they carry me to the graveyard on the hill." He was in his latter seventies, and he still worked as hard and as long as other men, and in their great love for him his people thought this fidelity was worthy of a better cause. All the same most of them thought a move was inevitable, and another letter was sent to the leaders of the Church, asking them to come again, look the situation over, and say whether they still required the people to stay. In answer to their petition Brigam Young, Jr.. Anthon H. Lund, and George Teasdale, of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles, came all the way from Salt Lake City, a journey of at least three long days by team from the nearest railroad station, Thompson Springs. "Your task in this country is not accomplished," they said. "This is a very important post: and the great objective in calling you here has not yet been reached. After emphasizing what had been said to the people of the mission on two previous occasions, that the mission was of tremendous importance and would have to be carried on by them or by some other people, the three men asked of each man individually if he were willing to stay. Every man in the meeting consented for them to write his name as one who could be depended on to stay, and Brigham Young, Jr., wrote every name in a little book he carried in his pocket. Silent forces were already at work to bring about many changes. That bill, hanging fire in Congress like a sword suspended by a hair over San Juan for years, resulted at length in the appointment of a special committee to visit the country and see if it were a fit place for the Piutes to live. That committee, astonished and amazed at the unusual region through which they were conducted by guides from Bluff, reported that San Juan was decidedly unfit for the Piutes. Its lack of good streams and farming land, its rocks, its sand, and its drouth made it the wrong kind of country in which to civilize a wild people. Worse than that, its many dens and barriers, its mountain passes, and its corners of safe retreat had already

emboldened the Indians to do what they never would have dared to undertake in some other country, and the longer they lived in San Juan the worse they would be. The committee's adverse report exploded the dreamers' arguments for a legal Indian reservation in San Juan, and someone awoke feebly to the fact that the Piutes had never yet acknowledged the authority of the United States, and it was again proposed that they be appointed a reservation and placed within its boundaries. When the Piutes understood they were not to he approved among their ancient retreats but to be sent to some other country, they resolved as before to do their own appointing and stay in the region of their little valleys cast of Elk Mountain. If it had been the Navajos, twenty or thirty thousand strong, a Kit Carson would have been on the job to put teeth into the government’s orders, but with this pesky little snarl of Piutes, spoiled children requiring more attention than they were worth, the easy thing, if they began to snivel and threaten, was to let them do just as they pleased. That is exactly what they did, crowing exultantly about their freedom from all outside orders. The killing of that reservation bill, although it eliminated one source of uncertainty, had no more effect on the drouth than it had on the Piutes. The dry spell hung on till that bill was remembered as a lost possibility. The winds blew the grass up by the roots and carried the loose soil out of the fields. The mountains could not be seen for clouds of dust, and the whole face of the country was dark and dreary like the most wretched region in the world. Those who staved, besides the immovable natives, stayed because of their uncompromising devotion to the mission or because they were too poor to move. Like a bright rift in the dark clouds, through which welcome sunshine pours into the gloom, the signs and figures of prosperity began to appear in the drouth. That Co-op sheepherd, which they had bought at a seemingly extortionate price to keep the people from being driven out of the country, had increased steadily, even through the dry years, till the bishop who advised them in the first place to buy it as a company herd, advised them now to buy it as individuals. The old settlers of San Juan began to realize that they had survived the drouth, while the winds with their dust clouds had blown most of the buzzards off their roosts and out of the country, guns and all, purifying the range and making it safer than it had been for years. The builders of the fort took heart and bought Carlisle's ranch and the flock of sheep which he still held. This gave them the key to most of the Blue Mountain, cleared now of most of its undesirables where the outlaw empire had flourished. Monticello rose up from her humiliations and abuse and became the county seat. Finding themselves more prosperous as the drouth broke, the old settlers bought the big Cunningham ranch at LaSal. They bought out the Dark Canyon Cattle Company and a number of smaller concerns, and before they were aware of it, they controlled the whole of San Juan County, a region more than six times as extensive as the state of Rhode Island. Prosperity came as the bright sunshine after the storm. With the whitefaced cattle increasing in the big grass, a new and long-hoped-for era was ushered in. The old log huts with their dirt roofs disappeared one at a time to be replaced by homes of brick and stone. Bluff became, with one exception, the wealthiest town for its population west of the Mississippi River. Much of what had been implied in the repeated promises of

