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Heights of Wild Horse Mass
THE SOUTH SPINS ITS OWN COTTON

PAINTED BY REGINALD BOLLES



We Climbed the Treacherous Glassy Slopes of the Marching Rocks Which Rolled Out of Utah Like Huge Prehistoric Monsters

The Heights of Wild Horse Mesa

By Zane Grey

MY FIRST sight of Wild Horse Mesa came in the spring of 1913. At that time John Wetherill, the Indian trader and guide at Kayenta, Arizona, said he did not know of any Indian or white man who had ever climbed it. This fact, together with its wild beauty and grandeur, determined me to scale it. That trip we were not able to get anywhere near the mesa. Naturally for me, after that, it haunted me.

From the Arizona side of the vast cañon country—two hundred miles of wind-and-water-worn rock, bare, curved, smooth, like a heaving sea—Wild Horse Mesa stood up in magnificent dominance.

It was a red-walled, golden-rimmed, black-fringed tableland, towering above the rest of the wilderness of cloven stone. It seemed to be about five miles long, but was in fact seventy. It seemed to have a million precipices and insurmountable slopes.

Located in Southern Utah it looked down upon the Grand Cañon, Escalante Cañon, and San Juan Cañon, all tremendous gulfs in red stone. That vast section of denuded earth was crisscrossed in every direction by intersecting cañons. Piute Cañon is one of these, and it is a mile wide and almost as deep.

Zane Grey Cañon, named by the Bernheimer expedition in 1922, was only one of many cañons, nameless even to the Indians. Wild Horse Mesa had an irregular base, level with the surrounding rims and ramparts, and from this base it sheered up thousands of feet. Where it got the felicitous name we could not learn; perhaps from the Mormon wild-horse hunters. Wild stallions with bands were known to disappear and not be seen again; and it was certainly a thrilling and satisfying assumption to believe they had a way to surmount this mesa.

It was the last stand of the wild horses of Utah.

In the spring of 1922 we got much closer to the mesa and might have reached it if our supplies had not given out.

The Desert's Thrilling Hazards

THIS trip, besides Wetherill and his outfit I had my personal guide Lee Doyle, son of the old-timer Al Doyle, who during ten years took me into every wild nook and corner of Arizona. Lee had charge of my own horses. My brother R. C. and friend Doctor Wiborn accompanied me on this trip, which was a wonderful one, and extremely hard. Crossing the desert we had snow, sleet,

Zane Grey's Latest Novel

WILD HORSE MESA, newest—perhaps greatest—of books by America's favorite writer, begins next week.

Amid the well-nigh stunning grandeur of the Utah cañon country, a drama of the Frontier West is set forth.

In it we hear the thunder of countless hoofs as two thousand wild horses plunge madly into the trap.

We come to know Chane Weymer, stalwart leader of stalwart men; Sue Melberne, frank, yet with all woman's tender appeal; Panguitch, wild stallion of almost fabled speed and beauty.

Wild Horse Mesa has been dedicated by Mr. Grey to Queen Marie of Rumania.

piercing winds, sandstorms to face; and long rides with scant wood for fires and grass for horses.

We crossed the Painted Desert, that ridged and upstepping area of colored rocks and clay; we went to the cliff-dwelling ruins in Segi Cañon; we rode through Monument Valley in Utah; climbed the treacherous glassy slopes of the Marching Rocks; went down and down into the red and yellow depths to Surprise Valley where it was hot, windless and enchanting; and so on to Nonnezoshe, the Rainbow Bridge.

During this ride of ten days, many an hour we looked up right into the looming hold face of the southern end of Wild Horse Mesa. It overpowered us. It seemed so close, so colossal. Yet how aloof and inaccessible! But the Grand Cañon of the Colorado wound its awful rent between us and the mesa. We could not reach it that way.

Close-Ups of Nature's Marvels

IN SEPTEMBER of 1923, I took Jesse Lasky and his staff to Arizona and Utah for the purpose of studying the country with a view of making a motion picture of my romance, *The Vanishing American*. We covered a new trail, but practically went over the ground we traversed in 1922. During this interval Wetherill had succeeded in reaching Wild Horse Mesa with Professor Gregory, a scientist. He had heard from the Piutes that Mormons could climb the mesa from its northern end, but could not verify the report.

