

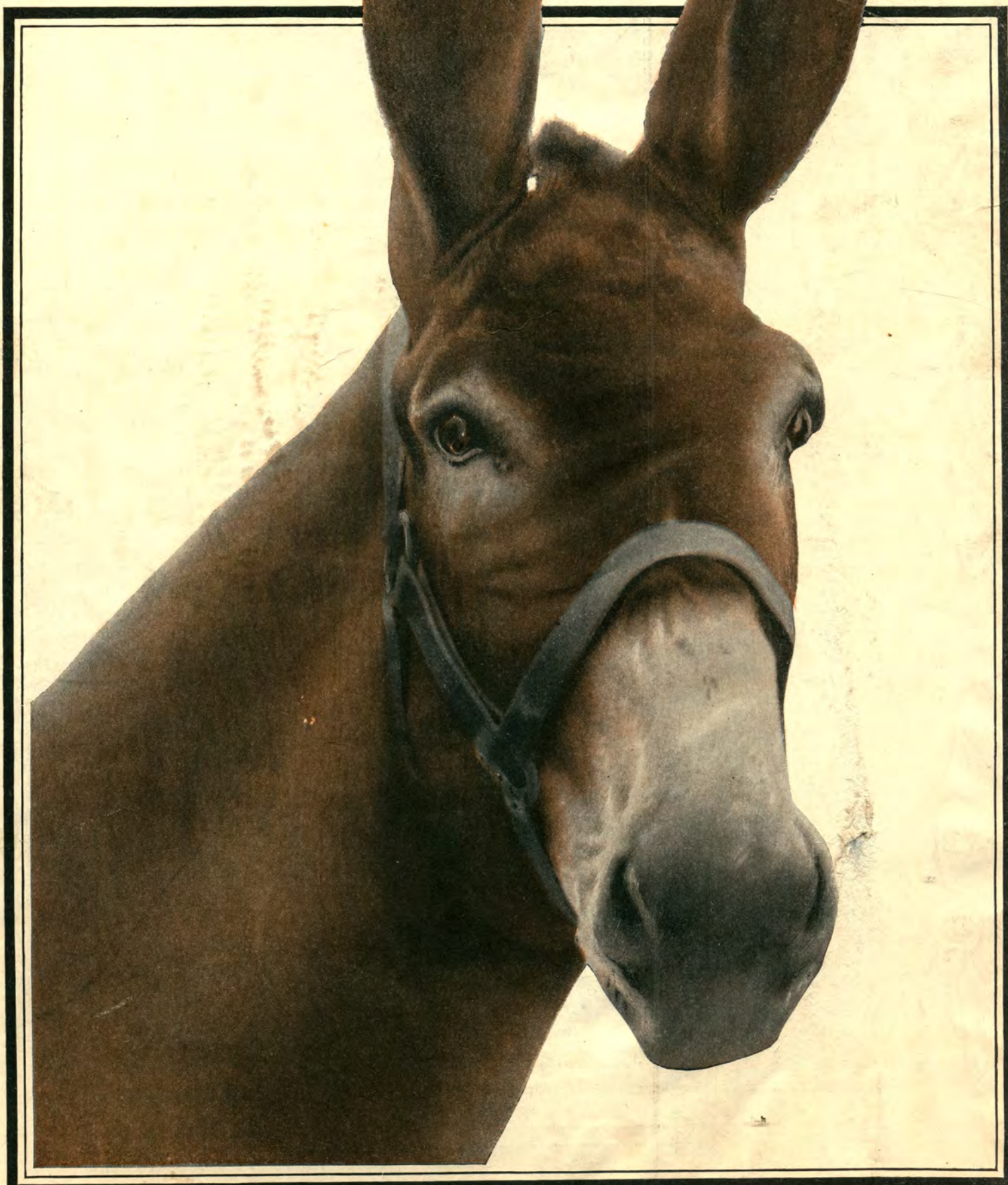
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Welfare
P. 4

The COUNTRY GENTLEMAN

The OLDEST AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL IN THE WORLD



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VII

SLONE hurried onward, to be blocked by a huge crack in the rocky plateau. This he had to head. And it was only to meet another and like obstacle in his hurry to reach that promontory. He slowed up then. Wildfire had been close only as to sight. And this was the great cañon that dwarfed distance and magnified proximity. Climbing down and up, toiling on, he at last acquired patience. He had seen Wildfire at close range. That was enough. So he plodded on, once more returning to a careful regard for Nagger. It took an hour of work to reach the point where Wildfire had disappeared.

A promontory, indeed, it was, overhanging a valley a thousand feet below. A white torrent of a stream wound through it. There were lines of green cottonwoods following the winding course. Then Slone saw Wildfire slowly crossing the flat toward the stream. He had gone down that cliff, which to Slone looked perpendicular.

Wildfire appeared to be walking lame. Slone, making sure of this, suffered a pang. Then, when the significance of such lameness dawned upon him, he whooped his wild joy and waved his hat. The red stallion must have heard for he looked up. Then he went on again and waded into the stream, where he drank long. When he started to cross, the swift current drove him back in several places. The water wreathed white round him. But evidently it was not deep, and finally he crossed. From the other side he looked up again at Nagger and Slone, and going on, he soon was out of sight in the cottonwoods.

"Now to get down!" muttered Slone.

There was a break in the cliff wall—a bare stone slant where horses had gone down and come up. That was enough for Slone to know. He would have attempted the descent if he were sure no other horse but Wildfire had ever gone down there. But Slone's hair began to rise stiff on his head. A horse-like Wildfire, like a mountain sheep, and Indian ponies were different from Nagger. The chances were against Nagger.

"Come on, old boy. If I can do it you can," he said.

Slone had never seen a trail so perilous as this. He was afraid for his horse. A slip meant death. The way Nagger trembled in every muscle attested to what he felt. But he never flinched. He would follow Slone anywhere, provided Slone rode him or led him. And here, as riding was impossible, Slone went before. If the horse slipped there would be a double tragedy, for Nagger would knock his master off the cliff. Slone set his teeth and stepped down. He did not let Nagger see his fear. He was taking the greatest risk he had ever run.

The break in the wall led to a ledge and the ledge dropped from step to step, with bare, slippery slants between. Nagger was splendid on a bad trail. He had methods peculiar to his huge build and great weight. He crashed down over the stone steps, both front hoofs at once. The slants he slid down on his haunches, with his forelegs stiff and the iron shoes scraping. He snorted and heaved and sweat. He tossed his head at some of the places. But he never hesitated and it was impossible for him to go slow.

