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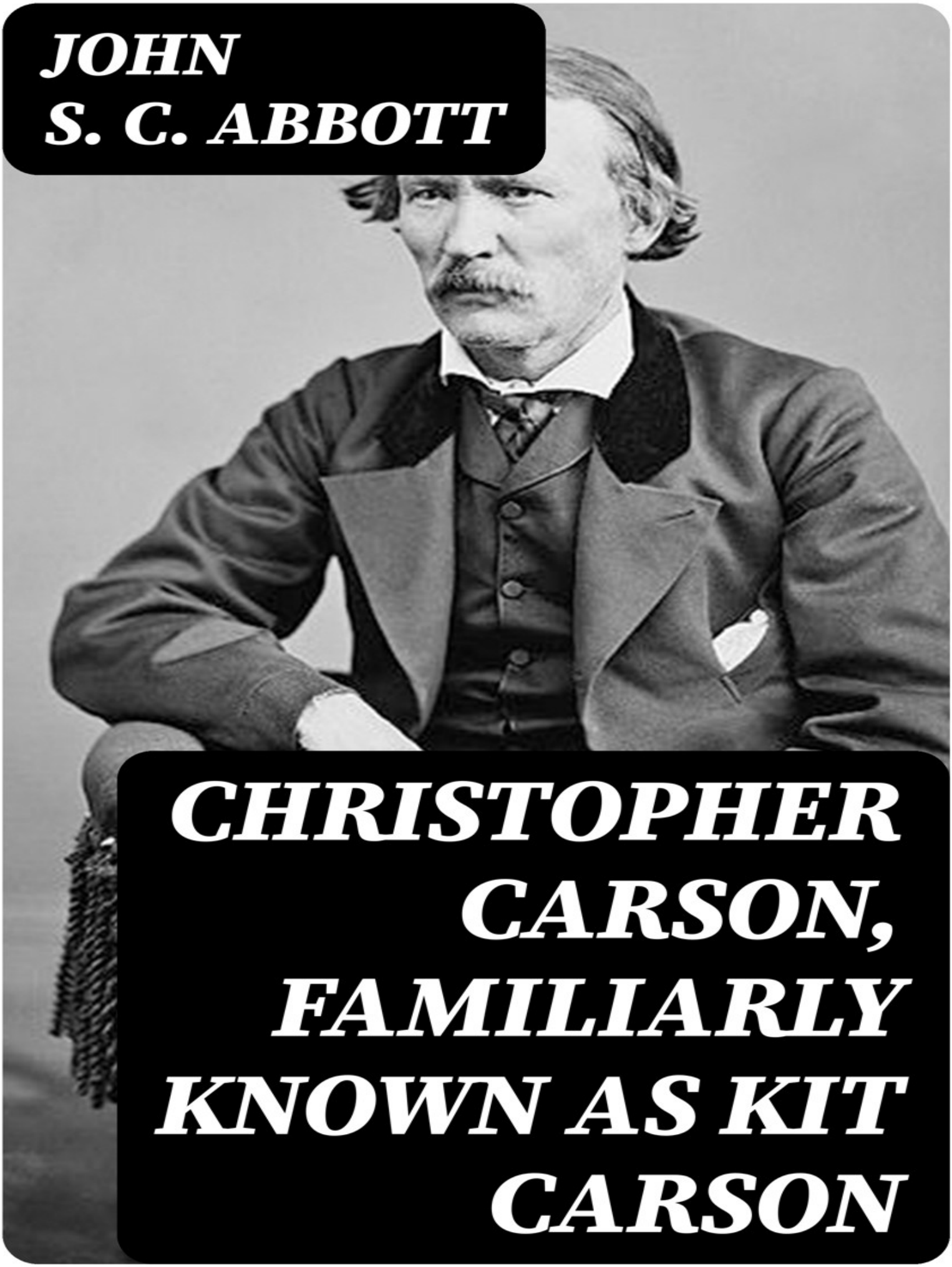

CHRISTOPHER CARSON, FAMILIARLY KNOWN AS KIT CARSON

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Christopher Carson, Familiarly Known as Kit Carson

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PREFACE.

