

half-breed of it. Impassibility may be stupid or intensely nervous. Then, all a-tremble, he rode back to where the three specialists in question were camped, just on the border of the town, and proffered his formal application.

The three to whom he addressed himself were practically at the head of their profession. It was not a profession of easy access, but one to which only a long and dangerous apprenticeship gave admittance. Its members were men who had lived their lives on the frontier, either as express riders, hunters trappers, army scouts, or as members of the Indian tribes themselves. They were a hardy, bold, self-reliant race, equal to all emergencies, and exacting from the men in their charge the most implicit obedience. To their wonderful resourcefulness is due the fact that so many comparatively weak forces were enabled to penetrate in safety a hostile country teeming with the most treacherous and wily foes.

As with all crafts, they had their big men—the masters, as it were—whose deeds they emulated, whose feats of skill and divination they spoke of with awe, whose names they worshipped. Of such were Kit Carson, Wild Bill, Jim Clarke, Buffalo Bill, Slade, and the three men with whom we have to deal—Jim Buckley, Alfred, and Billy Knapp.

Billy Knapp was dark, tall, broad-shouldered, long-haired, wearing a bristly moustache and goatee. A stranger might have remarked his frowning, beetling brow with a little uneasiness, but would have taken heart from the energetic kindliness of the eyes beneath. In fact, eager, autocratic energy was the dominant note in Billy's character. He succeeded because this energy carried him through—with some to spare.

Jim Buckley was also tall and large, but he gave one less the idea of nervous force than of a certain static power. He was a mass which moved slowly but irresistibly. His seal-brown beard, his broad forehead, the distance between his wide, steady eyes strengthened this impression. One felt that his decisions would be hardly come at, but stubbornly held. Success was inevitable, but it would be the result of slow thinking, deep purpose, and a quiet tenacity of grip that never let go.

As for Alfred—everybody has heard of him, his place in the annals of the West is assured, and his peculiarities of person and character have been many times described. Surely no