Whenever Slone came to corrugated stretches in the trail he felt grateful. But these were few. The rock was like smooth red iron. Slone had never seen such hard rock. It took him long to become aware that it was marble. His heart seemed a tense, painful knot in his breast, as if it could not beat, holding back in the strained suspense.

But Nagger never jerked on the bridle. He never faltered. Many times he slipped, often with both front feet, but never with all four feet. So he did not fall. And the red wall began to loom above Slone.

Suddenly he seemed brought to a point where it was impossible to descend. It was a round bulge, slanting fearfully, with only a few little rough surfaces to hold a foot. Wildfire had left a broad, clear-swept mark at that place, and red hairs on some of the sharp points. He had slid down. Below was an offset that fortunately prevented further sliding. Slone started to walk down this place, but when Nagger started to slide Slone had to let go the bridle and jump. But both he and the horse landed safely.

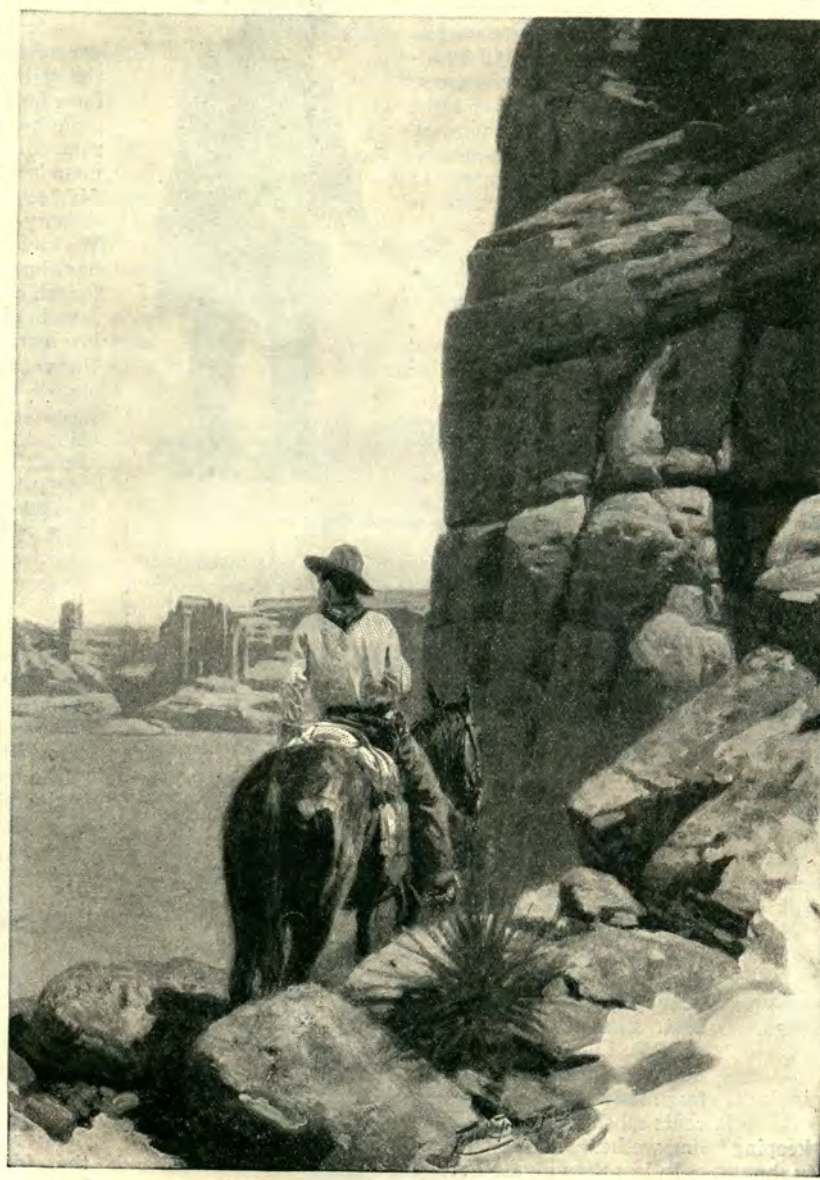
They went on, down and down, to reach the base of the great wall, scraped and exhausted, wet with sweat, but unhurt. As Slone gazed upward he felt the impossibility of believing what he knew to be true. He hugged and petted the horse. Then he led on to the roaring stream.

WILDFIRE

By Zane Grey

Author of "Riders of the Purple Sage," "The Lone Star Ranger," etc., etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK TENNEY JOHNSON



This Was the Setting for That Grand Horse. But Also it Seemed the Last Place Where There Might be Any Chance to Trap the Stallion

It was green water, white with foam. Slone waded in and found the water cool and shallow and very swift. He had to hold to Nagger to keep from being swept downstream. They crossed in safety. There in the sand showed Wildfire's tracks. And here were signs of another Indian camp, half a year old.

The shade of the cottonwoods was pleasant. Slone found this valley oppressively hot. There was no wind and the sand blistered his feet through his boots. Wildfire held to the Indian trail that had guided him down into this wilderness of worn rock. And that trail crossed the stream at every turn of the twisting, narrow valley.

Slone enjoyed getting into the water. He hung his gun over the pommel and let the water roll him. A dozen times he and Nagger forded the rushing torrent. Then they came to a boxlike closing of the valley to cañon walls, and here the trail evidently followed the stream bed. There was no other way. Slone waded in, and stumbled, rolled, and floated ahead of the sturdy horse. Nagger was wet to his breast, but he did not fall. This gulch seemed full of hollow, rushing roar. It opened out into a wide valley. And Wildfire's tracks took to the left side and began to climb the slope.

Here the traveling was good, considering what had been passed. Once up out of the valley floor Slone saw Wildfire far ahead, high on the slope. He did not appear to be limping, but he was not going fast. Slone watched as he climbed. What and where would be the end of this chase?

Sometimes Wildfire was plain in his sight for a moment, but mostly he was hidden by rocks. The slope was one

great talus, a jumble of weathered rock, fallen from what appeared a mountain of red and yellow wall. Here the sun fell with heat of fire. The rocks were so hot Slone could not touch them with bare hand. The time was approaching the close of the afternoon and this slope was interminably long. Still it was not steep and the trail was good. It had been used more than that part farther back. Slone accounted for that by additional signs of Indians, probably a cañon tribe.