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It is a prominent object of this volume to bring to light the wild adventures of the pioneers of this continent, in the solitudes of the mountains, the prairies and the forests; often amidst hostile Indians, and far away from the restraints and protection of civilization. This strange, weird-

like life is rapidly passing away, before the progress of population, railroads and steamboats. But it is desirable that the memory of it should not drift into oblivion. I think that almost every reader of this narrative will be somewhat surprised, in its development of the character of CHRISTOPHER CARSON. With energy and fearlessness never surpassed, he was certainly one of the most gentle, upright, and lovable of men. It is strange that the wilderness could have formed so estimable a character. America will not permit the virtues of so illustrious a son to be forgotten.

JOHN S.C. ABBOTT.

CHRISTOPHER CARSON.

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CHAPTER I.

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Early Training.

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Christopher Carson, whose renown as Kit Carson has reached almost every ear in the country, was born in Madison county, Kentucky, on the 24th of December, 1809. Large portions of Kentucky then consisted of an almost pathless wilderness, with magnificent forests, free from underbrush, alive with game, and with luxuriant meadows along the river banks, inviting the settler's cabin and the plough.

There were then many Indians traversing those wilds. The fearless emigrants, who ventured to rear their huts in such solitudes, found it necessary ever to be prepared for an attack.

But very little reliance could be placed even in the friendly protestations of the vagabond savages, ever prowling about, and almost as devoid of intelligence or

conscience, as the wolves which at midnight were heard howling around the settler's door. The family of Mr. Carson occupied a log cabin, which was bullet-proof, with portholes through which their rifles could command every approach. Women and children were alike taught the use of the rifle, that in case of an attack by any blood-thirsty gang, the whole family might resolve itself into a military garrison. Not a tree or stump was left, within musket shot of the house, behind which an Indian could secrete himself.

Almost of necessity, under these circumstances, any bright, active boy would become a skilful marksman. A small garden was cultivated where corn, beans and a few other vegetables were raised, but the main subsistence of the family consisted of the game with which forest, meadow and lake were stored. The settler usually reared his cabin upon the banks of some stream alive with fishes. There were no schools to take up the time of the boys; no books to read. Wild geese, ducks and other water fowl, sported upon the bosom of the river or the lake, whose waters no paddle wheel or even keel disturbed. Wild turkeys, quails, and pigeons at times, swept the air like clouds. And then there was the intense excitement of occasionally bringing down a deer, and even of shooting a ferocious grizzly bear or wolf or catamount. The romance of the sea creates a Robinson Crusoe. The still greater romance of the forest creates a Kit Carson. It often makes even an old man's blood thrill in his veins, to contemplate the wild and wondrous adventures, which this majestic continent opened to the pioneers of half a century ago.

Gradually, in Kentucky, the Indians disappeared, either dying off, or pursuing their game in the unexplored realms nearer the setting sun. Emigrants, from the East, in large numbers entered the State. Game, both in forest and meadow, became scarce; and the father of Kit Carson, finding settlers crowding him, actually rearing their huts within two or three miles of his cabin, abandoned his home to find more room in the still more distant West.

Christopher was then the youngest child, a babe but one year old. The wilderness, west of them, was almost unexplored. But Mr. Carson, at his blazing fireside, had heard from the Indians, and occasionally from some adventurous white hunter, glowing accounts of the magnificent prairies, rivers, lakes and forests of the far West, reposing in the solitude and the silence which had reigned there since the dawn of the creation.

There were no roads through the wilderness. The guide of the emigrants was the setting sun. Occasionally they could take advantage of some Indian trail, trodden hard by the moccasined feet of the savages, in single file, through countless generations. Through such a country, the father of Kit Carson commenced a journey of several hundred miles, with his wife and three or four children, Kit being an infant in arms. Unfortunately we are not informed of any of the particulars of this journey. But we know, from numerous other cases, what was its general character.

It must have occupied two or three weeks. All the family went on foot, making about fifteen miles a day. They probably had two pack horses, laden with pots and kettles, and a few other essential household and farming utensils.

Early in the afternoon Mr. Carson would begin to look about for a suitable place of encampment for the night. He would find, if possible, the picturesque banks of some running stream, where there was grass for his horses, and a forest growth to furnish him with wood for his cabin and for fire. If the weather were pleasant, with the prospect of a serene and cloudless night, a very slight protection would be reared, and the weary family, with a buffalo robe spread on the soft grass for a blanket, would sleep far more sweetly in the open air, than most millionaires sleep in tapestried halls and upon beds of down.

