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The Rough Riders: Raising the Regiment

DURING the year preceding the outbreak of the Spanish War I was Assistant Secretary of the Navy. While my party was in opposition, I had preached, with all the fervor and zeal I possessed, our duty to intervene in Cuba, and to take this opportunity of driving the Spaniard from the Western World. Now that my party had come to power, I felt it incumbent on me, by word and deed, to do all I could to secure the carrying out of the policy in which I so heartily believed; and from the beginning I had determined that, if a war came, somehow or other, I was going to the front.

Meanwhile, there was any amount of work at hand in getting ready the navy, and to this I devoted myself.

Naturally, when one is intensely interested in a certain cause, the tendency is to associate particularly with those who take the same view. A large number of my friends felt very differently from the way I felt, and looked upon the possibility of war with sincere horror. But I found plenty of sympathizers, especially in the navy, the army, and the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs. Commodore Dewey, Captain Evans, Captain Brownson, Captain Davis—with these and the various other naval officers on duty at Washington I used to hold long consultations, during which we went over and over, not only every question of naval administration, but specifically everything necessary to do in order to put the navy in trim to strike quick and hard if, as we believed would be the case, we went to war with Spain. Sending an ample quantity of ammunition to the Asiatic squadron and providing it with coal; getting the battle-ships and the armored cruisers on the Atlantic into one squadron, both to train them in manoeuvring together, and to have them ready to sail against either the Cuban or the Spanish coasts; gathering the torpedo-boats into a flotilla for practice; securing ample target exercise, so conducted as to raise the standard of our marksmanship; gathering in the small ships from European and South American waters; settling on the number and kind of craft needed as auxiliary cruisers—every one of these points was threshed over in conversations with officers who were present in Washington, or in correspondence with officers who, like Captain Mahan, were absent.

As for the Senators, of course Senator Lodge and I felt precisely alike; for to fight in such a cause and with such an enemy was merely to carry out the doctrines we had both of us preached for many years. Senator Davis, Senator Proctor, Senator Foraker, Senator Chandler, Senator Morgan, Senator Frye, and a number of others also took just the right ground; and I saw a great deal of them, as well as of many members of the House, particularly those from the West, where the feeling for war was strongest.

Naval officers came and went, and Senators were only in the city while the Senate was in session; but there was one friend who was steadily in Washington. This was an army surgeon, Dr. Leonard Wood. I only met him after I entered the navy department, but we soon found that we had kindred tastes and kindred principles. He had served in General Miles's inconceivably

harassing campaigns against the Apaches, where he had displayed such courage that he won that most coveted of distinctions—the Medal of Honor; such extraordinary physical strength and endurance that he grew to be recognized as one of the two or three white men who could stand fatigue and hardship as well as an Apache; and such judgment that toward the close of the campaigns he was given, though a surgeon, the actual command of more than one expedition against the bands of renegade Indians. Like so many of the gallant fighters with whom it was later my good fortune to serve, he combined, in a very high degree, the qualities of entire manliness with entire uprightness and cleanliness of character. It was a pleasure to deal with a man of high ideals, who scorned everything mean and base, and who also possessed those robust and hardy qualities of body and mind, for the lack of which no merely negative virtue can ever atone. He was by nature a soldier of the highest type, and, like most natural soldiers, he was, of course, born with a keen longing for adventure; and, though an excellent doctor, what he really desired was the chance to lead men in some kind of hazard. To every possibility of such adventure he paid quick attention. For instance, he had a great desire to get me to go with him on an expedition into the Klondike in mid-winter, at the time when it was thought that a relief party would have to be sent there to help the starving miners.

In the summer he and I took long walks together through the beautiful broken country surrounding Washington. In winter we sometimes varied these walks by kicking a football in an empty lot, or, on the rare occasions when there was enough snow, by trying a couple of sets of skis or snow-skates, which had been sent me from Canada.