At last from the height of slope Wildfire appeared, looking back and down. Then he was gone. Slone plodded upward. Long before he reached that summit he heard a dull rumble of the river. It grew to be a roar, yet it seemed distant. Would the great desert river stop Wildfire in his flight? Slone doubted it. He surmounted the ridge to find the cañon opening in a tremendous gap and to see down, far down, a glittering sun-blasted slope into a deep, black gulch where a red river swept and chafed and roared.

Somehow the river was what he had expected to see. A force that had cut and ground this cañon could have been nothing but a river like that. The trail led down, and Slone had no doubt that it crossed the river and led up out of the cañon. He wanted to stay there and gaze endlessly and listen.

At length he began the descent. As he proceeded it seemed that the roar of the river lessened. He could not understand why this was so. It took half an hour to reach the last level, a ghastly, black and iron-ribbed cañon bed with the river splitting it. He had not had a glimpse of Wildfire on this side of the divide, but he found his tracks, and they led down off the last level through a notch in the black bank of marble to a sand bar and the river.

Wildfire had walked straight off the sand into the water. Slone studied the river and shore. The water ran slowly, heavily, in sluggish eddies. From far up the cañon came the roar of rapids, and from below the roar of others, heavier and closer. The river appeared tremendous, in ways Slone felt rather than realized, yet it was not swift.

Studying the black, rough wall of rock above him he saw marks where the river had been sixty feet higher than where he stood on the sand. It was low, then. How lucky for him that he had got there before flood season! He believed Wildfire had easily crossed and he knew Nagger could make it. Then he piled and tied his supplies and weapons high on the saddle, to keep them dry, and looked for a place to take to the water.

Wildfire had sunk deep before reaching the edge. Manifestly he had lunged the last few feet. Slone found a better place and waded in, urging Nagger. The big horse plunged, almost going under, and began to

swim. Slone kept upstream beside him. He found, presently, that the water was thick and made him tired, so it was necessary to grasp a stirrup and be towed. The river appeared only a few hundred feet wide, but probably it was wider than it looked. Nagger labored heavily near the opposite shore; still he landed safely upon a rocky bank. There were patches of sand in which Wildfire's tracks showed so fresh that the water had not yet dried out of them.

Slone rested his horse before attempting to climb out of that split in the rock. However, Wildfire had found an easy ascent. On this side of the cañon the bare rock did not predominate. A clear trail led up a dusty, gravelly slope, upon which scant greasewood and cactus appeared. Half an hour's climbing brought Slone to where he could see that he was entering a vast valley, sloping up and narrowing to a notch in the dark cliffs, above which towered the great red wall and about that the slopes of cedar and the yellow rim rock.

And scarcely a mile distant, bright in the westering sunlight, shone the red stallion, moving slowly.

Slone pressed on steadily. Just before dark he came to an ideal spot to camp. The valley had closed up, so that the lofty walls cast shadows that met. A clump of cottonwoods surrounding a spring, abundance of rich grass, willows and flowers lining the banks formed an oasis in the bare valley. Slone was tired out from the day of ceaseless toil down and up, and he could scarcely keep his eyes open. But he tried to stay awake. The dead silence of the valley, the dry fragrance, the dreaming walls, the

advent of night low down when up on the ramparts the last red rays of the sun lingered, the strange loneliness—these were sweet and comforting to him.

And that night's sleep was a moment. He opened his eyes to see the crags and towers and peaks and domes, and the lofty walls of that vast broken chaos of cañons across the river. They were now emerging from the misty gray of dawn, growing pink and lilac and purple.

He arose and set about his few tasks, which, being soon finished, allowed him early start.

Wildfire had grazed along, no more than a mile in the lead. Slone looked eagerly up the narrowing cañon, but he was not rewarded by a sight of the stallion. As he progressed up a gradually ascending trail he became aware of the fact that the notch he had long looked up to was where the great red walls closed in and almost met. And the trail zigzagged up this narrow vent, so steep that only a few steps could be taken without rest.

Slone toiled up for an hour—an age—till he was wet, burning, choked, with a great weight on his chest. Yet still he was only half way up that awful break between the walls. Sometimes he could have tossed a stone down upon a part of the trail, only a few rods below, yet many, many weary steps of actual toil. This feature appeared to grow as he got farther up, the same as the proportions of the notch widened. What had been scarcely visible from the valley below was now colossal in actual dimensions. The trail was like a twisted mile of thread between two bulging mountain walls, leaning their ledges and fronts over this tilted pass.

Slone rested often. Nagger appreciated this and heaved gratefully at every halt. In this monotonous toil Slone forgot the zest of his pursuit. And when Nagger suddenly snorted in fright Slone was not prepared for what he saw.

Above him ran a low red wall, round which the trail evidently led. At the curve, which was a promontory, scarcely a hundred feet in an airline above him, he saw something red moving, bobbing, coming out into view. It was a horse.

Wildfire—no farther away than the length of three lassos!

There he stood, looking down. He fulfilled all Slone's dreams. Only he was bigger. But he was so magnificently proportioned that he did not seem heavy. His coat was shaggy and red. It was not glossy. The color was what made him shine. His mane was like a crest, mounting, then falling low, and it was black streaked. Slone had never seen so much muscle on a horse. Yet his outline was graceful, beautiful.

The head was, indeed, that of the wildest of all wild creatures—a stallion born wild, and it was beautiful, savage, splendid, everything but noble. Whatever Wildfire was he was a devil, a murderer—he had no noble attributes. Slone thought that if a horse could express hate surely Wildfire did then. But it was certain that he did express curiosity and fury.

Slone shook a gauntleted fist at the stallion, as if the horse were human. That was a natural action for a rider of his kind. Wildfire turned away, showed bright against the dark background, and then disappeared.

VIII

THAT was the last Slone saw of Wildfire for three days. It took all of that day to climb out of the cañon. The second was a slow march of thirty miles into a scrub cedar and piñon forest, through which the great red and yellow walls of the cañon could be seen. That night Slone found a water hole in a rocky pocket, and a little grass for Nagger.

The third day's travel consisted of forty miles or more through level pine forest, dry and odorous but lacking the freshness and beauty of the forest on the north side of the cañon. On this south side a strange feature was that all the water, when there was any, ran away from the rim. Slone camped this night at a muddy pond in the woods where Wildfire's tracks showed plain.

The following day Slone rode out of the forest into scant cedar country, bleached and stunted, and out of this to the edge of a plateau, from where the shimmering desert flung up its vast and desolate distances as if menacing, forbidding. This was not the desert upland country of Utah, but a naked and bony world of colored rock and sand—a painted desert of heat and wind and flying sand and waterless wastes and barren ranges. But it did not daunt Slone. For far down on the bare, billowing ridges moved, at snail-pace, a red speck that was Wildfire.