If clouds were gathering and menacing winds were wailing through the tree-tops, the vigorous arm of Mr. Carson, with his sharp axe, would, in an hour, rear a camp which could bid defiance to any ordinary storm. The roof would be so thatched, with bark and long grass, as to be quite impenetrable by the rain. Buffalo robes, and a few of the soft and fragrant branches of the hemlock tree, would create a couch which a prince might envy. Perhaps, as they came along, they had shot a turkey or a brace of ducks, or a deer, from whose fat haunches they have cut the tenderest venison. Any one could step out with his rifle and soon return with a supper.

While Mr. Carson, with his eldest son, was building the camp, the eldest girl would hold the baby, and Mrs. Carson would cook such a repast of dainty viands, as, when we consider the appetites, Delmonico never furnished. It was life in the "Adirondacks," with the additional advantage that those who were enjoying it, were inured to fatigue, and

could have no sense of discomfort, from the absence of conveniences to which they were accustomed.

If in the darkness of midnight, the tempest rose and roared through the tree-tops, with crushing thunder, and floods of rain, the family was lulled to sounder sleep by these requiems of nature, or awoke to enjoy the sublimity of the scene, whose grandeur those in lowly life are often able fully to appreciate, though they may not have language with which to express their emotions.

The family crossed the Mississippi river, we know not how, perhaps in the birch canoe of some friendly Indian, perhaps on a raft, swimming the horses. They then continued their journey two hundred miles farther west, till they reached a spot far enough from neighbors and from civilization to suit the taste even of Mr. Carson. This was at the close of the year 1810. There was no State or even Territory of Missouri then. But seven years before, in 1803, France had ceded to the United States the vast unexplored regions, whose boundaries even, were scarcely defined, but which were then called Upper Louisiana.

Here Mr. Carson seems to have reached a very congenial home. He found, scattered through the wilderness, a few white people, trappers, hunters, wanderers who had preceded him. The Indians, in numerous bands, as hunters and as warriors, were roving these wilds. They could not be relied upon, whatever their friendly professions. Any wrong which they might receive from any individual white man, their peculiar code of morals told them they might rightly attempt to redress by wreaking their vengeance upon any pale face, however innocent he might be. Thus hundreds of

Indian warriors might, at any time, come swooping down upon Mr. Carson's cabin, laying it in ashes, and burying their tomahawks in the brains of his family.

The few white men, some half a dozen in number, who had gathered around Mr. Carson, deemed it expedient for self-defence to unite and build a large log cabin, which should be to them both a house and a fort. This building of logs, quite long and but one story high, was pierced, at several points, with portholes, through which the muzzles of the rifles could be thrust. As an additional precaution they surrounded this house with palisades, consisting of sticks of timber, six or eight inches in diameter, and about ten feet high, planted as closely as possible together. These palisades were also pierced with portholes.

With a practiced eye, these men had selected a very beautiful spot for their habitation, in what is now called Howard county, Missouri, just north of the Missouri river. It seems that they had much to fear from the Indians. There were at this time, frequent wars with them, in the more eastern portions of the continent, and the rumors of these conflicts reached the ears of all the roving tribes, and greatly excited them. It became necessary for the settlers to go upon their hunting excursions with much caution.

As the months passed rapidly away, other persons one after another, came to their fort. They were glad to find a safe retreat there, and were welcomed as giving additional strength to the little garrison. Game began to be scarce around their lonely habitation, for the crack of the rifle was almost incessantly heard there. It thus became necessary to resort more generally to farming, especially to raising large

fields of corn, whose golden ears could easily be converted into pork and into bread. With these two articles of food, cornbread and bacon, life could be hilarious on the frontier. Keenness of appetite supplied the want of all other delicacies.

When they went to the cornfield to work, they first made a careful exploration of the region around, to see if there were any lurking savages near. Then with their guns ever ready to be grasped, and keeping a close lookout for signs of danger, they ploughed and sowed and gathered in their harvest.

Thus fifteen years passed away. Civilization made gradual encroachments. Quite a little cluster of log huts was reared in the vicinity, where the inmates in case of necessity could flee to the fort for protection. Christopher, at fifteen years of age, was an unlettered boy, small in stature, but very fond of the solitude of the forest, and quite renowned as a marksman. He was amiable in disposition, gentle in his manners, and in all respects a good boy. He had a strong character. Whatever he undertook, he quietly and without any boasting performed. With sound judgment, and endowed with singular strength and elasticity, he was even then deemed equal to any man in all the requirements of frontier life.

