

drifting in; and when they had heard the tale joined in the search. All through the night, in ever-widening circles, lanterns, like giant fireflies, played around the premises until they covered a radius of a half mile; but ever the report was the same. With the coming of morning not the home force alone but men from distant ranches appeared. The reflection of fire on the sky reaches far indeed on the prairie, and ere the sun shone again a goodly company was assembled. Then it was that the real search began and a swarm of riders scoured the country for miles and miles. And once more, from all, the testimony was as before. There was not a clue to the disappearance, nor the semblance of a clue. As out of the darkness of night surrounding, a great horned owl swoops down upon its prey, and as mysteriously disappears, so the Indian had come and gone; and satisfied at last, irresistibly awed as well into an unwonted quiet, one by one, as they had arrived, the ranchers dispersed—and the search was over.

And to this day that disappearance remains a mystery unsurmountable. One morning a week later, after Mead and O'Reilly had gone, when the new master of the ranch arose it was to find a wicked-looking mouse-coloured cayuse standing motionless by the stable door. Upon him was neither saddle nor bridle nor mark of any kind. Somewhere out on that limitless waste he had been released, and, true to an unerring homing instinct, he had returned; but from where no man could do more than speculate. He