On open ground like this Nagger, carrying two hundred and fifty pounds, showed the

nature of his great prowess. He did not mind the heat nor the sand nor the glare nor the distance nor his burden. He did not tire. He was an engine of tremendous power.

Slone gained upon Wildfire, and toward evening of that day he reached within half a mile of the stallion. And he chose to keep that far behind. That night he camped where there was dry grass, but no water.

Next day he followed Wildfire down and down, over the endless swell of rolling red ridges, bare of all but a bleached white grass and a meager greasewood, always descending in the face of that painted desert of bold and ragged steps. Slone made fifty miles that day, and gained the valley bed, where a slender stream ran thin and spread over a wide, sandy bottom. It was salty water, but it was welcome to both man and beast.

Next day he crossed, and the tracks of Wildfire were still wet on the sand bars. The stallion was slowing down. Slone saw him limping along, not far in advance. There was a ten-mile stretch of level ground, blown hard as rock, from which the sustenance had been bleached, for not a spear of grass grew there. And following that was a passage through a weird region of clay dunes, blue and violet and heliotrope and lavender, all worn smooth by rain and wind.

Wildfire favored the soft ground now. He had deviated from his straight course. He was partial to washes and dips in the earth where water might have lodged. He was not now scornful of a green-scummed water hole, with its white margin of alkali.

That night Slone made camp with Wildfire in plain sight. The stallion stopped when his pursuers stopped. And he began to graze on the same stretch with Nagger. How strange this seemed to Slone!

Here at this camp was evidence of Indians. Wildfire had swung round to the north in his course. Like any pursued wild animal he had begun to circle. He had pointed his nose toward the Utah he had left.

Next morning Wildfire was not in sight, but he had left his tracks in the sand. Slone tracked him with Nagger at a trot. Toward the head of this sandy flat Slone came upon old cornfields, and a broken dam where the water had been

stored, and well-defined trails leading away to the right. Somewhere over there in the desert lived Indians.

At this point Wildfire abandoned the trail he had followed for many days, and cut out more to the north. It took all the morning hours to climb three great steps and benches that led up to the summit of a mesa, vast in extent. It turned out to be a sandy waste. The wind rose and everywhere were moving sheets of sand, and in the distance circular yellow dust-devils, rising high like water-spouts, and back down in the sun-scorched valley a sand-storm moved along majestically, burying the desert in its yellow pall.

Then two more days of sand and another day of a slowly rising ground growing from bare to gray and gray to green and then to the purple of sage and cedar—these three grinding days were toiled out with only one water hole.

Wildfire was lame and in distress and Nagger was growing gaunt and showing strain. Slone, haggard and black and worn, plodded miles and miles on foot to save his horse.

Slone felt that it would be futile to put the chase to a test of speed. Nagger could never head that stallion. Slone meant to go on and on, always pushing Wildfire, keeping him tired, wearing and worrying him, till some section of the country was reached where he could drive Wildfire into some kind of a natural trap. The pursuit seemed endless. Wildfire kept to open country where he could not be surprised.

There came a morning when Slone climbed to a cedared plateau that rose for a whole day's travel and then split into a labyrinthine maze of cañons. There were trees, grass, water. It was a high country, cool and wild, like the uplands he had left. For days he camped on Wildfire's trail, always relentlessly driving him, always watching for that trap he hoped to find.

The red stallion spent much of this time of flight in looking backward. Whenever Slone came in sight of him he had his head over his shoulder, watching. And on the soft ground of these cañons he had begun to recover from his lameness. But this did not worry Slone. Sooner or later Wildfire would go down into a high-walled wash from which there would be no outlet; or he would wander into a box cañon; or he would climb out on a mesa with no place to descend without passing Slone; or he would get cornered on a soft, steep slope where his hoofs would sink deep and make him slow.

The nature of the desert had changed. Slone had entered a wonderful region, the like of which he had not seen—a high plateau crisscrossed in every direction by narrow cañons with red walls a thousand feet high.

And one of the strange turning cañons opened into a vast valley of monuments.

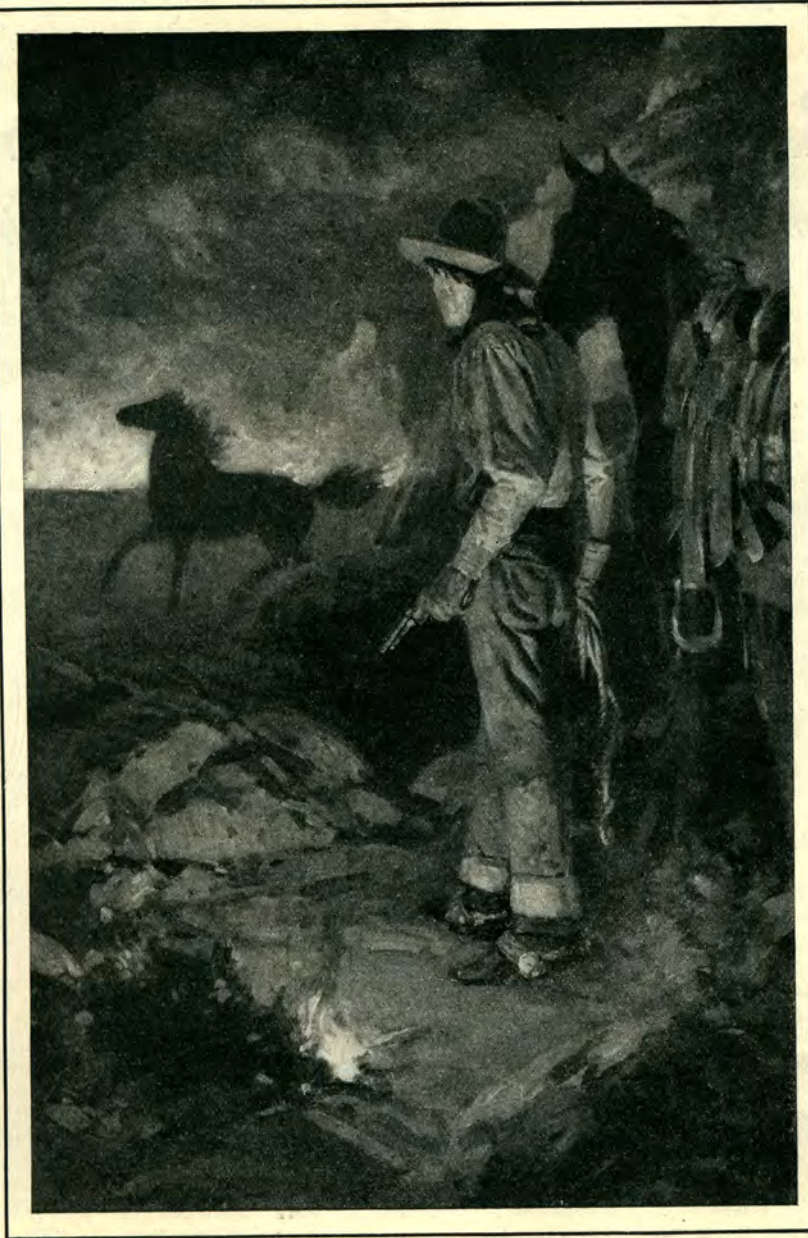
The plateau had weathered and washed away, leaving huge sections of stone walls all standing isolated, aloof, different in size and shape, but all clean-cut, bold, with straight lines. They stood up everywhere, monumental, towering, many-colored, lending a singular and beautiful aspect to the great green and gray valley, billowing away to the north where dim, broken, purple battlements mounted to the clouds.