But always on our way out to and back from these walks and sport, there was one topic to which, in our talking, we returned, and that was the possible war with Spain. We both felt very strongly that such a war would be as righteous as it would be advantageous to the honor and the interests of the nation; and after the blowing up of the Maine, we felt that it was inevitable. We then at once began to try to see that we had our share in it. The President and my own chief, Secretary Long, were very firm against my going, but they said that if I was bent upon going they would help me. Wood was the medical adviser of both the President and the Secretary of War, and could count upon their friendship. So we started with the odds in our favor.

At first we had great difficulty in knowing exactly what to try for. We could go on the staff of any one of several Generals, but we much preferred to go in the line. Wood hoped he might get a commission in his native State of Massachusetts; but in Massachusetts, as in every other State, it proved there were ten men who wanted to go to the war for every chance to go. Then we thought we might get positions as field-officers under an old friend of mine, Colonel—now General—Francis V. Greene, of New York, the Colonel of the Seventy-first; but again there were no vacancies.

Our doubts were resolved when Congress authorized the raising of three cavalry regiments from among the wild riders and riflemen of the Rockies and the Great Plains. During Wood's service in the Southwest he had commanded not only regulars and Indian scouts, but also white frontiersmen. In the Northwest I had spent much of my time, for many years, either on my ranch or in long hunting trips, and had lived and worked for months together with the cowboy and the mountain hunter, faring in every way precisely as they did.

Secretary Alger offered me the command of one of these regiments. If I had taken it, being entirely inexperienced in military work, I should not have known how to get it equipped most rapidly, for I should have spent valuable weeks in learning its needs, with the result that I should have missed the Santiago campaign, and might not even have had the consolation prize of going to Porto Rico. Fortunately, I was wise enough to tell the Secretary that while I believed I

could learn to command the regiment in a month, yet that it was just this very month which I could not afford to spare, and that therefore I would be quite content to go as Lieutenant-Colonel, if he would make Wood Colonel.

This was entirely satisfactory to both the President and Secretary, and, accordingly, Wood and I were speedily commissioned as Colonel and Lieutenant-Colonel of the First United States Volunteer Cavalry. This was the official title of the regiment, but for some reason or other the public promptly christened us the "Rough Riders." At first we fought against the use of the term, but to no purpose; and when finally the Generals of Division and Brigade began to write in formal communications about our regiment as the "Rough Riders," we adopted the term ourselves.

The mustering-places for the regiment were appointed in New Mexico, Arizona, Oklahoma, and Indian Territory. The difficulty in organizing was not in selecting, but in rejecting men. Within a day or two after it was announced that we were to raise the regiment, we were literally deluged with applications from every quarter of the Union. Without the slightest trouble, so far as men went, we could have raised a brigade or even a division. The difficulty lay in arming, equipping, mounting, and disciplining the men we selected. Hundreds of regiments were being called into existence by the National Government, and each regiment was sure to have innumerable wants to be satisfied. To a man who knew the ground as Wood did, and who was entirely aware of our national unpreparedness, it was evident that the ordnance and quartermaster's bureaus could not meet, for some time to come, one-tenth of the demands that would be made upon them; and it was all-important to get in first with our demands. Thanks to his knowledge of the situation and promptness, we immediately put in our requisitions for the articles indispensable for the equipment of the regiment; and then, by ceaseless worrying of excellent bureaucrats, who had no idea how to do things quickly or how to meet an emergency, we succeeded in getting our rifles, cartridges, revolvers, clothing, shelter-tents, and horse gear just in time to enable us to go on the Santiago expedition. Some of the State troops, who were already organized as National Guards, were, of course, ready, after a fashion, when the war broke out; but no other regiment which had our work to do was able to do it in anything like as quick time, and therefore no other volunteer regiment saw anything like the fighting which we did.

Wood thoroughly realized what the Ordnance Department failed to realize, namely, the inestimable advantage of smokeless powder; and, moreover, he was bent upon our having the weapons of the regulars, for this meant that we would be brigaded with them, and it was evident that they would do the bulk of the fighting if the war were short. Accordingly, by acting with the utmost vigor and promptness, he succeeded in getting our regiment armed with the Krag-Jorgensen carbine used by the regular cavalry.