prosperity to the holders of the fort if they would carry on seemed to be budding into reality. And yet Problem Two, the Piutes, who had never vet been made a part of the United States, remained deeply rooted in all their evil precedents. a sure prophecy of serious trouble. San Juan, the Piute melting pot for outlaw Indian blood, was sure, as such pots are always sure, to bring forth a more vigorous type. Piute Frank, an old fanatic, bent half-double with some spinal disorder, was the grand high priest of their ignorance at the opening of this century. No white man, though he lived in their country and saw them every day, could give any complete list of their killings. No white man got far enough into their mysterious world to discern how many men, women, and children came under the deadly ban of their superstitions. In that Piute world, as distant from the United States and about as well known as if it had been on the moon, lived ghoulish creatures and monsters defying all description. In their narrow world they held tenaciously to their ancient customs, the same as if the United States had not come and reached all around them for hundreds of miles in every direction. When a man, woman, or child became burdensome from sickness or advanced age, he was thrust out of the wickiup without blankets on some fierce night to perish from exposure or he was left to die for needed attention in some camp from which they were moving. They might return to burn the corpse in a heap of dry limbs or they might avoid the place for years. Major Problem Two, chronic and complicated, was at the door of the people who had been sent by their Church to solve it; they would have to do it alone and in their own way and time. Appointed by some strange destiny to take a prominent, although an inglorious, part in the impending trouble, was Posey. Posey was devoted first of all to the perverted superstitions of his people - fantastic traditions of witches, snakes, and devils, about which he might fly into a holy rage on short notice. Once, with gun in hand, he chased a Mexican out of Johnson Creek Valley for killing a rattlesnake. Posey's second interest was the card blanket, the race track, the horse belonging to someone else. No one wanted to clash with this old troublemaker, men with cattle near his "farms" thought it poor economy to incur his displeasure, and he collected from what he thought were easy victims, carrying his racket on and on to what sometime had to be the breaking point. Finally a warrant was sworn out for Posey's arrest. Triumphant in his threats and sure he was secure with his followers at his back, Posey retired with a back-load of melons and fruit to his wickiup to feast on the spoils of his raid and exult over his latest achievement. Arthur S. Wood, a deputy sheriff, acting as leader, sent a messenger asking Posey to come down and talk it over. Posey refused in contempt. The report of Posey's impudent answer was all it needed to touch off the explosive resolution in the hot pulse of the men and boys waiting at the store. Their fingers fairly itched to get hold of him, and they turned with quick step towards the group of wickiups on the hill. Twelve of them walked; two rode horses. Fourteen men, only two of them carrying arms, setting out to arrest a leading Piute in the midst of his camps! Nothing was ever more promising of trouble before on this firing line. When they reached the doorway of Posey's dwelling, the deputy sheriff repeated the invitation to come down and talk it over. "Yes, me no go," Posey hissed in contempt. At a signal from Sheriff Wood, his

men seized Posey hand and foot, giving him the shock of his life. He struggled and squirmed and thrashed about like a fish out of water, while his squaw snatched up a heavy gun and the Indians from the other dwellings came rushing in alarm. Trouble seemed certain. Not one of the fourteen in that posse bothered to take any notice of the other Piutes as they came rushing with their guns. The fearless disregard of what they might do was more terrifying than any gesture of defense could have been. These other Piutes halted in stunned astonishment, for right there in their camps Posey's hands were being forced together and locked with steel cuffs; he was being dragged from his own wickiup, his big hat left in dishonor behind, his long hair in a humiliating jumble over his head and face. They simply couldn't believe it. It jarred them completely out of gear, and they followed in blank bewilderment. When the posse came into town with their prisoners, a company of Navajos gathered around them, and in the company was Jim Joe, who told Posey in the most uncompromising terms what a yellow coyote he had been in returning evil for good with the friends who wanted to help him. Finding the wind gone unaccountably out of their sails; and being convinced that it was the intention to hold their boasted champion under close guard and go on with legal procedure whether they liked it or not, the people of the wickiups turned back to their camps and sent fast riders in half a dozen directions to gather their fighting men. Before dawn the next day the terrible men of the tribe began to arrive from Allan Canyon, from Alkali, from Montezuma Canyon, and from camps at the foot of the mountain where they were spending the summer. But Poke, the unconquerable, the invincible, who had never bowed to a white man but had cut the scalps off their heads, had not yet come. The fact of the matter is, being no friend to Posey, he never did come. All the same the Piutes intended to fight, but strange to relate, they couldn't find the moment nor the place to make a start. They did agree to guard the road leading up through the cliffs toward Monticello. Without seeming to recognize this blockade, the people prepared to go on with the preliminary hearing, and Justice Peter Allan called his court to order the schoolhouse. The trial went forward as if the Piutes were but a defeated and unimportant minority. Fearlessly and unfailingly Judge Allan, always very matter-of-fact in discriminating between right and wrong, pronounced emphatically against the horse thief, and ordered him appear in the district court at the next session. That ostentatious array of Piutes dropped their jaws in disconcerted amazement. Their fighting blood, instead of heating up to explosive temperatures as intended, fell towards a freezing degree. Posey's mouth sagged at the corners, and he became deflated like a punctured balloon. For twenty-three years he had heard these people pleading and entreating, and it had never entered his imagination they could do anything else. The only thing now was to squirm out of the clutches of these awakened Mormons. He wanted to be free, no matter how white-feather and ignominious the method employed. The fighting men went stringing back to their several places of abode at Allan Canyon, Alkali, and elsewhere. Posey's belligerent little squaw plotted with his sons and his brother, Scotty, for his escape. Visiting him often as he sat dejectedly under the vigilant eve of his guard, they succeeded in getting him synchronized with their plan for his freedom. They would hide with their horses in a jungle on an island in

