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AMERICAN SCENE



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AMERICAN SCENE

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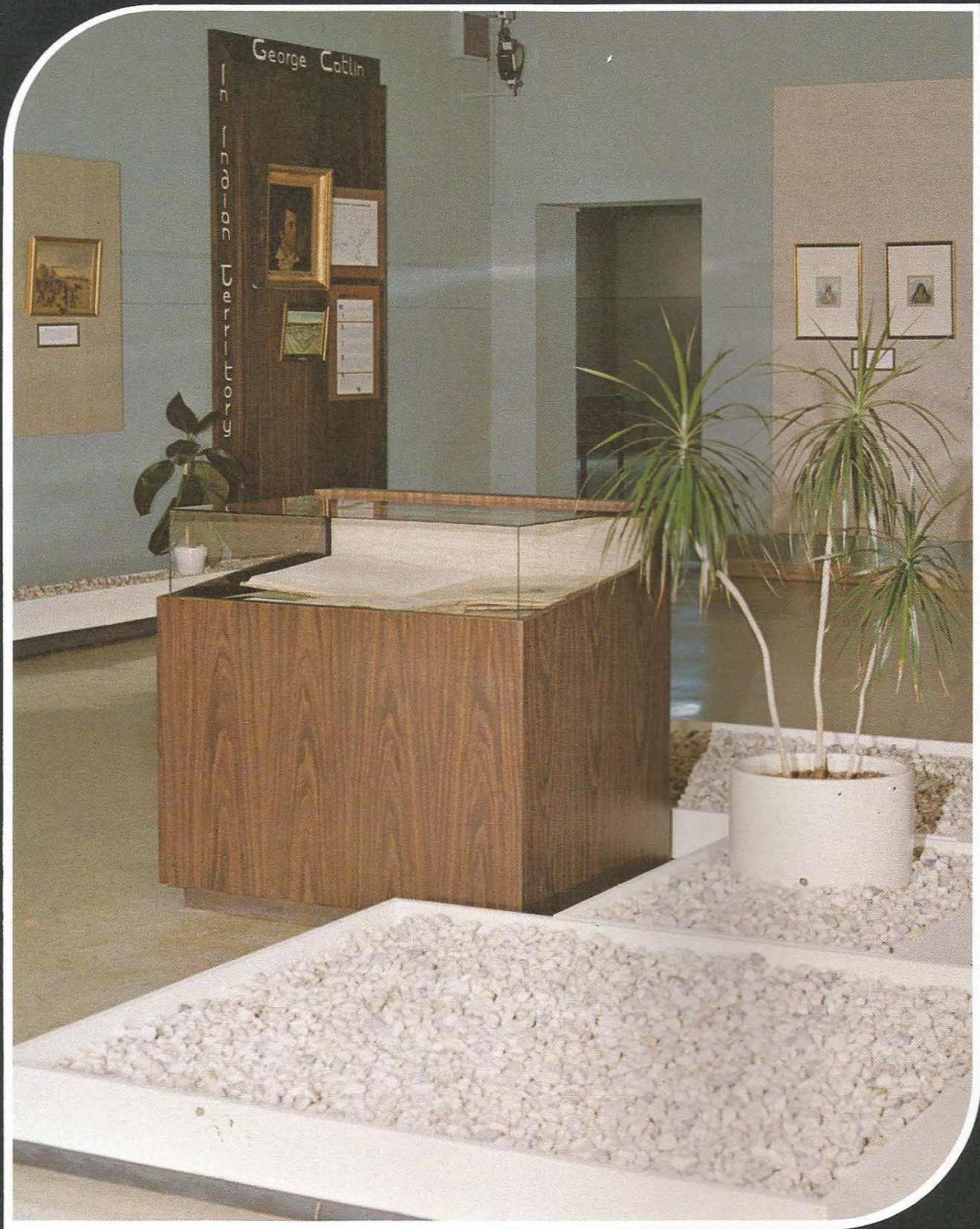
In this issue of *American Scene*, the curatorial staff of the Thomas Gilcrease Institute of American History and Art has departed somewhat from the editorial pattern of the past. Instead of concentrating all effort upon one single article for the entire issue, we have elected to present three articles of shorter lengths. The idea, of course, is to provide a greater variety of curatorial comment upon the innumerable facets of the magnificent collections housed and exhibited here in the Gilcrease Museum.

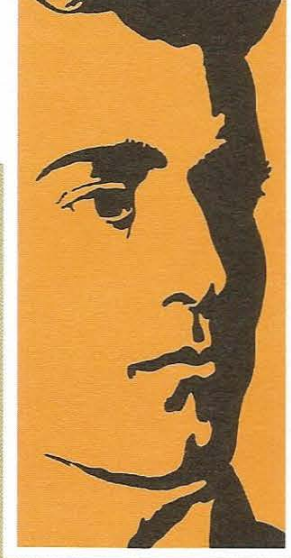
The subject areas were selected to coincide with recent gallery installations. It is our wish that these articles serve to



augment the gallery experience for the museum member and visitor by providing what are hoped to be fresh or unique insights into the lives and careers of the artists whose works are featured in the new installations. Of course, none of the three artists spotlighted in this issue of *American Scene* needs any introduction. George Catlin, Thomas Moran, Charles Russell—they are all old friends. What we have tried to do in the museum with the works of these well-known and well-loved artists is to *reintroduce* them, in new gallery settings, thereby refreshing the memories of visitors to our collections. We hope that this issue of *American Scene* will become part of that process of refreshment. •

W. R. B.





Geo. Catlin

PORTRAITIST OF THE WESTERN INDIAN

George Catlin was born at Wilkes-Barre, Penn., July 26, 1796. Although admitted to the bar in 1818, Catlin permitted his love for art to become dominant and abandoned his legal career to devote time to painting. In 1824 he was elected to the Pennsylvania Academy of Art, which at the time numbered among its members Thomas Sully and Charles Willson Peale. Although he achieved success as a portraitist, Catlin turned to the subject of the American Indian with sustained enthusiasm soon after being inspired by a visiting delegation of Western Indians to Philadelphia. Interested in Indians from childhood, Catlin resolved with religious zeal to devote his life to becoming the pictorial historian of the American Indian.

