

The Vanguard

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BAPTISED INTO BATTLE

I BELIEVE it was Victor Hugo who once wrote, "A judge is more and less than a man; he is more than a man because he holds the scales of justice; he is less than a man because he has no heart."

But my memory harks back across a half century to times when judges, and prosecuting attorneys and peace officers as well, were less than men for other reasons than a lack of heart; not all, of course, but far too many.

I refer to times in the formative epoch of our early mining communities, from the British line to the Mexican border, when their lawless elements made the lives and property of honest, serious folk who there ventured as insecure as both had been while exposed to the ambushes and raids of hostile Indians who infested the overland trails; to times when judges and peace officers were either the willing and well-paid tools or the cowed and trembling servitors of the human vul-