The only living thing in Slone's sight was Wildfire. He shone red down on the green slope.

Slone's heart swelled. This was the setting for that grand horse—a perfect wild range. But also it seemed the last place where there might be any chance to trap the stallion. Still that did not alter Slone's purpose, though it lost to him the joy of former hopes. He rode down the slope, out upon the billowing floor of the valley. Wildfire looked back to see his pursuers, and then the solemn stillness broke to a wild, piercing whistle.

Day after day, camping where night found him, Slone followed the stallion, never losing sight of him till darkness had fallen. The valley was immense and the monuments were miles apart. But they always seemed close together and near him. The air magnified things. Slone lost track of time. The strange, solemn, lonely days and the silent, lonely nights, and the endless pursuit, and the wild, weird valley—these completed the work of years on Slone and he became satisfied, unthinking, almost savage.

Toil and privation had worn him down and he was like iron. His garments were torn and ragged; his boots were ripped. Long since his flour had been used up, and all his supplies, except the salt. He lived on meat of rabbits, but they were scarce, and the time



How Had He Ever Dared to Believe He Could Capture That Wild Stallion?

came when there were none. Some days he did not eat.

Hunger did not make him suffer. He killed a desert bird now and then, and once a wildcat crossing the valley. Eventually he felt his strength diminishing, and then he took to digging out the pack rats and cooking them. But these, too, were scarce. At length starvation faced Slone. But he knew he would not starve.

Many times he had been within rifle shot of Wildfire. And the grim, forbidding thought grew upon him that he must kill the stallion. The thought seemed involuntary but his mind rejected it. Nevertheless, he knew that if he could not catch the stallion he would kill him. That had been the end of many a desperate rider's pursuit of a coveted horse.

While Slone kept on his merciless pursuit, never letting Wildfire rest by day, time went on just as relentlessly. Spring gave way to early summer. The hot sun bleached the grass; water holes failed out in the valley, and water could be found only in the cañons; and the dry winds began to blow the sand. It was a sandy valley, green and gray only at a distance, and out toward the north the monuments failed and the slow heave of sand lifted toward the dim walls.

Wildfire worked away from his open valley, back to the south end, where the great monuments loomed, and still farther back, where they grew closer, till at length some of them were joined by weathered ridges to the walls of the surrounding plateau. For all Slone could see Wildfire was in perfect condition. But Nagger was not the horse he had been. Slone realized that in one way or another the pursuit was narrowing down to the end.

Slone found a water hole at the head of a wash in a split in the walls, and here he let Nagger rest and graze one whole day—the first day for long that he had not kept the red stallion in sight. That day was marked by the good



Nagger Labored Heavily;
Still He Landed Safely
Upon a Rocky Bank

fortune of killing a rabbit, in the eating of which his gloomy fixed mind admitted the fact that he was starving.

He dreaded the next sunrise. But he could not hold it back. There behind the dark monuments, standing sentinel-like, the sky lightened and reddened and burst into gold and pink, till out of the golden glare the sun rose glorious. And Slone, facing the league-long shadows of the monuments, rode out again into the silent, solemn day on his hopeless quest.

For a change Wildfire had climbed high up a slope of talus, through a narrow pass, rounded over with drifting sand. And Slone gazed down into a huge amphitheater full of monuments, strange like all that strange country. A basin three miles across lay beneath him. Walls and

weathered slants of rock and steep slopes of reddish-yellow sand inclosed this oval depression. The floor was white and it seemed to move gently or radiate with heat waves. Studying it Slone made out that the motion was caused by wind in long bleached grass. He had crossed small areas of this grass in different parts of the region.

Wildfire's tracks led down into this basin, and presently Slone, by straining his eyes, made out the red spot that was the stallion.

"He's lookin' to quit the country," soliloquized Slone as he surveyed the scene.

With keen, slow gaze Slone studied the lay of wall and slope, and when he had circled the huge depression he made sure that Wildfire could not get out except by the narrow pass through which he had gone in. Slone sat astride Nagger in the mouth of this pass—a wash a few yards wide, walled by broken rock on one side and by an insurmountable slope on the other.

"If this hole was only little now," sighed Slone as he gazed at the sweeping, shimmering, oval floor, "I might have a chance. But down there—we couldn't get near him."

There was no water in that dry bowl. Slone reflected on the uselessness of keeping Wildfire down there, because Nagger could not go without water so long as Wildfire. For the first time Slone hesitated. It seemed merciless to Nagger to drive him down into this hot, windy hole. The wind blew from the west and it swooped up the slope, hot, with the odor of dry, dead grass.

But that hot wind stirred Slone with an idea, and suddenly he was tense, excited, glowing, yet grim and hard.

"Wildfire, I'll make you run with your namesake in that high grass," called Slone. The speech was full of bitter failure, of regret, of the hardness of a rider who could not give up the horse to freedom.

(Continued on Page 948)

THE TRACTOR—By Barton W. Currie

Summing Up the Case for the Farm Machine

YOU might as well try to sum up the vagaries of womankind as attempt to cap a climax to a discussion of farm tractors during the industry's present spasms of regeneration, or rejuvenation, or recrudescence, or whatever you desire to call its 1916 labor pains.