In 1834 Catlin had the opportunity of accompanying the Leavenworth-Dodge Dragoon Expedition to the Wichita Mountains of present day southwestern Oklahoma and painted not only the Southern Plains tribes such as the Kiowa and Comanche but also the Osage and the civilized Southern Tribes, such as the Cherokee, Creek, and Choctaw who had moved to the Three Forks region near Ft. Gibson.

Following his travels to the Indian country during the eighteen-thirties, Catlin placed his work on exhibit in New York, Washington, Philadelphia, and Boston. The exhibition included not only some 500 paintings but also costumes, ornaments, weapons, and other Indian artifacts.

Catlin's painting does not represent any school of art. He was self taught (having been trained in law) and excelled at portraiture. In his field work, Catlin's technique was impressionistic; one might expect such a sketchy, rapid directness when one recalls the conditions under which he worked. Catlin's paintings must be judged individually. Some are very accurate even to minute details, while others reveal certain artistic license. Catlin was not only a painter-ethnologist, but first of all he could be called a humanitarian. He had an honest interest in the welfare of the Indians, and he made an effort to note the events in the lives of the Indians that sat for him. He managed to follow the careers of most of the better known of his subjects with the anecdotes supplied by traders who had visited his Indian friends. ● G. P. E.



“ The next and second chief of the tribe, is Mah-toh-pa (the four bears). This extraordinary man, though second in office is undoubtedly the first and most popular man in the nation. Free, generous, elegant, and gentlemanly in his deportment—handsome, brave and valiant; wearing a robe on his back, with the history of his battles emblazoned on it; which would fill a book of themselves, if properly translated. This, readers, is the most extraordinary man, perhaps, who lives at this day, in the atmosphere of Nature's noblemen; and I shall certainly tell you more of him anon.

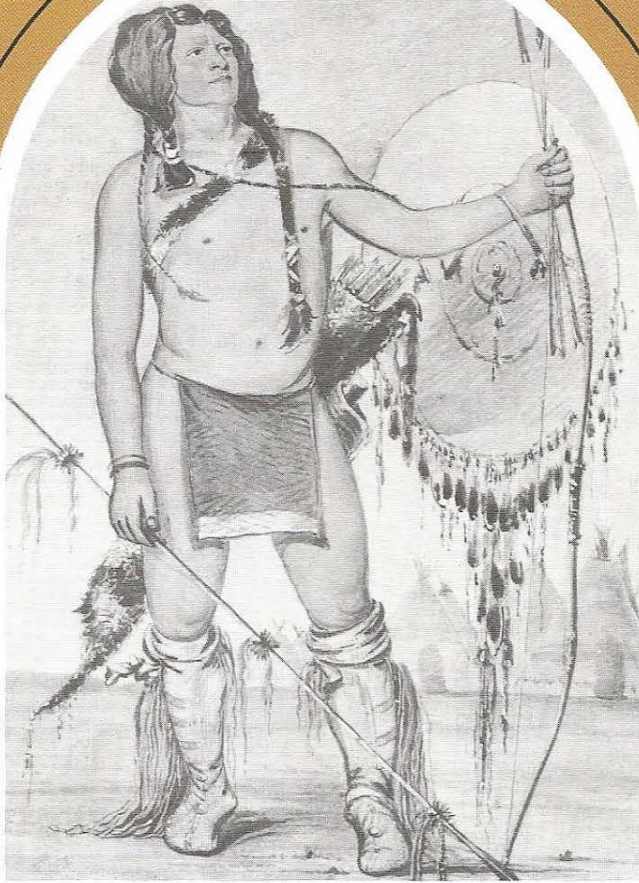
“This fine fellow sat in his wigwam and watched every one of his family die about him, his wives and his little children, after he had recovered from the disease himself: when he walked out, around the village, and wept over the final destruction of his tribe; his braves and warriors, whose sinewy arms alone he could depend on for a continuance of their existence, all laid low; when he came back to his lodge, where he covered his whole family in a pile, with a number of robes, and wrapping another around himself, went out upon a hill at a little distance, where he lay several days, despite all the solicitations of the Traders, resolved to starve himself to death. He remained there till the sixth day, when he had just strength enough to creep back to the village, when he entered the horrid gloom of his own wigwam, and laying his body alongside of the group of his family, drew his robe over him and died on the ninth day of his fatal abstinence.”



“ Muk-a-tah-mish-o-kah-kaik . . . as the leader of the 'Black Hawk War', who was defeated by General Atkinson, and held a prisoner of war, and sent through Washington and other Eastern cities, with a number of others, to be gazed at.

“This man, whose name has carried a sort of terror through the country where it has been sounded, has been distinguished as a speaker or counsellor rather than as a warrior; and I believe it has been pretty generally admitted, that 'Nah-pope' and the 'Prophet' were, in fact, the instigators of the war; and either of them with much higher claims for the name of warrior than Black Hawk ever had.