At a short distance from the fort there was a saddler, and Mr. Carson, with the advice of friends, decided to apprentice his son, now called Kit, to learn that trade. The boy remained in this employment for two weary years. Though faithful to every duty, and gaining the respect and confidence of his employer, the work was uncongenial to him. He longed for the freedom of the wilderness; for the sublime scenes of nature, to which such a life would introduce him; for the exciting chase of the buffalo, and the lucrative pursuits of the trapper, floating on distant streams

in the birch canoe, and loading his bark with rich furs, which ever commanded a ready sale.

All these little settlements were clustered around some protecting fort. A man, who was brought up in the remote West, furnishes the following interesting incident in his own personal experience. It gives a very graphic description of the alarms to which these pioneers were exposed:

"The fort to which my father belonged was three-quarters of a mile from his farm. But when this fort went to decay and was unfit for use, a new one was built near our own house. I well remember, when a little boy, the family were sometimes waked up in the dead of night by an express, with the report that the Indians were at hand. The express came softly to the door and by a gentle tapping raised the family. This was easily done, as an habitual fear made us ever watchful, and sensible to the slightest alarm. The whole family were instantly in motion.

"My father seized his gun and other implements of war. My mother waked up and dressed the children as well as she could. Being myself the oldest of the children, I had to take my share of the burdens to be carried to the fort. There was no possibility of getting a horse in the night to aid us. Besides the little children we caught up such articles of clothing and provisions as we could get hold of in the dark, for we durst not light a candle or even stir the fire. All this was done with the utmost dispatch and in the silence of death. The greatest care was taken not to awaken the youngest child.

"To the rest it was enough to say *Indian*, and not a whisper was heard afterward. Thus it often happened that

the whole number belonging to a fort, who were in the evening at their homes, were all in their little fortress before the dawn of the next morning. In the course of the next day their household furniture was brought in by men under arms. Some families belonging to each fort were much less under the influence of fear than others. These often, after an alarm had subsided, in spite of every remonstrance, would remove home, while their more prudent neighbors remained in the fort. Such families were denominated *fool-hardy*, and gave no small amount of trouble by creating such frequent necessities of sending runners to warn them of their danger, and sometimes parties of our men to protect them during their removal."

While Kit Carson was impatiently at work on the bench of the harness-maker, feeding his soul with the stories, often greatly exaggerated, of the wonders of scenes and adventures to be encountered in the boundless West, a party of traders came along, who were on the route for Santa Fe. This city, renowned in the annals of the West, was the capital of the Spanish province of New Mexico. It was situated more than a thousand miles from Missouri, and contained a mongrel population of about three thousand souls. Goods from the States could be readily sold there at a profit of one or two hundred per cent. Cotton cloth brought three dollars a yard.

Captain Pike, upon his return from his exploring tour, brought back quite glowing accounts of Santa Fe and its surroundings. It was a long and perilous journey from Missouri. The party was all strongly armed, with their goods borne in packs upon mules and horses. They expected to

live almost entirely upon the game they could shoot by the way. Kit, purely from the love of adventure, applied to join them. Gladly was he received. Though but a boy of eighteen, his stable character, his vigorous strength, and his training in all the mysteries of frontier life, rendered him an invaluable acquisition.

The perils to which they were exposed may be inferred from the fate which some traders encountered soon after Kit Carson's party had accomplished the journey. There were twelve traders returning from Santa Fe. To avoid the Indians they took an extreme southern route. Day after day they toiled along, encountering no savages. It was December, and in that climate mild and serene. A caravan of twenty horses or mules travelling in single file, leaves a trail behind which can easily be followed.

Our adventurers were on a treeless prairie, an ocean of land, where nothing obstructed the view to the remote horizon. One beautiful morning, just after they had taken their breakfast and resumed their march, they perceived, not a little to their alarm, some moving object far in the distance behind. It soon resolved itself into a band of several hundred Indians, well mounted, painted and decorated in the highest style of barbaric art. They were thoroughly armed with their deadly bows and arrows and spears. It was indeed an imposing spectacle as these savage warriors on their fleet steeds, with their long hair and pennons streaming in the wind, came down upon them.