Upon our return from the Rainbow Bridge, on September twenty-sixth, I parted with the Lasky outfit at Beaver Creek Cañon, under the black slope of Navaho Mountain. They went on back to Kayenta on their way home; and I with Wetherill and selected horses, Indians and cowboys, headed down into the depths of the cañon country, hoping to cross the rivers and climb Wild Horse Mesa.

That was a wild and wonderful ride down through the Marching Rocks which rolled out of Utah like huge prehistoric monsters, high as hills; on down deeper where the straggling rocks closed into a wall, and travel must keep to the winding cañons.

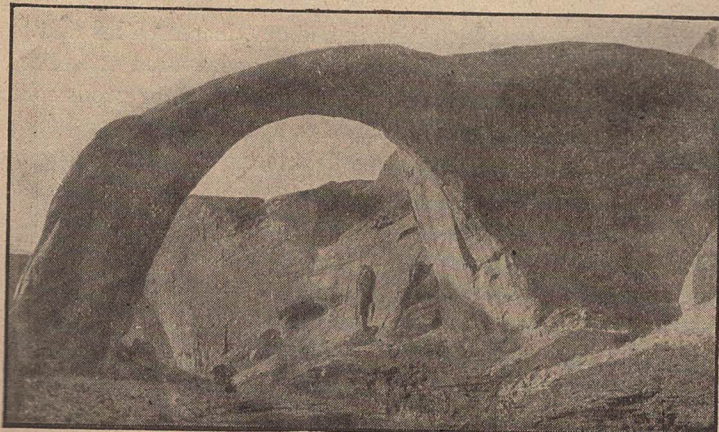
Nocki Cañon, a new one for me, would alone have been worth the toil.

From the sage uplands clear down into the bowels of the rock-ribbed maze we encountered wild horses. What then must have been true of Wild Horse Mesa?

(Continued on Page 54)

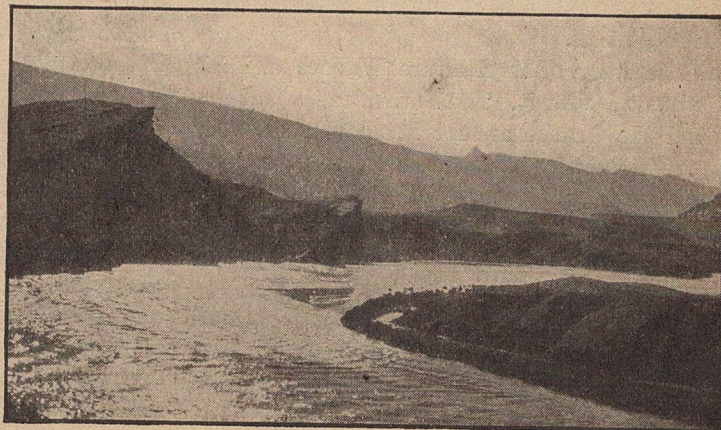


Zane Grey in Piute Cañon, With Wild Horse Mesa in the Dim Distance



At Left—Nonnezoshe, the Rainbow Bridge, Which Lies Beyond the Red and Yellow Depths of Hot, Windless and Enchanting Surprise Valley

At Right—The San Juan in Flood. The High Wall is the Rim of the Grand Cañon, Into Which This Roaring Stream Finds an Outlet to the Far-Off Sea



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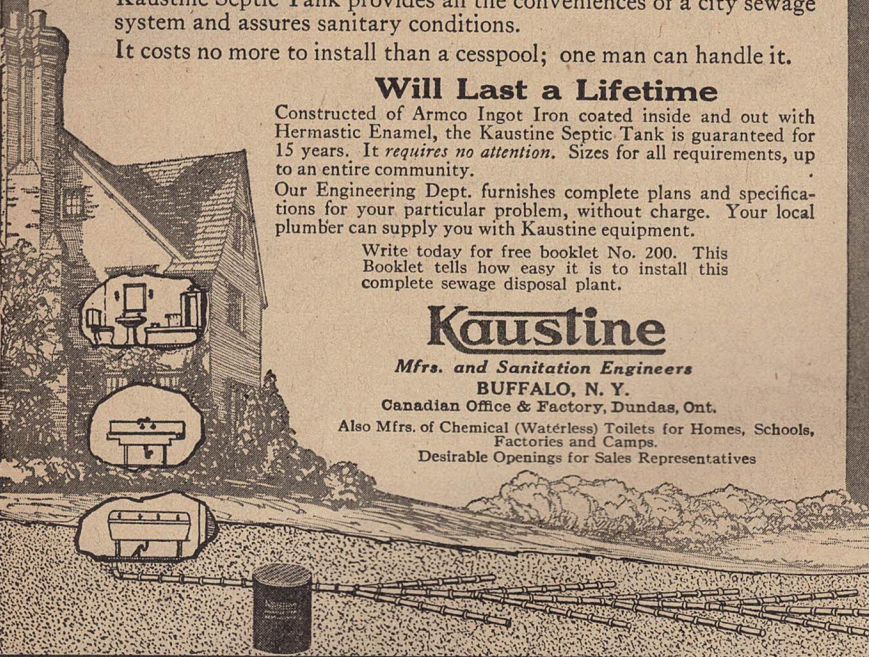
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The Heights of Wild Horse Mesa