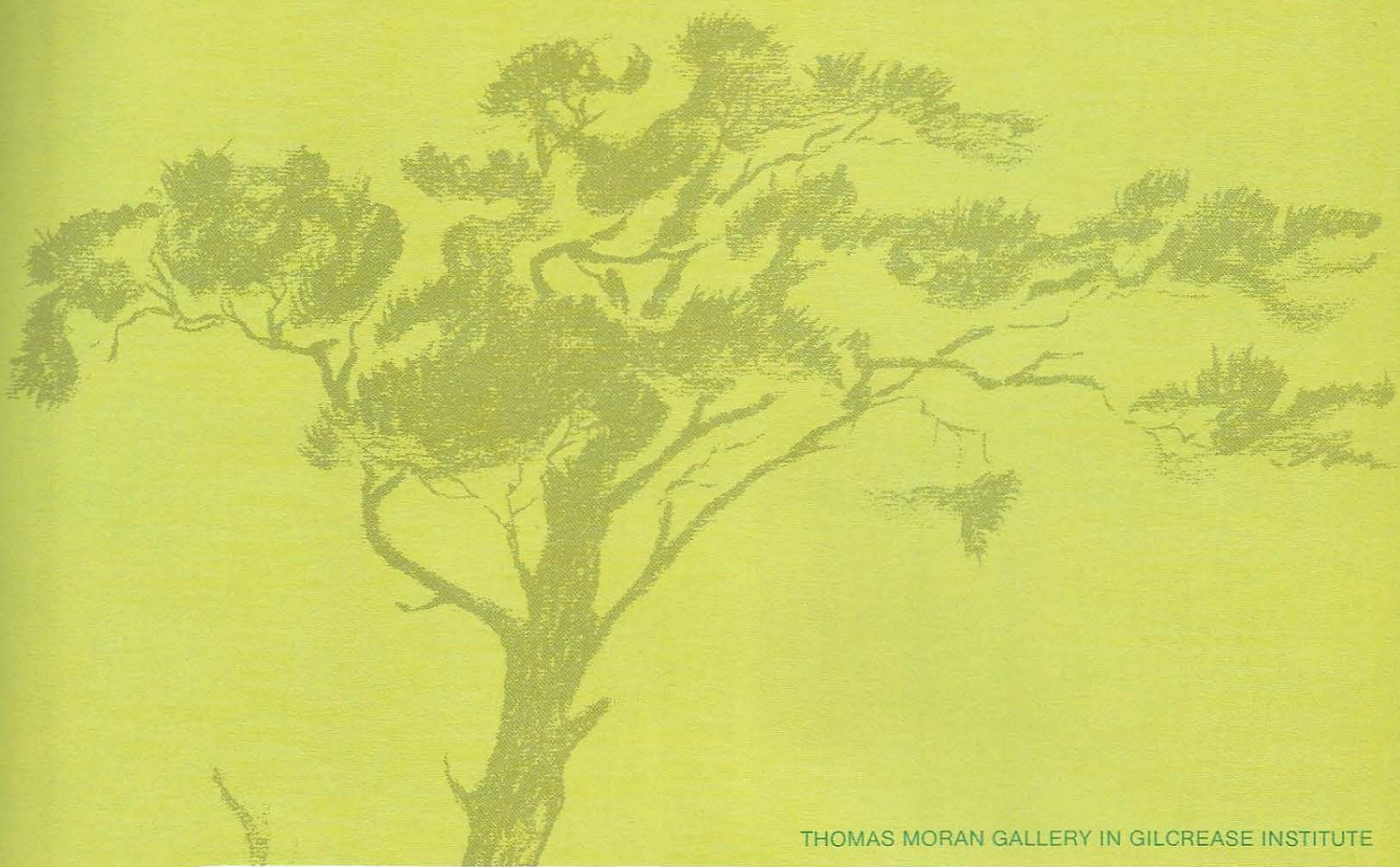
“When I painted this chief, he was dressed in a plain suit of buckskin, with strings of wampum in his ears and on his neck, and held in his hand his medicine-bag, which was the skin of a black hawk, from which he had taken his name, and the tail of which made him a fan, which he was almost constantly using.”



“His-oo-san-ches, a gallant little fellow, is represented to us as one of the leading warriors of the tribe; and no doubt is one of the most extraordinary men at present living in these regions. He is half Spanish and being a half-breed, for whom they generally have the most contemptuous feelings, he has been all his life thrown into the front of battle and danger; at which posts he has signalled himself, and commanded the highest admiration and respect of the tribe, for his daring and adventurous career. This is the man of whom I have before spoken, who dashed out so boldly from the war-party, and came to us with the white flag raised on the point of his lance, and of whom I have made a sketch in Fig. 157. I have here represented him as he stood for me, with his shield on his arm, with his quiver slung, and his lance of fourteen feet in length in his right hand. This extraordinary little man, whose figure was light, seemed to be all bone and muscle, and exhibited immense power, by the curve of the bones in his legs and his arms. We had many exhibitions of his extraordinary strength, as well as agility; and of his gentlemanly politeness and friendship, we had as frequent evidences.”



“... little grey-haired Sha-ko-ka, mint; and fifty others, who are famous for their conquests, not with the bow or the javelin, but with their small black eyes, which shoot out from under their unfledged brows, and pierce the boldest, fiercest chieftain to the heart. ... the diversity in the colour of hair is also equally as great as that in the complexion; for in a numerous group of these people (and more particularly amongst the females, who never take pains to change its natural colour, as the men often do), there may be seen every shade and colour of hair that can be seen in our own country, with the exception of red or auburn, which is not be found.”



THOMAS MORAN GALLERY IN GILCREASE INSTITUTE



The name of Thomas Moran is identified with the grand scenery of our far western country, the Rocky Mountains, the cañons of the great rivers, the plains of Arizona, and the beautiful natural views in the Yellowstone country. When he took other subjects than those he found in the West, it was to transcribe some quiet pastoral scene in the vicinity of Easthampton, Long Island, where he had his studio and country home, or to depict Venice under magical effects of atmosphere and color.

Moran was at his best in the interpretation of grand effects in nature, and his compositions generally impress the beholder with a sense of power and dramatic color. This was especially true of the western subjects. Two of his celebrated works, "The Grand Cañon of the Yellowstone," and "The Chasm of the Colorado," were purchased by Congress for the Capitol in Washington, D. C.

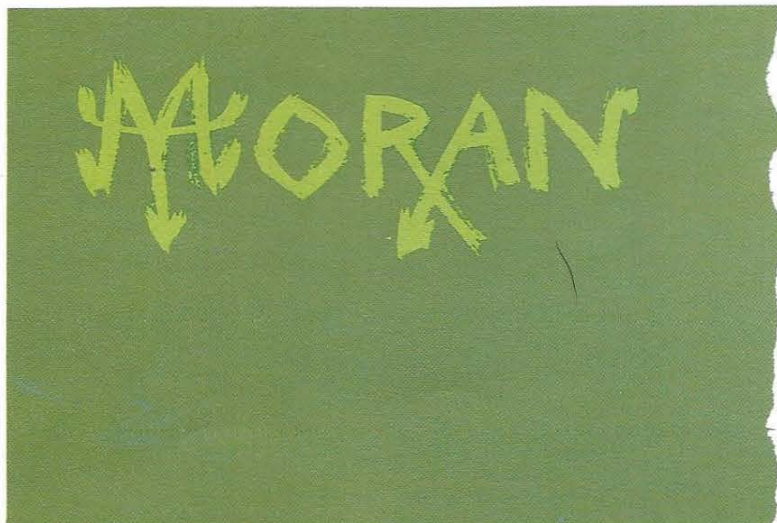
Thomas Moran was born at Bolton, Lancashire, England, January 12, 1837, and died in Santa Barbara, California, August 25, 1926. He came from a family of artists and studied art with his brother, Edward. His wife, Mary Nimmo Moran, also an artist, was noted especially for her etchings. To Moran, art was not just a way of life—it was life itself. Still, his was a colorful many faceted personality. In the following pages we will try to present one picture of Moran through the eyes of his daughter, Ruth, who devoted her life to her famous father.

