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Blazed Trail Stories

— AND —

Stories of the Wild Life

By **STEWART EDWARD WHITE.**

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THE GIRL WHO GOT RATTLED

This is one of the stories of Alfred. There are many of them still floating around the west, for Alfred was in his time very well known. He was a little man, and he was bushy. That is the most that can be said against him; but he was very little and very bushy. When on horseback his legs hardly reached his lower body-line of his mount, and only his extreme agility enabled him to get on successfully. When on foot, strangers were inclined to call him "sonny." In company he never advanced an opinion. If things did not go according to his ideas he reconstructed the ideas and made the best of the poorest ideas of any man on the plains. His attitude was a perpetual smiling apology. It has been said that Alfred killed his men diffidently, without enthusiasm, as though both to take the responsibility, and that in the pioneer days on the plains was either without affection, or else—altered. With women he was just. Men would have staked their last ounce of dust at odds that he had never in his life made a definite assertion of fact to one of the opposite sex. When it became absolutely necessary to change a woman's preconceived notions as to what she should do—as, for instance, discouraging her raising through quickness she would persuade somebody else to issue the advice. And he would cover his absurd little blazes at his second-hand tenacity. Add to this narrow, sloping shoulders, a soft voice, and a diminutive pink-and-white face.

But Alfred could read the prairie like a book. He could ride anything about accurately, was at heart afraid of nothing, and could fight like a little catamount when occasion for it really arose. Among those who know, Alfred was considered one of the best riders on the plains. That is why Caldwell, the capitalist, engaged him when he took his daughter out to Deadwood. A limited experience of the lady's sort, where they have wadded floors to the tent-poles, and expert cooks to the delatation of the campers, had convinced her that "roughing it" was hardly a hardship. So, of course, Caldwell senior had, sooner

than later, to take her across the plains on the annual trip. This was at the time when wagon-trains went by way of Reno on the north, and the South Fork on the south. Incidental incidents, of homicidal tendencies and underdeveloped ideas as to the propriety of doing what they were told, made things interesting occasionally, but not often. There was really no danger to a good-sized train.

The daughter had a dance named Allen who liked roughing it, too; so he went along. He and Miss Caldwell rigged themselves out beautifully, and prepared to enjoy the trip.

At Reno the train of eight wagons was made up, and they were joined by Alfred and Billy Knapp. These two men were interesting, but tyrannical on one or two points—such as getting out of sight of the train, for instance. They were also deficient in reasons for their tyranny. The young people chafed, and, finding Billy Knapp either imperturbable or thick-skinned, they turned their attention to Alfred. Allen annoyed Alfred, and Miss Caldwell thoughtfully approved of Allen. Between them they succeeded often in shocking fearfully all the little man's finer sensibilities. If it had been a question of Allen alone, the annoyance would soon have ceased. Alfred would simply have beautifully killed him. But because of his innate courtesy, which so astounded him that his philosophy of life was thoroughly tinged by it, he was silent and inactive.

There is a great deal to recommend a plain journey at first. Later, there is nothing at all to recommend it. It has the same monotony as a voyage at sea, only there is less living room, and, instead of being carried, you must progress to a great extent by your own volition. Also the food is coarse, the water poor, and you cannot bathe. To a plainman, or a man who has the instinct, these things are nothing in comparison with the charm of the outdoor life, and the pleasing tingling of adventure. But woman is entirely alone every once in a while, probably because her experiences, while not less numerous than man's, are mainly practical, and she needs occasionally to be "roughed up" to date. So Miss Caldwell began to get very impatient.

to find the company strong in colonialism. And they are. Teddy McNamee leads the fun makers and is ably abetted by the Helms twins. The trio make "three of a kind" that one can easily bank as winners.

Of the girls, probably little Daphne Pollard scored the hit of the week. She is a wee, wisecracking little who might, and I believe has, been likened to a pocket edition of Anna Held. Daphne is delightful and as dainty as her name. Olive Moore, Eva Thompson, Eva Moore, Leah Leitchner and Merle Pollard are the other little girls who had opportunities to make good and they more than fulfilled all expectations.

Altogether the Pollards present a marvellously clever entertainment and if the programme extended to them next week is at all commensurate with their ability to please then the old York will not look the audience.

Three new operas will be offered next week, commencing Monday evening. For Monday and Tuesday they will produce "The Geisha," which has won fame wherever produced as a useful laughing success. For Wednesday matinee The Belle of New York will be presented. Wednesday and Thursday evenings and Saturday matinee The Gaiety Girl, and on Friday and Saturday evenings The Lady Slave. Such a repertoire should in itself be a guarantee of large houses, even if it were not in the hands of such a splendid aggregation of entertainers. The Pollards have certainly set a new standard for comic opera and they should profit by it.

The interest in amateur theatricals is being aroused in St. John. On Thursday night the King Edward Stock Company gave a very creditable production of Uncle Si, in the Opera House. I also hear that the Empire Dramatic Club is planning an active season's work. This, I understand, will include a concert in the latter part of the month when The Boston Dip, a farce, will be given—as an after piece. Also the Empire people are planning for next year an elaborate production of a new comedy which will probably be given to the public after the holidays.

Those who saw Me and Otis will agree there is excellent material in the Empire if properly worked up, and their forthcoming presentation will be watched with interest.

In the broader world of theatricals the equal of the week has been the approx-

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