It was impossible to take any of the numerous companies which were proffered to us from the various States. The only organized bodies we were at liberty to accept were those from the four Territories. But owing to the fact that the number of men originally allotted to us, 780, was speedily raised to 1,000, we were given a chance to accept quite a number of eager volunteers who did not come from the Territories, but who possessed precisely the same temper that distinguished our Southwestern recruits, and whose presence materially benefited the regiment.

We drew recruits from Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and many another college; from clubs like the Somerset, of Boston, and Knickerbocker, of New York; and from among the men who belonged neither to club nor to college, but in whose veins the blood stirred with the same

impulse which once sent the Vikings over sea. Four of the policemen who had served under me, while I was President of the New York Police Board, insisted on coming—two of them to die, the other two to return unhurt after honorable and dangerous service. It seemed to me that almost every friend I had in every State had some one acquaintance who was bound to go with the Rough Riders, and for whom I had to make a place. Thomas Nelson Page, General Fitzhugh Lee, Congressman Odell, of New York, Senator Morgan; for each of these, and for many others, I eventually consented to accept some one or two recruits, of course only after a most rigid examination into their physical capacity, and after they had shown that they knew how to ride and shoot. I may add that in no case was I disappointed in the men thus taken.

Harvard being my own college, I had such a swarm of applications from it that I could not take one in ten. What particularly pleased me, not only in the Harvard but the Yale and Princeton men, and, indeed, in these recruits from the older States generally, was that they did not ask for commissions. With hardly an exception they entered upon their duties as troopers in the spirit which they held to the end, merely endeavoring to show that no work could be too hard, too disagreeable, or too dangerous for them to perform, and neither asking nor receiving any reward in the way of promotion or consideration. The Harvard contingent was practically raised by Guy Murchie, of Maine. He saw all the fighting and did his duty with the utmost gallantry, and then left the service as he had entered it, a trooper, entirely satisfied to have done his duty—and no man did it better. So it was with Dudley Dean, perhaps the best quarterback who ever played on a Harvard Eleven; and so with Bob Wrenn, a quarterback whose feats rivalled those of Dean's, and who, in addition, was the champion tennis player of America, and had, on two different years, saved this championship from going to an Englishman. So it was with Yale men like Waller, the high jumper, and Garrison and Girard; and with Princeton men like Devereux and Channing, the foot-ball players; with Larned, the tennis player; with Craig Wadsworth, the steeple-chase rider; with Joe Stevens, the crack polo player; with Hamilton Fish, the ex-captain of the Columbia crew, and with scores of others whose names are quite as worthy of mention as any of those I have given. Indeed, they all sought entry into the ranks of the Rough Riders as eagerly as if it meant something widely different from hard work, rough fare, and the possibility of death; and the reason why they turned out to be such good soldiers lay largely in the fact that they were men who had thoroughly counted the cost before entering, and who went into the regiment because they believed that this offered their best chance for seeing hard and dangerous service. Mason Mitchell, of New York, who had been a chief of scouts in the Riel Rebellion, travelled all the way to San Antonio to enlist; and others came there from distances as great.

Some of them made appeals to me which I could not possibly resist. Woodbury Kane had been a close friend of mine at Harvard. During the eighteen years that had passed since my graduation I had seen very little of him, though, being always interested in sport, I occasionally met him on the hunting field, had seen him on the deck of the Defender when she vanquished the Valkyrie, and knew the part he had played on the Navajoe, when, in her most important race, that otherwise unlucky yacht vanquished her opponent, the Prince of Wales's Britannia. When the war was on, Kane felt it his duty to fight for his country. He did not seek any position of distinction. All he desired was the chance to do whatever work he was put to do well, and to get to the front; and he enlisted as a trooper. When I went down to the camp at San Antonio he was on kitchen duty, and was cooking and washing dishes for one of the New Mexican troops; and he was doing it so well that I had no further doubt as to how he would get on.