"His children, three of us, loved him, and never felt the least awe or fear of him, but always instinctively in awe of his work. He, himself, disappeared so completely in it—was so rapt in it—that we children never had to be told, or taught, to reverence it—it was always the first thought of all of us—as it was practically the whole thought and life of my father.

"We lived closely as a family, always in and out of the studio, but we never disturbed my father. We would lie flat on the floor and watch him paint, or use his water colors to paint the pictures for ourselves in the old pictorial magazine, The Aldine, or we would shudder with delightful horror over the Dore drawings in Dante's Inferno, which was always in the studio, but we never disturbed the complete concentration which isolated Thomas Moran from everyone he most loved—even his beloved wife, who was almost a part of himself!"

Moran lived unobtrusively and modestly, always true to his ideals, producing an enormous amount of work during his life time, and living long enough to receive the awards and acclaim he so justly deserved. ●

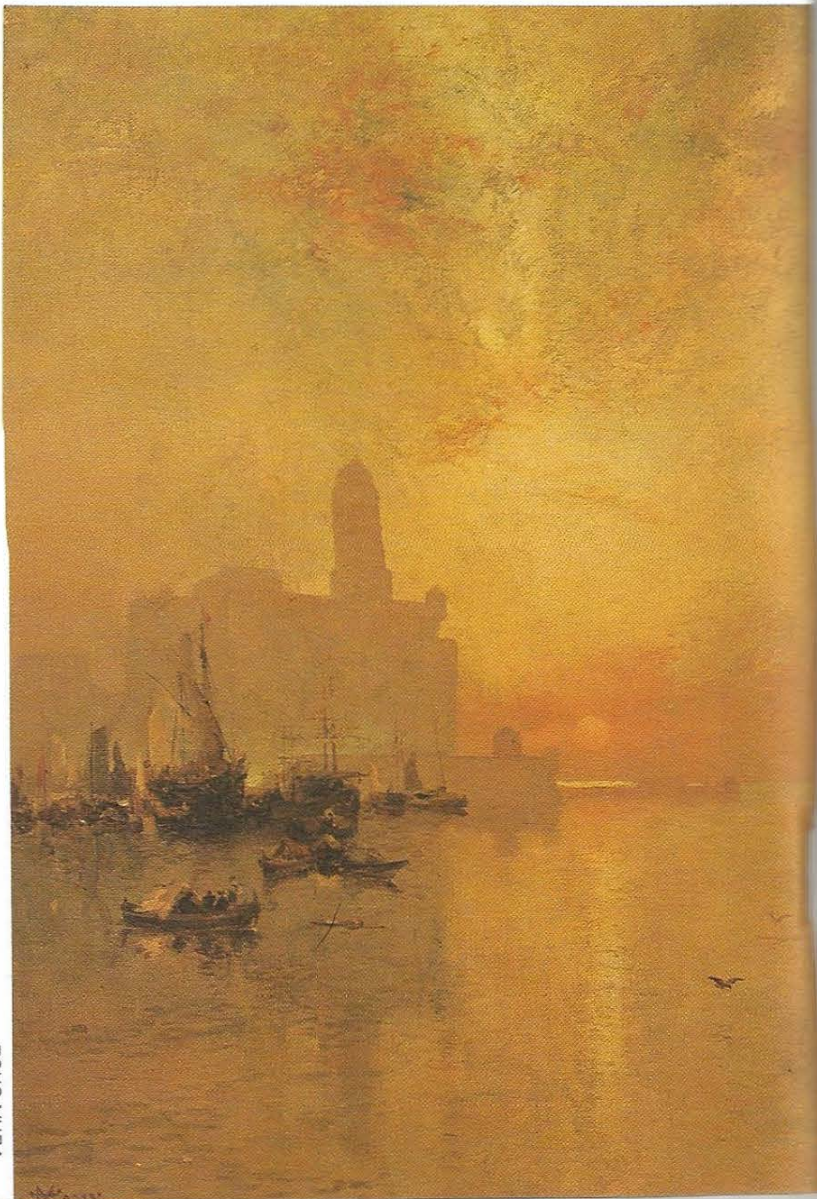
M. K.





"The outstanding memory of my father; the first impression was, and I believe the last impression will be the atmosphere of romance that he had about him; he seemed always to be starting off or coming back from strange, beautiful places, wild countries. And then at once on the return I would be thrilled by the lovely colors that almost at once began to grow and glow on canvas and water-color pads, and the delicate, beautiful drawings on the blocks of boxwood."

"He loved England—it was in his blood—the beautiful landscape and fierce coast line, and the perfect composition of it. But he cared little for the Continent—only Venice really held him—and as he always would say 'Venice' was only a dream."





"So now when I look at him, in his eighty-eighth year, unchanged in spirit, still noting every variation of light and color and form in the clouds, the solidity of the foliage of the live oak, and the grace of the eucalyptus; still dreaming his fairy cities, and strange, misty mountain-rimmed seas—I feel again the old thrill and wonder of Romance, as I did in my babyhood when I crept down the stairs and into my mother's lap to watch him at work on his black and white dreams, after a long day with color—never tired, never through, always riding on through his enchanted forest."

". . . That was the real beginning of a career that never flagged or went stale—or backward—but always steadily forward—to the very end in Santa Barbara when he left this World which he had found so beautiful—nearly ninety years old—and still interested in making designs for a Venice out of the cracks that the earthquake had made on his ceiling of his bedroom—and the sunlight that flooded his room—indeed a life of joy, fulfilled dreams of exploring for new beauty in strange lands, dead seas, great forests—living and petrified—great waterfalls, the great sea, the great deserts, or the little Long Island Village that was his home."



