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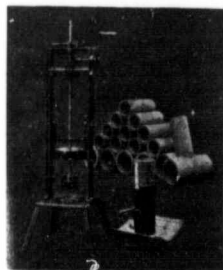
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WILD HORSES OF THE
WEST.

By Day Allen Willey.

In the writings of American novelists, an animal which frequently figures is the so-called wild horse. The authors often describe him as fleetier than the steed of Arabia, dangerous in his fierceness, and have given accounts of his pursuit which have added to the sensation of the tale. In fact, the existence of the wild horse in the ordinary sense of the term is doubted by many people, even some living west of the Mississippi River.

There is no doubt, however, that herds of wild horses live in some of the uninhabited valleys and occasionally graze along stretches of the vast prairie of the southwest which is still separated from civilization. They have been seen at times by hunters, mining prospectors, and occasionally have ventured in the vicinity of some outlying ranch, and thus come within sight of the cowboys. Nevada contains what is believed to be the largest herd, which apparently has a foraging and breeding ground within its boundaries. The nearest human habitation is in the little hamlet of Battle Mountain, on the route of the Southern Pacific Railway.

Like Stalking Caribou.

Here the hunter of the wild horse must leave civilization and cross the summit and valley over a region which is deserted even by the sheep herder. It requires about two days to traverse the thirty miles to the breeding grounds, such is the difficulty of the way, but after reaching the vicinity of the animals they must be stalked as carefully as a caribou, for their scent is as keen, and they are quick to detect the presence of man. As a rule they can be seen only at a distance.

The wild horses of Nevada owe their origin to a band of domestic horses which were turned loose on the hills and plains back of Sheep Creek Mountains over thirty years ago. There they have since remained, breeding and running at will, and until the last two years or so no attempt has been made to capture them, except in rare individual instances. For more than a quarter of a century they have existed in a country as wild as when the continent was discovered, full of deep canons and maze like runways. The country over which these horses roam is ideal for their freedom, isolation and concealment. The Sheep Creek Mountains are a comparatively short range, rising from the valley of the Humboldt River. In the region noted it is estimated that there are now two thousand wild horses; but their method of existence and travel is in small bands, numbering



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