I have been poring over scores of essays written by engineers and experts in hurry-up response to emergency appeals for copy, but they agree only on the score of their uncertainties. No, that is not exactly accurate. There is a harmonious tone to their optimism. The majority of them express themselves as scientific optimists. It has been denied that there is such a critter. Let me explain. When these technical specialists get away from the backing and filling of their technical discussion they step right up to the front of the rostrum and let go to this effect:

"Whatever happens, the tractor is here with bells on and going so fast you can't see it for sparks and smoke."

This is just a common kitchen-garden variety of hysteria, but when you see it develop in scientists you may gamble there is some good sound reason for it.

During the extensive tour I made through the tractor centers of manufacture and distribution I met a variety of types of enthusiasts—probably not all the types, but I believe a majority of them. One of the most interesting was the horse eliminator.

He was one of a force of 750 earnest workers employed in the experimental department of the biggest concern that makes tractors and farm implements. He was assigned to just one specialty, and he certainly took that specialty to heart. It was a sort of one-cylinder, three-speed, no-reverse, direct-drive hobby. That preëminent hobby-horseman of English literature, Uncle Toby, was a chronic diversifier in comparison with this earnest, chubby little gentleman, who has given up the greater part of his life to contriving patents that should eliminate horse power from farming.

He was almost up to his neck in blue-print designs when I visited him in a Chicago skyscraper. Almost the first phrase he uttered was "horseless farm." In the next breath he told me he was no mere skyscraper theorist, but a real farmer. He lived on a farm—a horseless farm. It was part of his job to promote the horselessness of this farm.

He still kept a few horses on this farm—kept them round just for the sake of having them there to prove how easily he could do without them. Furthermore, he was figuring out to a nicety what these horses cost to maintain and just how much power they delivered in return for their upkeep. He had entered the purchase price of this work stock, estimated their depreciation to a hair day by day, worked out the average of horse ailments, horse accidents, on a large number of farms. He had balanced his horse quota as to sex so as to get the average returns from reproduction and its value, also he measured and estimated the value of manure return.

"I intend to play fair with the horse," he said, "and to get its value as high as the averages carry. Only by doing that will I succeed in driving myself at the top speed to replace the horse by diversified tractor service. I am working now on a great many patents for redesigning farm machinery and farm equipment so as to increase the utility of the tractor and make it earn dividends on an average small farm of 150 acres. The smaller the farm the greater must be the range of activity of the tractor. We must drive toward the complete elimination of the horse to make the tractor a paying investment on the really small farm.

"We are redesigning our harvester as a small tractor harvester, so that we can take it off and utilize the transmission drive of the tractor as the drive of the harvester. I am working on no end of patents for a tractor cultivator. There are a good many snags in the way, but we are going to cut through them. We are redesigning our mowers, so as to put on as many sets of knives as the tractor will pull. We have worked out a header-separator for the grain districts that is already a tractor success.

"When we get our tractor cultivator worked out it will cultivate four rows with three men and then it will be possible to cultivate two or three times where we cultivate only once now. There will be no need then to cultivate any further when the corn is so high as to interfere with tractor traction. The increased yields should be incalculable.

"In the course of my experimental work I have become a small-tractor fanatic. I do not see the need of large tractors at all. If more power is needed add more small-tractor

units. I believe a six or eight drawbar pull will be all the power necessary in these small power units.

"Each small tractor will take care of one manure spreader, one harvester, one mower, one hay loader, one hayrack, and so on. The hayrack may be mounted on a two-wheel trailer. The trailer can be used to carry the grain to the carrier and the tractor will operate the carrier to unload. I have worked this out with potatoes, sugar beets, and many other crops besides hay and grain, by running the end of the carrier box into the car that is to be loaded. Can't you see that when we get this down pat the horse will be completely out of it? There'll be no use at all for animal power. We can begin in the spring with the manure spreader and work right through to the delivery of crops at the elevator or the freight car. All we have to do is to be sure that our small-unit tractor has power enough to operate all these various machines."

"What about the additional cost of labor for the additional small-tractor units?" I asked; then added: "It is quite generally urged that there is an important economic gain to be made in eliminating man labor. A plurality of small tractors on the farm will certainly call for a plurality of operators."

"That will be a mere trifle," he retorted, "when we have our readjustment down to a fine point and have eliminated the horse. The economies accomplished by each small-tractor unit will pay for the extra man labor and leave a wide margin of surplus to spare. There is an immense amount of waste man labor on the farm today, due to horse labor. The small tractor will take care of that waste."

"The more small-tractor units the more farm machinery," I remarked. "What about the cost of doubling and tripling the number of machines? Isn't it true that the bigger the machine the less per horse power the cost of the power it delivers? Of course it would be better for the implement manufacturers to double up the number of machines, from manure spreaders to side-delivery rakes, hay loaders, and so on, but where will the farmer get off? He is already pretty heavily overpowered on the small farm."

"That is merely an assumption of the long-haired economists. When a farmer has a number of teams of horses he

What is Accomplished by Testing Cows

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Slone meant to ride down there and fire the long grass. In that wind there would indeed be wildfire to race with the red stallion. It would perhaps mean his death; at least it would chase him out of that hole where to follow him would be useless.

"I'd make you hump now to get away if I could get behind you," muttered Slone. He saw that if he could fire the grass on the other side the wind of flame would drive Wildfire straight toward him. The slopes and walls narrowed up to the pass, but high grass grew to within a few rods of where Slone stood. But it seemed impossible to get behind Wildfire.

"At night, then, I could get round him," said Slone, thinking hard and narrowing his gaze to scan the circle of wall and slope. "Why not? . . . No wind at night. That grass would burn slow till mornin'—till the wind came up. An' it's been west wind for days."

Suddenly Slone began to pound the patient Nagger and to cry out to him in wild exultance:

"Old horse, we've got him! . . . We've got him! . . . We'll put a rope on him before this time tomorrow!"

Slone gave up to his strange, wild joy, but it did not last long. He rode down into the bowl a mile, making absolutely certain that Wildfire could not climb out on that side. The far end, beyond the monuments, was a sheer wall of rock. Then he crossed to the left side. Here the sandy slope was almost too steep for even him to go up. And there was grass that would burn. He returned to the pass assured that Wildfire had at last fallen into a trap the like Slone had never dreamed of. The great horse was doomed to run into living flame or the whirling noose of a lasso.