DREAM CITY

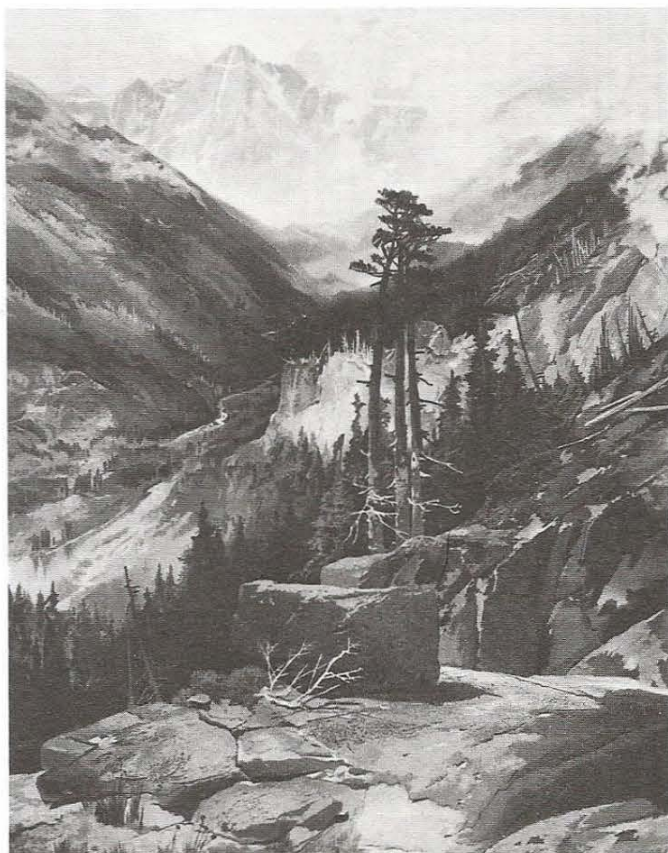


ACOMA

"Thomas Moran before 1871 had taken but one trip to the westward. He was a city man, educated and lived in Philadelphia, Pa., but a great lover of nature

which took him out into the country about the City where he could walk—and there he first studied from nature—the trees, rocks, & running streams he always after loved, and painted."

"A dreamer of dreams—and at the same time often a painter of exact facts—a lover of nature to such a degree that he knew every tree and leaf by heart—all the movements in the water—the form of it—the geology of the rocks, because he said, he could not get beauty unless he knew how they were formed first. . . . He went straight for his goal—and always without fear—he knew neither mental nor physical fear—though with his delicate physique, and lack of any muscular force—he might have feared an utterly unknown West—where the stories of Indians—Wells Fargo hold ups—and many deaths of a fearful kind seemed to abound. But he always said that when he went on his first trip with Hayden (alone—he met the others somewhere in Utah or Colorado), that he felt it a pity things had become so tame and civilized—this was 1871!"



MOUNTAIN OF THE HOLY CROSS



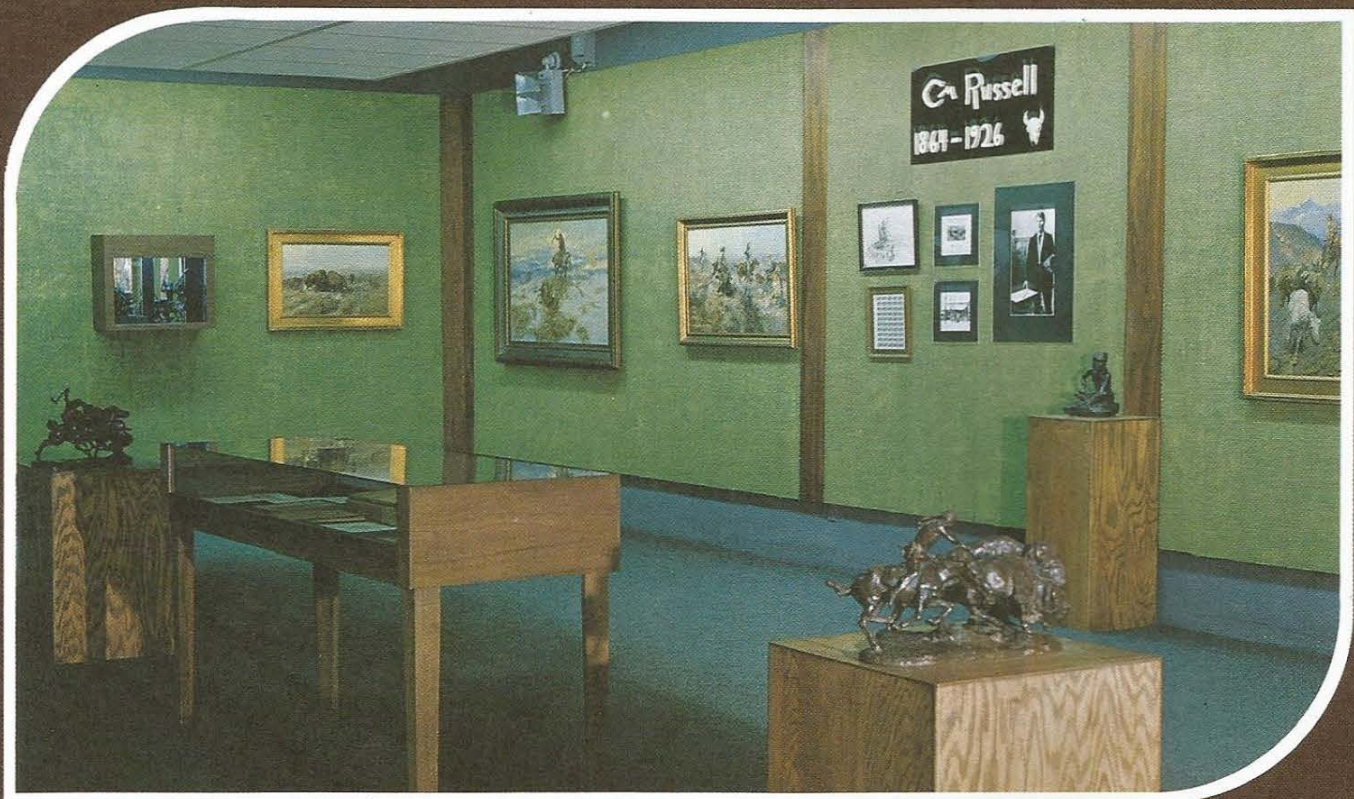
"I have the hope that . . . young people of an artistic talent look at this, their own country, and look with their own minds and eyes, not led by other and foreign schools, but remembering especially those earlier schools of art in America. Nations live in the undying quality of their arts. America should be proud of her early beginnings and should win her own way in the painters' art by saying 'Know Thyself.' The man I write of did this in all simplicity of purpose, leading

us to the saving of beauty in nature and art, otherwise lost to a later generation." It was nearly forty years after Ruth Moran wrote the above words that man became really concerned with preserving and protecting the trees, rivers, green meadows, and even the atmosphere that Moran has preserved so magnificently on canvas. Let us not forget that Thomas Moran, perhaps more than anyone else, is responsible for the establishing of our national parks.