The little caravan halted and prepared for defence. There were twelve bold hearts to encounter several hundred foes on the open prairie. They knew that the main object of the

Indians would be to seize the horses and mules and effect a stampede with their treasure. This being accomplished they would torture and murder the traders in mere wantonness. The savages had a very salutary caution of rifles which could throw a bullet twice as far as the strongest bow and the most sinewy arm could speed an arrow.

With the swoop of the whirlwind they approached until they came within gun-shot distance, when they as suddenly stopped. Each trader had fastened his horse or mule with a rope and an iron pin two feet long driven firmly into the ground. They knew that if they were captured a cruel death awaited them. They therefore prepared to sell their lives as dearly as possible. There was no trunk or tree, or stone behind which either party could hide. The open prairie covered with grass was smooth as a floor.

For a short time both bands stood looking at each other. The traders in a small group had every man his rifle. Had the Indians in their resistless strength come rushing simultaneously upon them, they could easily have been trampled into the dust. But it was equally certain that twelve bullets, with unerring aim, would have pierced the hearts of twelve of their warriors. The Indians were very chary of their own lives. They were never ready for a fight in the open field, however great might be the odds in their favor.

The savages having halted and conferred together, endeavored to assume a friendly attitude. With a great show of brotherly feeling they cautiously approached one by one. The traders not wishing to commence the conflict, began to move on, leading their animals and with their rifles cocked,

watching every movement of the intruders. The mounted Indians followed along, quite surrounding with their large numbers the little band of white men.

Two of the mules lagged a little behind. One or two of the bolder of the savages made a dash at them and shot dead a man by the name of Pratt, who had them in charge. It was the signal of battle. A shower of arrows fell upon the traders, another man dropped dead, and an arrow buried its head in the thigh of another. Several of the Indians also fell. But the savages manifested a great dread of the rifle; and though they were forty to one against the white men, they retreated to a safe distance. As they felt sure of their victims, they did not wish to peril their own lives.

The traders hastily took the packs from the mules and piled them around for a barricade. The Indians were very wary. But by entirely surrounding the little fort and creeping through the long grass they succeeded in a few hours in shooting every one of the mules and horses of the traders. The savages kept up an incessant howling, and thirty-six dreadful hours thus passed away. It seemed but a prolongation of death's agonies. Hunger and thirst would ere long destroy them, even though they should escape the arrow and the tomahawk. It was not deemed wise to expend a single charge of powder or a bullet, unless sure of their aim. And the Indians crept so near, prostrated in the long grass, that not a head could be raised above the frail ramparts without encountering the whiz of arrows.

The day passed away. Night came and went. Another day dawned, and the hours lingered slowly along, while the

traders lay flat upon the ground, cramped in their narrow limits, awaiting apparently the sure approach of death.

The night was dark, dense clouds obscuring the sky. The Indians themselves had become somewhat weary, and deeming it impossible for their victims to escape and feeling sure of the booty, which could by no possibility be removed, relaxed their watchfulness. As any death was preferable to captivity and torture by the Indians, the traders resolved, in the gloom of midnight to attempt an escape, though the chances were a hundred to one that they would be almost buried beneath the arrows of the howling savages.

Cautiously they emerged from their hiding-place, creeping slowly and almost breathlessly through the tall grass of the prairie, till quite to their surprise, they found themselves beyond the circle of the besiegers. There were ten men, one wounded, fleeing for life, expecting every moment to be pursued by five hundred savages. It was a long, dark, dismal winter's night, for in that changing clime a freezing night succeeded a sunny day. Like spectres they fled over the open prairie. That their flight might not be encumbered they had taken nothing with them but their guns and ammunition.

They were determined men. In whatever numbers and with whatever speed the mounted Indians might ride down upon them, ten of their warriors would inevitably bite the dust ere the fugitives could be taken. The Indians fully understood this. And when the morning dawned and they saw that their victims had escaped, instead of pursuing, they satisfied their valor in holding a triumphant powwow over the rich booty they had gained.

It was a chill day and the wind moaned dismally over the bleak prairie. But as far as the eye could extend no foe could be seen. Not even a tree obscured the vision. The exhaustion of the fugitives, from their thirty-six hours of sleeplessness and battle, and their rapid flight, was extreme. They shot a few prairie chickens, built a small fire of dried buffalo chips with which they cooked their frugal breakfast, and then, lying down upon the rank grass, slept soundly for a few hours.