Then Slone reflected. Nagger had that very morning had his fill of good water—the first really satisfying drink for days. If he was rested that day he would be fit on the morrow for the grueling work possibly in store for him. Slone unsaddled the horse and turned him loose; with a snort he made down the gentle slope for the grass. Then Slone carried his saddle to a shady spot afforded by a slab of rock and a dwarf cedar, and composed himself to rest and watch and think and wait.

Wildfire was plainly in sight, no more than two miles away. Gradually he was grazing along toward the monuments and the far end of the great basin. Slone believed, because the place was so large, that Wildfire thought there was a way out on the other side or over the slopes or through the walls. Never before had the far-sighted stallion made a mistake. Slone suddenly felt the keen, stabbing fear of an outlet somewhere. But it left him quickly. He had studied those slopes and walls. Wildfire could not get out, except by the pass he had entered, unless he could fly.

Slone lay in the shade, his head propped on his saddle, and while gazing down into the shimmering hollow he began to plan. He calculated that he must be able to carry fire swiftly across the far end of the basin, so that he would not be absent long from the mouth of the pass.

Fire was always a difficult matter, since he had resource only to flint and steel. He decided to wait till dark, build a fire with dead cedar sticks, and carry a bundle of them with burning ends. He felt assured that the wind caused by riding would keep them burning. After he had lighted the grass all he had to do was to hurry back to his station and there await developments.

The day passed slowly. It was hot. The heat waves rose from the valley in dark wavering lines and veils. The wind blew almost a gale. Thin, curling sheets of sand blew up over the crests of the slopes, and the sound it made was a soft, silken, rustling, sweeping roar, very low. The sky was a steely blue above and copper close over the distant walls.

That afternoon, toward the close, Slone ate the last of his meat. At sunset the wind died away and the air cooled. There was a strip of red along the wall of rock and on the tips of the monuments, and it lingered there for long, a strange bright crown. Nagger was not far away, but Wildfire had disappeared, probably behind one of the monuments.

When twilight fell Slone went down after Nagger, and returning with him put on bridle and saddle. Then he began to

search for suitable sticks of wood. Farther back in the pass he found stunted dead cedars, and from these secured enough for his purpose. He kindled a fire and burned the ends of the sticks into red embers. Making a bundle of these he put them under his arm, the dull, glowing ends backward, and then mounted his horse.

It was just about dark when he faced down into the valley. When he reached level ground he kept to the edge of the left slope and put Nagger to a good trot. The grass and brush were scant here and the color of the sand was light so he had no difficulty in traveling.

From time to time his horse went through grass, and its dry, crackling rustle, showing how it would burn, was music to Slone. Gradually the monuments began to loom up, bold and black against the blue sky, with stars seemingly hanging close over them. Slone had calculated that the basin was smaller than it really was, both in length and breadth. This worried him. Wildfire might see or hear or scent him, and make a break back to the pass, and thus escape.

Slone was glad when the huge, dark monuments were indistinguishable from the black, frowning wall. He had to go slower here, because of the darkness. But at last he reached the slow rise of jumbled rock that evidently marked the extent of weathering on that side. Here he turned to the right and rode out into the valley.

The floor was level and thickly overgrown with long dead grass and dead grease-wood, as dry as tinder. It was easy to account for the dryness: Neither snow nor rain had visited that valley for many months. Slone whipped one of the sticks in the wind and soon had the smoldering end red and showering sparks. Then he dropped the stick in the grass, with curious intent and a strange feeling of regret.

Instantly the grass blazed with a little sputtering roar. Nagger snorted.

"Wildfire!" exclaimed Slone. That word was a favorite one with riders, and now Slone used it, both to call out his menace to the stallion and to express his feeling for that blaze, already running wild.

Without looking back Slone rode across the valley, dropping a glowing stick every quarter of a mile. When he reached the other side there were a dozen fires behind him, burning slowly, with white smoke rising lazily. Then he loped Nagger along the side back to the sandy ascent, and on up to the mouth of the pass. There he searched for tracks.

Wildfire had not gone out, and Slone experienced relief and exultation. He took up a position in the middle of the narrowest part of the pass, and there with Nagger, ready for anything, he once more composed himself to watch and wait.

Far across the darkness of the valley, low down, twelve lines of fire, widely separated, crept toward one another. They appeared thin and slow, with only an occasional leaping flame. Some of the black spaces must have been monuments, blotting out the creeping snail lines of red. Slone watched, strangely fascinated.

"What do you think of that?" he said aloud, and he meant his query for Wildfire.

As he watched, the lines perceptibly lengthened and brightened and pale shadows of smoke began to appear. Over at the left of the valley the two brightest fires, the first he had started, crept closer and closer together. They seemed long in covering distance. But not a breath of wind stirred, and besides they really might move swiftly without looking so to Slone. When the two lines met a sudden and larger blaze rose.

"Ah!" said the rider, and then he watched the other lines creeping together.

How slowly fire moved, he thought. The red stallion would have every chance to run between those lines, if he dared. But a wild horse feared nothing so much as fire. This one would not run the gantlet of flames. Nevertheless, Slone felt more and more relieved as the lines closed. The hours of the night dragged past until at length one long, continuous line of fire spread level across the valley, its bright red line broken only where the monuments of stone were silhouetted against it.

The darkness of the valley changed. The light of the moon changed. The radiance of the stars changed. Either the line of fire was finding denser fuel to consume or it was

growing appreciably closer, for the flames began to grow, to leap, and to flare.

The time seemed endless in its futility of results, but fleeting after it had passed; and he could tell how the hours fled by the ever-recurring need to replenish the little fire he kept burning in the pass.

A broad belt of valley grew bright in the light and behind it loomed the monuments, weird and dark, with columns of yellow and white smoke wreathing them.

Suddenly Slone's sensitive ear vibrated to a thrilling sound. He leaned down to place his ear to the sand. Rapid, rhythmic beat of hoofs made him leap to his feet, reaching for his lasso with right hand and a gun with his left.

Nagger lifted his head, sniffed the air and snorted. Slone peered into the black belt of gloom that lay below him. It would be hard to see a horse there, unless he got high enough to be silhouetted against that line of fire, now flaring to the sky.

But he heard the beat of hoofs, swift, sharp, louder—louder. The night shadows were deceptive. That wonderful light confused him, made the place unreal. Was he dreaming? Or had the long chase and his privations unhinged his mind? He reached for Nagger. No! The big black was real, alive, quivering, pounding the sand. He scented an enemy.

Once more Slone peered down into the void, or what seemed a void. But it, too, had changed, lightened. The whole valley was brightening. Great palls of curling smoke rose white and yellow, to turn black as the monuments at their crests, and then to roll upward, blotting out the stars. It was such a light as he had never seen, except in dreams.