"Thomas Moran's whole figure was romantic; perhaps the more so because of the utter lack of self-consciousness. . . . He used always to wear in winter, a round beaver fur cap, set rather jauntily on his very small, compact head. Nearly five feet eight inches in height, thin, wiry, and quick and firm on his feet, . . . he wore his cap and cape coat rather gallantly. Yes, he was a romantic figure, in a not very romantic period." In another biographical sketch of her father, Ruth writes: ". . . the first time he ever rode a horse and being so thin he suffered from it much — that he used his pillow to ride on not withstanding the jokes of his companions. He told me he never enjoyed for one moment being on a horse. And I never saw him willingly mount one."



C.M. RUSSELL GALLERY IN GILCREASE INSTITUTE



Charles Russell's

RAWHIDE RAWLINS STORIES



Charles Russell is known to most of us primarily as a famous western painter, and I, by no means, want to prejudice that view of Mr. Russell, but I do want to add that to understand him better, it would help a great deal to read his fresh and unpretentious short stories. Russell uses words almost as well as he does oils to tell a story or to express an idea. He tells us a lot about himself, perhaps unknowingly, through the stories he wrote. Charlie Russell is a man who did most of the things he wrote about or depicted on canvas, and his unassuming manner and high spirits are prevalent throughout his tales. Russell's marvelous sense of humor emerges through the fictitious character of Rawhide Rawlins, the narrator of his stories. Some might say that the

stories are not only pleasant tales of the Old West, as Russell intended them, but are also rife with cowboy philosophy, western lore, and an indispensable insight into Russell's own warm personality.

In order to make these stories available to almost everyone at a reasonable price, they were printed on uncalendered paper and were bound in paper. *Rawhide Rawlins Stories* was published in 1921, and *More Rawhide Rawlins Stories* in 1925. The Gilcrease Library has copies of these scarce volumes. A larger collection of Rawhide Rawlins stories was printed in 1927 in conventional book form by Doubleday and titled *Trails Plowed Under*. All three of these books are heavily illustrated with his pen and ink drawings. •

G. P. E.



HANDS UP!



JACK SHEA tells one time about being held up. It was in Colorado, and he's travelin' on a coach. There's five passengers, and one of them is a middle-aged woman. There's been a lot of stick-up men on this road, and this old lady is worried. She's got fifty dollars, and she's tryin' to get to her daughter somewhere up North. This fifty is all she's got, and if she loses it she's on the rocks.

"There's an old man in the bunch that's got all the earmarks of a cowman," says Shea. "He tells her to stick her roll under the cushions, and slips her a couple of dollars, sayin' that it will pacify these road robbers."

"We ain't gone five mile when the coach stops sudden and a gent outside says, 'Step out, folks, an' keep your hands up while you're doin' it.' We all know what we're up against and ain't slow gettin' out. There's one gent at the leaders, got the driver and the outside passenger covered; another that's waitin' for us. They're both wearin' blinds and heeled till they look nasty. This stick-up seems to know the old cowman and speaks to him. The old man steps out of line and whispers something to him. None of us get any of his talk, but when

the hold-up gets through trimmin' us he reaches into the coach, flips the cushion, and grabs the old lady's roll. Then we all return to our seats and the hold-up gives the driver his orders and the coach pulls out.

"We're all trimmed; the old lady's cryin'; and the rest of us ain't sayin' much, but we're doin' lots of thinkin'. From what we get, it looks like the old cowman stands in with the hold-ups: He's tellin' the lady not to take it so hard. When one of the passengers wants to know what the low talk is between him and the stick-up, the cowman don't turn a hair but tells us all he doubled-crossed the lady; that he tells this hold-up that twenty dollars is his bank roll, but if he'll pass him up he knows where there's fifty. The hold-up agrees, and he tips off the old lady's cash to protect himself. He tells it like he ain't ashamed, and finishes, sayin'; 'If you don't take care of yourself, nobody else will'."

"This talk makes the whole bunch wolfy. The passenger that's doin' the talkin' is for stoppin' the coach, and if there's a rope there'll be a hangin'. 'We don't need no rope; what's the matter with a lead rein? If he's as light in pounds as he is in principle, we'll slip a boulder in his pants to give him weight. This skunk is dirtier than airy hold-up on the road, and the sooner we pull this party, the better it suits me'."

"We're gettin' worked up on all this talk when the cowman that ain't turned a hair, says, 'If you gentlemen will let me play my hand out you'd find out who wins, but if you're bound to, go through with this hangin'."

"By this time, the old lady's beggin' for the cowman. She don't want to see him strung up, but thinks jail is strong enough. But these passengers are frothin' at the mouth, and it sure looks like the cowman's end is near. The driver has heard the story and stopped."

"Well," says the old man, "if you're bound to hang me—" and he don't scare worth a dam—"I'll slip my boots. I've been a gambler all my life," says he, draggin' off his right boot, "but none of your shorthorns ever was; you never played nothin' but solitaire. This lady stakes me to fifty," says he, "and I always split my winnin's in the middle with them that stakes me." And takin' a thousand dollars he's got tucked in his sock, he counts off five one-hundred-dollar bills, and hands them to the lady. "That's yours," says he.

