

Swarthy Nukolds was the first man. He came out into the meadow carrying his own saddle and bridle. To him had fallen a wiry bay, four-year-old, never yet touched by man. First, the horse was led out with a lasso halter around his neck, then, when it had come to a standstill, Nukolds, with the softness of a cat, slipped up and passed a rope halter over its head, which he made cleverly into a bitless bridle, then he stealthily, and before the horse knew it, hoodwinked it with a leather band, and when the horse could not see his motions, he gently, oh, so gently, laid the big Mexican saddle on its back, and had it double girt fast before the horse knew what had happened. Then he waved his hand. the hoodwink was pulled off by two assistants, and instantly he was in the saddle astride the astonished beast. For a moment the horse stood wild-eyed, sweating with terror—and then, and then—up it went like a bent hook, a bunch, then down it came, stiff-kneed, taught as iron, and then up again, and so by leaps and bounds across the wide field and back again right through the scrambling crowd. All the while Nuckolds rising and falling in perfect unison with the mad motions of the terrified horse—his hat gone, his black hair flying, his great whip and heavy spurs goading the animal into subjection. At last he rode it on a trot, mastered, subjugated, cowed, up to the judges' stand. The horse stood quietly, trembling, sweating, wet as though having swum Grand River. Wild were the yells that greeted Nuckolds. He had but added to a reputation already made.

“Grimsby next,” was the command, His horse was a short backed, spindle-tailed sorrel, with a sort of vicious gait that boded bad temper and stubborn mind. Again the halter was deftly put on and made into a bitless bridle, the hoodwink slipped on, the saddle gently placed, and man and horse were furiously rushing, bucking, leaping, rearing across the meadow, and right straight at the high board and wire fence. The horse, if it couldn't throw him, would jam and scrape him off if it ever reached that merciless mass of pine and barbed wire. Could Grimsby turn him, and without a bit? Great riding that was, and greater steering, for just before the seeming inevitable crash, the horse swerved, turned and was bucking across and then around the field again. Grimsby never failed to meet each wild movement, and sat in the saddle as though in a rocking-chair. The horse, at last conquered, stood quiet as a lamb, and the cheers for the sturdy rider quite equalled the applause given to his raven-maned predecessor.

Now the crowd had its blood up. Two native champions had proved their grit, what could the Arizonian do against such as these? “He's too big and awkward,” said one onlooker. “He's not the cut for a King buster,” grunted another. “The h—I he ain't. Ain't he the man who won that Cheyenne race after his horse fell on him?” exclaimed one who knew, and the scoffers became silent.

Arizona Moore strode clumsily under the weight of his big saddle, but his black eye shone clear and masterful, and I felt he was sure enough a man. His horse was