They then pressed on their pathless way toward the rising sun. Through weary days and nights they toiled on, through rain and cold, sleeping often in stormy nights drenched, upon the bare soil, without even a blanket to cover their shivering frames. Their feet became blistered. Passing beyond the bounds of the open prairie, they sometimes found themselves in bogs, sometimes in tangled forests. There were streams to be waded or to be crossed upon such rude rafts as they could frame with their hatchets. Their clothes hung in tatters around them, and, most deplorable of all, their ammunition became expended.

For days they lived upon roots and the tender bark of trees. Some became delirious, indeed some seemed quite insane through their sufferings. The man who was wounded, Mr. Schenck, was a gentleman of intelligence and of refinement and of distinguished family connections, from Ohio. A poetic temperament had induced him to seek the romance of an adventure through the unexplored wilderness.

After incredible sufferings his wound became so inflamed that it was impossible for him to go any farther. Prostrate

upon a mound in the forest his comrades left him. They could do absolutely nothing for him. They could not supply him with a morsel of food or with a cup of water. They had no heart even to bid him adieu. Silently they tottered along, and Mr. Schenck was left to die. Through what hours of suffering he lingered none but God can tell. Not even his bones were ever found to shed any light upon his sad fate.

So deep became the dejection of these wanderers that often for hours not one word was spoken. They were lost in the wilderness and could only direct their steps toward the rising sun. After leaving Mr. Schenck there were but nine men remaining. They soon disagreed in reference to the route to follow. This led to a separation, and five went in one direction and four in another. The five, after wandering about in the endurance of sufferings which can scarcely be conceived of, fell in with a party of friendly Creek Indians, by whom they were rescued and treated with the greatest humanity. Of the other four two only succeeded in escaping from the mazes of the wilderness.

Such were the perils upon which the youthful Kit Carson was now entering from the pure love of adventure. He was not uninformed respecting these dangers. The knowledge of them did but add to the zest of the enterprise.

Crossing the plains of the interior of our Continent from the Missouri river to the Rocky mountains, was a very different undertaking half a century ago, from what it has been in more modern times. The route was then almost entirely unexplored. There were no charts to guide. The bold adventurers knew not where they would find springs of water, where forage for their animals, where they would

enter upon verdureless deserts, where they could find fording-places of the broad and rapid rivers which they might encounter on their way.

This is not a forest-covered continent. The vast plains of the interior, whether smooth or undulating or rugged, spread far away for weary leagues, almost treeless. The forest was found mainly skirting the streams. Immense herds of buffaloes, often numbering ten or twenty thousand, grazed upon these rich and boundless pastures. Timid deer and droves of wild horses, almost countless in numbers, here luxuriated in a congenial home. There was scarcely a white man in the land whose eyes had ever beheld the cliffs of the Rocky mountains. And each Indian tribe had its hunting-grounds marked out with considerable precision, beyond which even the boldest braves seldom ventured to wander.

About a score of men started upon this trip. They were thoroughly armed, practiced marksmen, well mounted and each man led a pack mule, heavily laden with goods for the Santa Fe market. Their leader was commander-in-chief, whom all were bound implicitly to obey. He led the company, selecting the route, and he decided when and where to encamp. The procession followed usually in single file, a long line.

Early in the morning, at the sound of the bugle, all sprang from their couches which nature had spread, and they spent no more time at their toilet than did the horse or the cow. After a hurried breakfast they commenced their march. Generally an abundance of game was found on the

way. The animals always walked slowly along, being never put to the trot.

At noon the leader endeavored to find some spot near a running stream or a spring, where the animals could find pasture. The resting for a couple of hours gave them time for their dinner, which they had mainly picked up by the way.

An hour or two before sundown the camping ground was selected, the animals were tethered, often in luxuriant grass, and the hardy pioneers, by no means immoderately fatigued by the day's journey, having eaten their supper, which a good appetite rendered sumptuous, spent the time till sleep closed their eyelids in telling stories and singing songs. A very careful guard was set, and the adventurers enjoyed sound sleep till, with the dawn, the bugle call again summoned them. Under ordinary circumstances hardy men of a roving turn of mind, found very great attractions in this adventurous life. They were by no means willing to exchange its excitements for the monotonous labors of the field or the shop.