the river near to a popular swimming hole, and Posey was to persuade his guard to take him there for a cooling bath. The excessive warmth of that August weather gave weight to his pleas, and he waded out into the stream wearing nothing but a disguised look of concern for the perilous possibilities of his plot. Keeping furtive eyes on his guard who sat on a log with a six-shooter thrust in the band of his overalls, Posey found the deepest place in the current and sank from sight. Hugging the sandy bottom he propelled himself down the stream with all possible eagerness. When he had all but drowned in increasing the distance between himself and that six shooter, he rose coughing and gasping in the shallows towards the island and ran as in a handicap race through two feet of water for the bank. The guard fired at the splashing figure, and Posey dodged frantically as the bullet whistled past. As he gathered himself, another bullet sang very near to his naked flesh, and still another seemed to burn him by its close proximity as he plunged into the willows. He had escaped, but the shock and the surprise of it all had left him unstrung like a child that had seen a ghost. And the fighting men on whom he had doted so heavily had slunk away like a litter of scared puppies with their tails between their legs. He saw himself deserted, alone, an outcast, a fugitive. His people had gone back whipped and cowed to meditate the sharp change in policy with the once-tame peacemakers of the fort. Bluff had done the unprecedented. After these twenty-three years of futile effort, it seemed to have accomplished the impossible. Surely this was the long-sought solution of Problem Two. No, it was not. The Piutes were to follow their mad course for yet twenty years. When at the end of those twenty years the Mormons rounded up the Piutes in the schoolhouse, distorted stories of "the Indian war" in San Juan got onto the front pages of the big daily newspapers, and people in cities and towns of surrounding states were overheard to ask, "Where is San Juan? And how does it happen that anybody is still fighting Indians at this late day?" San Juan might have been a long way beyond what was happening on the outside, but the outside was forty years behind what was going on for their benefit in San Juan. Representatives of the United States Indian Service enrolled the tribe in the stockade, the older ones to be supervised in thrift and industry, the children to be placed in school. "What do you Mormons propose to do about the losses to which these people have put you?" asked the Indian agent, McKeen. When he was told it was the intention to forgive and forget, he objected. "Now look'e here," he said, "before you become too forgiving, we want it definitely understood there are certain things these people will have to do from now on, certain conditions to which they must conform." When the essential preliminaries were finished, the bars and fastenings to the gates of "Fort on the Firing Line" were removed, while the people on the outside and on the in stood in a kind of solemn hush of waiting, restrained by mutual awe of this moment from saying a word. When the gate was opened, the Piutes came quietly and meekly out, a people who had been chastised and humbled by their friends, no old grudge nor bitter score to settle later on. They had been whipped into the line of life and safety by those who loved them, most; the only way in which any people can be whipped to take it and call it good. Since then some of the Piute children have completed the lower grades in that building. Some of them have proved

themselves to be natural artists with a keen sense of perception which no one would have expected to find buried away in the dark world of Piutedom. They are not at war with themselves nor with any one else; no bad men are among them. Their best friends are the Mormons with whom they live as near neighbors. The years have served to break down all the hostile misunderstanding and mistrust between the three races in San Juan. Bonds of friendship and confidence extending without discrimination across the race-line are hastening the time when equal opportunity and just arrangements all the way round will make the Piutes and Navajos the equal of any other people.