In the pale path before Slone, that fan-like slope of sand which opened down into the valley, appeared a swiftly moving black object, like a fleeting phantom. It was a phantom horse.

Slone felt that his eyes, deceived by his mind, saw racing images. Many a wild chase he had lived in wild dreams on some wild shingle of desert.

But what was that beating in his ears—sharp, swift, even, rhythmic? Never had his ears played him false. Never had he heard things in his dreams. That running object was a horse and he was coming like the wind. Slone felt something grip his heart. All the time and endurance and pain and thirst and suspense and longing and hopelessness—the agony of the whole endless chase closed tight on his heart.

The running horse halted just in the belt of light cast by the burning grass. There he stood sharply defined, clear as a cameo, not a hundred paces from Slone. It was Wildfire.

Slone uttered an involuntary cry. Thrill on thrill shot through him. Delight and hope and fear and despair claimed him in swift, successive flashes.

Slone gave up Wildfire in that splendid moment. How had he ever dared to believe he could capture that wild stallion? He looked and looked, filling his mind, regretting nothing, sure that the moment was reward for all he had endured.

The weird lights magnified Wildfire and showed him clearly. He seemed gigantic. He shone black against the fire. His head was high, his mane flying. Behind him the fire flared and the valley-wide column of smoke rolled majestically upward; the great monuments seemed to retreat darkly and mysteriously as the flames advanced beyond them. It was a beautiful, unearthly spectacle, with its silence the strangest feature.

But suddenly Wildfire broke that silence with a whistle, which to Slone's overstrained faculties seemed a blast as piercing as the splitting sound of lightning. And with the whistle Wildfire plunged up toward the pass.

Slone yelled at the top of his lungs and fired his gun before he could terrorize the stallion and drive him back down the slope. Soon Wildfire became again a running black object and then he disappeared.

The great line of fire was beyond the monuments and now stretched unbroken across the valley from wall to slope. Wildfire could never pierce that line of flames. And now Slone saw, in the paling sky to the east, that dawn was at hand.

(TO BE CONTINUED)



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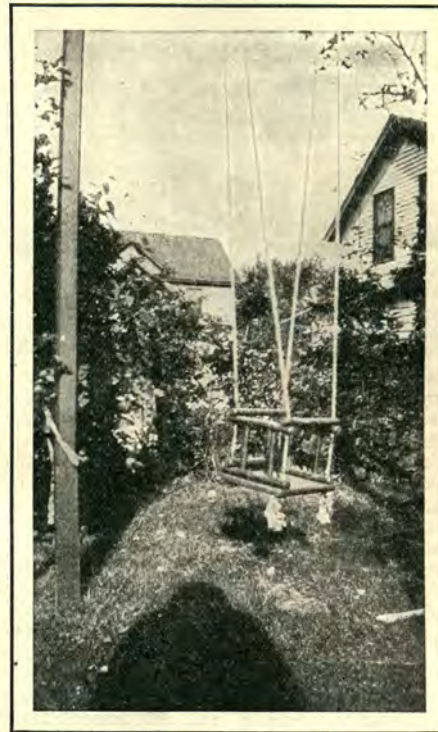
Ways to Give the Youngsters Some Extra Fun This Summer

By C. L. Meller

CONSIDER the children of the farm, they toil not neither do they show a profit; yet there is nothing on the farm that is as dear to you as one of these. Therefore do unto them as you could have wished to be done by when you were a child.

Make for the little tots a baby teeter; simply a section of some large log flattened enough at the top to hold the plank that is to be nailed across it. This plank can be cut in at each end to fit little legs. When the teeter is dressed down and a coat or two of paint applied you will have a very neat-looking piece of apparatus of which the little ones will be proud and upon which they could not possibly hurt themselves.

A baby swing is another piece of apparatus that you can readily fashion from the stout limbs of the trees that you cut down for firewood. This swing consists of five pieces held together by the rope by which it swings. These five pieces are: a board fourteen inches by sixteen inches for a seat, three sides ten inches high, and a strip across the front to prevent the child from falling out.



The Rope Holds This Swing Together

A seesaw for the older children is easily made from the trunk and limbs of a tree. Fashion the support in the manner of a carpenter's horse, using about three to four feet of the trunk for the body and four stout limbs for the legs. A two-inch plank fourteen to sixteen feet long and a foot wide can be used for a teeter board. This can be kept in place by means of a bolt screwed into the horse and through a slit cut into the plank. The legs fit into holes drilled into the body of the horse. To keep the wood near the holes from splitting provide a narrow shoulder on each leg.

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Make a Substantial Seesaw for the Big Boys and Girls

TABLE OF CONTENTS

April 29, 1916

	PAGE		PAGE
Chaff	917	Everyman's Garden	938
Where to Market Your Apples—By J. Russell Smith	919	A Hen House of the Better Sort—By H. Armstrong Roberts	940
Farmstead Windbreaks—By F. J. Kelleher	920	Beef-Type Poultry—By William S. Weaver	941
Grass Before Livestock—By C. B. Williams	921	The Poultry Calendar	942
Building Up the Small Farm	922	The Orchard on the Hillside—By O. H. Barnhill	945
A Little Belgian Farm—By André de Martelerc	923	A Concrete Watering Trough—By H. Armstrong Roberts	945
Where the Sheep Comes In	924	Skim Milk or Calf Meal?—By Richard G. Dukes	946
Wildfire—By Zane Grey	926	Strawberries for Market—By Frank E. Beatty	947
The Tractor—By Barton W. Currie	928	When Marjorie Turned Efficient—By Helen Christine Bennett	949
Editorial	929	Playing Indian—By Margaret Courtney	950
Time Well Spent—By Herbert Quick	930	Your Shakspeare Celebration—By Katharine Lord	951
Live Items About Livestock	931	In and Out My Sideboard—By Frances A. Harris	952
The Business of Dairying	932	Going to School at Home—By Ella Frances Lynch	953
What the States are Doing	933	Your Rural Club	954
The Way in Utah	934	Subtropical Cookery—By Katherine S. Lawson	955
Good Methods in the Field	935	A Swing and a Seesaw—By C. L. Meller	956
Power on the Farm	936		
The Market Garden	937		
Commercial Fruit Growing			

A COMPLETE SIX MONTHS' INDEX, ISSUED IN JANUARY AND JULY, WILL BE MAILED UPON REQUEST