CHAPTER II.

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Life in the Wilderness.

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A Surgical Operation.—A Winter with Kin Cade.—Study of the Languages and Geography.—Return towards Missouri.—Engagement with a new Company and Strange Adventures.—The Rattlesnake.—Anecdote of Kit Carson.—The Sahara.—New Engagements.—Trip to El Paso.—Trapping and Hunting.—Prairie Scenery.—The Trapper's Outfit.—Night Encampment.—Testimony of an Amateur Hunter.

The company of traders which Kit had joined enjoyed, on the whole, a prosperous expedition. They met with no hostile Indians and, with one exception, encountered nothing which they could deem a hardship. There was one exception, which most persons would deem a terrible one. The accidental discharge of a gun, incautiously handled, shattered a man's arm, shivering the bone to splinters. The arm rapidly grew inflamed, became terribly painful, and must be amputated or the life lost. There was no one in the party who knew anything of surgery. But they had a razor, a handsaw and a bar of iron.

It shows the estimation in which the firm, gentle, and yet almost womanly Kit Carson was held, that he was chosen to perform the operation. Two others were to assist him. The sufferer took his seat, and was held firmly, that in his anguish his struggles might not interfere with the progress of the knife. This boy of but eighteen years then, with great apparent coolness, undertook this formidable act of surgery.

He bound a ligature around the arm very tightly, to arrest, as far as possible the flow of blood. With the razor he cut through the quivering muscles, tendons and nerves. With the handsaw he severed the bone. With the bar of iron,

at almost a white heat, he cauterized the wound. The cruel operation was successful. And the patient, under the influence of the pure mountain air, found his wound almost healed before he reached Santa Fe.

Having arrived at his journey's end, Kit's love of adventure led him not to return with the traders, by the route over which he had just passed, but to push on still further in his explorations. About eighty miles northeast of Santa Fe there was another Spanish settlement, weird-like in its semi-barbarous, semi-civilized aspects, with its huts of sun-baked clay, its Catholic priests, its Mexican Indians and its half-breeds. It was a small, lonely settlement, whose population lived mainly, like the Indians, upon corn-meal and the chase. Kit ever kept his trusty rifle with him. His gun and hatchet constituted his purse, furnishing him with food and lodging.

It was a mountainous region; here in one of the dells, Kit came across the solitary hut of a mountaineer by the name of Kin Cade. They took a mutual liking to each other. As Kit could at any day, with his rifle bring in food enough to last a week, the question of board did not come into consideration. It was in the latter part of November that Kit first entered the cabin of this hunter. Here he spent the winter. His bed consisted probably of husks of corn covered with a buffalo robe, a luxurious couch for a healthy and weary man. Pitch pine knots brilliantly illumined the hut in the evening. Traps were set to catch animals for their furs. Deer skins were softly tanned and colored for clothing, with ornamental fringes for coats and leggins and moccasins. Kit and his companion Kin were their own tailors.

Thus passed the winter of 1826. Both of the men were very good-natured, and of congenial tastes. They wanted for nothing. When the wind howled amid the crags of the mountains and the storm beat upon their lonely habitation, with fuel in abundance and a well filled larder, and with no intoxicating drinks or desire for them, they worked upon their garments and other conveniences in the warmth of their cheerful fireside. It is not hazarding too much to say that these two gentle men, in their solitary cabin, passed a far more happy winter than many families who were occupying, in splendid misery, the palatial residences of London, Paris and New York.

Kin Cade was perhaps a Spaniard. He certainly spoke the Spanish language with correctness and fluency. The intelligence of Kit is manifest from the fact that he devoted himself assiduously during the winter to the acquisition of the Spanish language. And his strong natural abilities are evidenced in his having attained, in that short time, quite the mastery of the Spanish tongue. It is often said that Kit Carson was entirely an uneducated man. This is, in one respect, a mistake. The cabin of Kin Cade was his academy, where he pursued his studies vigorously and successfully for a whole winter, graduating in the spring with the highest honors that academy could confer.

We ought not to forget that, in addition to the study of the languages, he also devoted much attention to the study of geography. They had no books, no maps. It is doubtful indeed, whether either Kit or his teacher could read or write. But Kin had been a renowned explorer. He had traversed the prairies, climbed the mountains, followed the courses of the