"Nobody says nothin'. The old lady's shakin' hands, and,

between sobs, thankin' this old cross-roader. Somebody tells the driver to drive on, and we're just pullin' into town when the man that's strong for hangin' pulls a pint from his hip and says, 'To show you there's no hard feelin's, we'll all take

a drink—barrin' the lady! When the bottle comes back to its owner, it's near dry, but before he empties it, he says, 'Here's to the gambler that pays his stakes!' Then he empties her and throws her out the window, and we all shake hands." •



A STICK-UP ON THE ROAD

BRONC TWISTERS



A CONTEST RIDER

"**T**ALKIN' about bronc twisters," says Rawhide Rawlins, "there's some difference between hoss fighters to-day an' them I knowed years ago. I ain't sayin' these up-to-date riders ain't good as they ever was, an' I'd bet there's more of 'em than in the old days. The bronc rider always was and always will be a game glory hunter, gritty as a fish-egg rolled in sand, but the lives they live to-day an' the rigs they ride are different. "The bronc fighter saddles an' steps across the bronc in a narrer chute, or he's got a bunch of hoss handlers earin' the animal down till he saddles an' mounts. Of course he's got rules to ride under, such as keepin' one hand up, keepin' his spurs loose an' scratchin'. He ain't allowed to change hands, reach for or touch nothin'. The snake he's ridin' is an old outlaw from six to fifteen years old, an' he's grain-fed. It's a cinch a hoss with a paunch full of oats is stronger than one with a grass belly.

"These modern twisters ride a swell-fork saddle with high horn. The cantle is also high an' steep. Their spurs are long and straight-shanked. This is the contest rider I'm talkin' about, an' he's a sure-enough glory rider. When he breaks away from the chute in the middle of a twistin' snake, there's thousands of folks yellin' their heads off, but more'n half of 'em's howlin' for the hoss. There's generally three judges on hosses follerin' him, seein' he don't pull nothin' crooked.

"The big half of the folks that take in ridin' contests never rode nothin' but cushions, so if Mister Buster gets unloaded, they say he couldn't ride; if he stays an' scratches his bronc they say the hoss didn't buck. But there's always a few old bowlegs that have went straight up to the end of the bridle

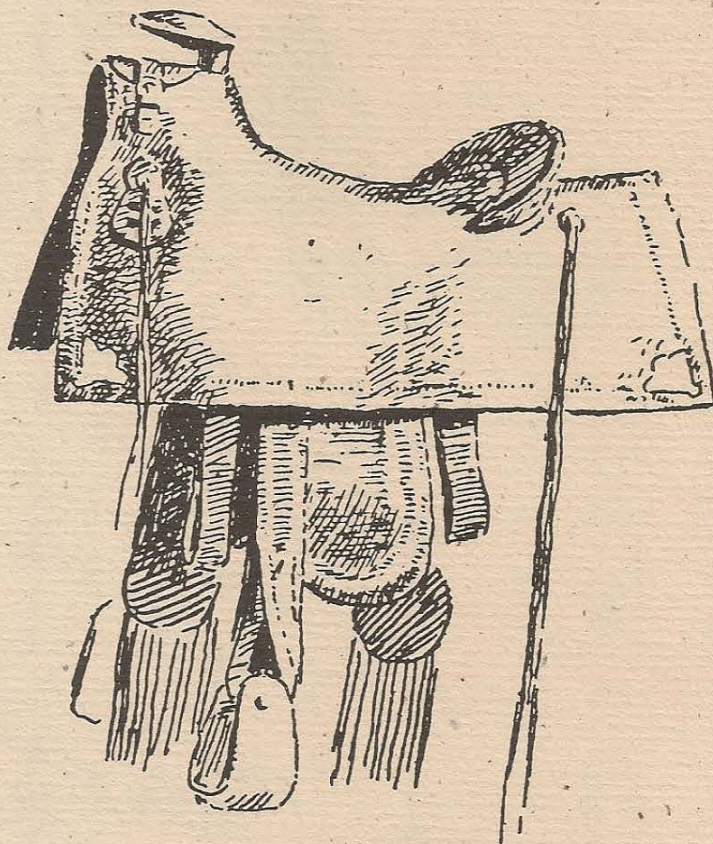
reins who heap savvy, an' are ready to shake hands with this bronc rider whether he stays or hits the ground. These twisters of to-day are made of the same leather as the old-time ones. It ain't their fault that the country's fenced an' most of the cows are wearin' bells.

"Now the old bronc fighter I knowed, lived when there wasn't a wire from the Arctic Sea to the Gulf of Mexico, an' that whole stretch was mighty near all his home. This gent lived on either cow or hoss ranges. His saddle was a straight-fork with a cantle that sloped back, an' compared to saddles now, the horn was low. I've seen bronc riders use an old macheer saddle with a Texas tree. It had two cinches an' was called a 'rim-fire'. The horn was low an' flat—so big you couldn't more'n span it with your hand. The macheer, as it was called, was one piece of leather that fitted over the cantle an' horn, makin' a coverin' for the whole rig. This leather was smooth an' so slick it wasn't easy to stay in.

"These old-timers' spurs had crooked shanks that turned down. They all rode an' broke broncs with a hackamore. It wasn't a rope one like they're usin' to-day, but one made of braided leather an' rawhide. Looped to this was about fifteen or twenty foot of hair rope called a 'McCarthy'. This was wrapped around the lower end of the noseband under the jaws of the hoss, makin' reins an' a tie-rope.

"Range hosses them days was wild as buffalo, an' corraling a bunch wasn't always easy. But Mister Bronc Fighter's work really begun after the gate was closed or the bars up, for the first thing was to rope the one he figgered on ridin'. Generally he fore-footed him. This made him fairly safe in front, but a bronc's dangerous at both ends, an' the bronc fighter knows this. He ain't takin' chances, an' after he's got the bronc's front feet snared, he man-handles him till he gets the hackamore on. Then, sometimes usin' a blind, he saddles him an' steps across.

"Mebbe this bronc's a snake, an' mebbe he's easy, but either way there ain't nobody watchin' but the other broncs. If the bronc fighter rides him outside the corral he might buck through a bunch of range cows, but neither cows nor broncs seem to appreciate good ridin', so there's nobody boostin' for this twister. The old bronc riders didn't only ride a bronc, but they worked him. They'd take a string of rough ones to a roundup an' ride circle, cut cattle or rope off of him.



OLD MACHEER SADDLE WITH TEXAS TREE

"All these things happened in the good old days long ago, when men like Con Price, Charlie Brewster, Windy Bill Davis, Kid Price, Little Jack Davis, Happy Jack Anderson, Jim Dency, Ed Rhodes, Joe Doles, Charlie Parks, Johnny Van, Bill Shaules, and Colonel Johnson were needed on all the cow ranges. These men were all well known when Montana was a cow country. They were all riders that rode smooth fork.