(Continued from Page 13)

We followed a dim Piute trail that for treacherous places, steep zigzags, slopes of weathered rock and almost impassable steps surpassed any I had ever before attempted. It was as hard as the Shinumo Trail on the north rim of the Grand Cañon, though perhaps not so perilous.

I had gotten possession of a new horse, the first sight of which inspired me with an irresistible desire to own him.

He had been brought from Colorado, and was a superbly built animal, young, of a glossy mottled bay, almost black. He had deceived me because of his spirit. As it turned out, he was the most intelligent, the gentlest, the quickest and surest on his feet, and altogether the greatest Western horse I ever saw.

For me the hard ride was a lark. Brutus did not feel my weight. He could go anywhere, up or down, and when my hair actually stood on end he would be reaching to nip a tuft of green grass. In all my rides over the desert I had never had so thrilling a one as this.

Like Dante's Inferno

ALTOGETHER, during my three trips, I had traveled half round Wild Horse Mesa, at least with my eye and glass.

Beaver Cañon, which we descended into at its lower end, was a cañon the like of which I had never seen.

It was almost a bright red. The walls were half a mile high and so cracked, rent and ruined that it seemed the checkered cliffs and splintered shafts would come toppling down on us. The slopes below the wall were a chaos of blocks of rocks, reaching almost to the stream bed that wound through the middle of the cañon. Now and then could be heard the thunder of falling sections of wall. It was an abyss of decay, death and desolation. Not a sprig of green!

This cañon of ruin seemed to belch its fiery avalanche of rocks into the austere sublimity of San Juan Cañon, near where it empties into the Grand Cañon.

Wild Horse Mesa looked down upon the union of cañons and rivers as if to guard them from intrusion. The place beggared description. It was like entering the portals of Dante's Inferno.

To our intense disappointment the desert rivers roared in flood. We had meant to swim our horses and mules across and get out of the labyrinth of cañons through what was called The Hole in the Wall. But the flooded rivers made an attempt impossible.

We camped a day and night in San Juan Cañon, one of the wildest and loneliest, and assuredly the grimmest, place I ever visited. Death Valley is a terrible void in the earth, but it is larger than this cañon, not so intimate, nor so red, nor so impellingly suggestive of hell.

We turned back on the long climb out to the purple sage uplands, and I had to content myself, as I had done for ten years, with scaling Wild Horse Mesa in dreams.

A Promise of Fulfillment

PERHAPS nothing but an airship will ever land on that extreme southern promontory of the mesa. The north end perhaps in time will be accessible. Dynamite will blow the obstacles to a trail, or perhaps wild-horse hunters will find the secret trail to the timber-fringed rims.

If I ever make a fourth attempt, which will probably grow to be irresistible, I will go in from the north. The chances are favorable for success on another trip.

My last sight of Wild Horse Mesa occurred at sunset, just as I was about to ride beyond an abutment that would hide it.

I halted Brutus to take my last look. The farther I rode away from it the loftier and grander it seemed to loom. It might not be a mesa at all, but just an unscalable height of my dreams!

Yet on the moment that rare and exquisite lilac haze began to enshroud it.

To me it seemed a promise of fulfillment. Even if I never climbed Wild Horse Mesa I was immeasurably enriched. There should be heights beyond men's grasp.

Then as I looked the strange lilac haze deepened to purple, and with a word to Brutus I bade farewell to Wild Horse Mesa.



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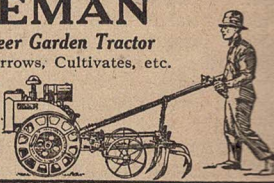
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