"Some of these old riders is friends of mine. Charlie Brewster's one of the best that ever stepped across a hoss, an' many a bad one he's tamed. One time Charlie's ridin' on a roundup. Of course his string's all broncs, an' one mornin'



THE BRONC'S LODGED IN THE TOP OF A BIG COTTONWOOD

he'll never forget he's got a snaky roan under him an' starts out on circle with six other punchers in the Deep Creek country. This stream in places is walled in with rimrock cliffs that run up twenty to sixty feet above the bottom.

"They're ridin' along mebbe twenty yards from the edge of one of these rims, when Charlie drops his hackamore reins an' builds a cigarette. Most men ridin' a hoss like this roan would be careful, but it's different with Charlie. He don't fear no hoss on earth, an' he ain't askin' no bronc whether he objects to smokin'. While he's rollin' his smoke the roan drops his ear down an' shows the white of his eyes, so it's easy to guess his feelin's is hurt. Charlie strikes a match, but he never lights his cigarette. While he's cuppin' his hands over the match, lettin' the sulphur burn off, somethin'—mebbe the brimfire sniff he gets—wakes the hell in the roan. He kicks the lid off, hides his head an' starts for the rimrock.

"Charlie has plenty of time to quit, but does he step off? Don't ever think it. He sinks the steel into the roan's right shoulder and throws his weight on the left rein, but he don't turn him. The roan's goin' high an' scary when he hits the edge of the cliff an' goes over.

"There's a feller called Oregon John with Brewster when he takes that long jump. Oregon tells me that when he sees Charlie sink into the landscape he's afraid to look over, but he'd have bet what he's got an' all he could beg, borrow, or steal, that at the bottom he'll find a scramble of man an' hoss meat.

"None of the bunch says nothin', but ridin' up easy, like they're goin' to a funeral, they peek over, an' what do you think they see? There, mebbe ten feet below the rimrock, sits Charlie in the middle of the roan. The bronc's lookin' healthy, but uncomfortable. He's lodged in the top of a big cottonwood. Charlie's still holdin' his cigarette, an' when the boys show up he hollers: 'Anybody got a match? The one I struck blowed out.'

"Oregon says that bronc's sure helpless, for he's wedged in the old tree so he can't more than move an ear. One of the boys goes to camp an' brings an axe, an' they have to fall the tree to get the roan out.

"This story may sound fishy to some folks, but it's true: Charlie Brewster's still in Montana, an' I'll bet wherever he

is, he's still with hosses. He was a real bronc rider, an' all old-time cowmen knew him.

"I remember another old-time bronc fighter that could ride any hoss livin' an' work with him. His name's Con Price, an' right now he's with a cow outfit in California. There's a story about him that a lot of old cowmen will remember an' laugh about.

"Con's out one time with Ed Rosser, huntin' hosses. They're riding the high country, when Rosser pulls up his hoss an' points to a nester's cabin in a little valley below. 'There's women in that shack,' says he.

"What makes you think so?' asks Con.

"I see washin' on the line there a few days ago,' says Rosser, 'an' all the he-folks we know, when they do any washin', use the creek an' hang their clothes on the willers. But to make my belief a cinch bet, there's garments on that line that ain't worn by no he-people.'

"Well, I guess you're right,' Con says. 'I remember a few weeks ago that nester told me he had a wife an' daughter comin' out from the States.'

"Wonder what the gal looks like,' says Rosser.

"She's a good looker, judgin' from the photograph the old man shows me,' Con answers.

"In the days when this happens, women 're scarce, an' the few cowpunchers an' old mountain men that lived in this womanless land sure liked to see a white woman an' hear her voice. So Con an' Rosser start figgerin' on some kind of an excuse to visit this ranch. They can't ask for a drink of water, 'cause the hills are full of springs an' they have to cross the creek to get to the cabin.

"They're both studyin' when Con get a plumb new one. The hoss he's ridin's a snuffy old boy. If you thumb him or hang the steel in his shoulder he'll go high. Con's idea is to start him an' then fall off.

"They're mebbe fifty yards from the house when Con throws one of his hooks in the shoulder of the old hoss, hopin' somebody's lookin' from behind a curtain to see the fall he gets. Once is enough. This animal, like many of his kind, considers this an insult, an' sinkin' his head, he starts for the clouds.

"About the third jump Con loosens. The hoss, Con tells me later, makes the play realistic. 'When he feels me goin,' he says,

'he weaves off to one side an' I hit the ground a lot harder than I expected!

"Con lays like he's hurt bad. Rosser quits his hoss an' runs to his friend, an' he's got all he can do to get him on his feet.

"You're a sure-enough actor," Rosser whispers to Con. "You're as heavy as a dead bear," he says, as he part leads an' part packs him up the hill to the house. 'If it was another twenty feet I'd have to cut hand-holds in you.'

"It's a cinch that anybody not on to the play would bet Con's got all his legs broke. A sweat's broke out all over Rosser when he gently lays Con on the step an' knocks at the door.

"Con lays there, listenin' for footsteps of the ladies, but they don't come. There's no sign of life, an' the only livin' thing in sight is two hosses—Con's and Rosser's. They're driftin' mighty rapidly homeward. The one Con rode, with the reins still over his neck, is headed like he knows where he's goin'. Rosser's is follerin' close with his head to one side, so he don't step on the reins. Lookin' at these hosses, an' nobody comin' to the door, makes Con recover mighty fast, an' his groans turns to cussin'.

"In them days, when the country was wide open an' lawless, the houses had no keys, so after knockin' a few more times, they both walk in. Rosser's right; it's a woman's camp. There's curtains on the winders and flowers growin' in a tomato can that's settin' on a table where the sun hits them. From the sign, they read there's two ladies camped here an' they ain't to home. They might have got sympathy from these ladies, but they don't get none from one another. This play

of their turns into a hoss joke, an' of course nobody laughs but the hosses.

"It's a ten-mile ride to the ranch, an' it means twice that a-foot to these spur-heeled gents, so after prospectin' they locate some bacon, real light-bread an' a dried apple pie. Finishin' their feed they wash the dishes an' start on their sorrowful journey.

"Con laughs about it now, but Rosser says he never even smiled the day he walked. Rosser says Con had no license to kick. He'd fought hosses all his life and win most of the fights. That day he throws the fight to the hoss. The hoss, bein' crooked as Con, double-crossed him." •

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