My friend of many hunts and ranch partner, Robert Munro Ferguson, of Scotland, who had been on Lord Aberdeen's staff as a Lieutenant but a year before, likewise could not keep out

of the regiment. He, too, appealed to me in terms which I could not withstand, and came in like Kane to do his full duty as a trooper, and like Kane to win his commission by the way he thus did his duty.

I felt many qualms at first in allowing men of this stamp to come in, for I could not be certain that they had counted the cost, and was afraid they would find it very hard to serve—not for a few days, but for months—in the ranks, while I, their former intimate associate, was a field-officer; but they insisted that they knew their minds, and the events showed that they did. We enlisted about fifty of them from Virginia, Maryland, and the Northeastern States, at Washington. Before allowing them to be sworn in, I gathered them together and explained that if they went in they must be prepared not merely to fight, but to perform the weary, monotonous labor incident to the ordinary routine of a soldier's life; that they must be ready to face fever exactly as they were to face bullets; that they were to obey unquestioningly, and to do their duty as readily if called upon to garrison a fort as if sent to the front. I warned them that work that was merely irksome and disagreeable must be faced as readily as work that was dangerous, and that no complaint of any kind must be made; and I told them that they were entirely at liberty not to go, but that after they had once signed there could then be no backing out.

Not a man of them backed out; not one of them failed to do his whole duty.

These men formed but a small fraction of the whole. They went down to San Antonio, where the regiment was to gather and where Wood preceded me, while I spent a week in Washington hurrying up the different bureaus and telegraphing my various railroad friends, so as to insure our getting the carbines, saddles, and uniforms that we needed from the various armories and storehouses. Then I went down to San Antonio myself, where I found the men from New Mexico, Arizona, and Oklahoma already gathered, while those from Indian Territory came in soon after my arrival.

These were the men who made up the bulk of the regiment, and gave it its peculiar character. They came from the Four Territories which yet remained within the boundaries of the United States; that is, from the lands that have been most recently won over to white civilization, and in which the conditions of life are nearest those that obtained on the frontier when there still was a frontier. They were a splendid set of men, these Southwesterners—tall and sinewy, with resolute, weather-beaten faces, and eyes that looked a man straight in the face without flinching. They included in their ranks men of every occupation; but the three types were those of the cowboy, the hunter, and the mining prospector—the man who wandered hither and thither, killing game for a living, and spending his life in the quest for metal wealth.

In all the world there could be no better material for soldiers than that afforded by these grim hunters of the mountains, these wild rough riders of the plains. They were accustomed to handling wild and savage horses; they were accustomed to following the chase with the rifle, both for sport and as a means of livelihood. Varied though their occupations had been, almost all had, at one time or another, herded cattle and hunted big game. They were hardened to life in the open, and to shifting for themselves under adverse circumstances. They were used, for all their lawless freedom, to the rough discipline of the round-up and the mining company. Some of them came from the small frontier towns; but most were from the wilderness, having left their lonely hunters' cabins and shifting cow-camps to seek new and more stirring adventures beyond the sea.

They had their natural leaders—the men who had shown they could master other men, and could more than hold their own in the eager driving life of the new settlements.

The Captains and Lieutenants were sometimes men who had campaigned in the regular army against Apache, Ute, and Cheyenne, and who, on completing their term of service, had shown their energy by settling in the new communities and growing up to be men of mark. In other cases they were sheriffs, marshals, deputy-sheriffs, and deputy-marshals—men who had fought Indians, and still more often had waged relentless war upon the bands of white desperadoes. There was Bucky O'Neill, of Arizona, Captain of Troop A, the Mayor of Prescott, a famous sheriff throughout the West for his feats of victorious warfare against the Apache, no less than against the white road-agents and man-killers. His father had fought in Meagher's Brigade in the Civil War; and he was himself a born soldier, a born leader of men. He was a wild, reckless fellow, soft spoken, and of dauntless courage and boundless ambition; he was staunchly loyal to his friends, and cared for his men in every way. There was Captain Llewellen, of New Mexico, a good citizen, a political leader, and one of the most noted peace-officers of the country; he had been shot four times in pitched fights with red marauders and white outlaws. There was Lieutenant Ballard, who had broken up the Black Jack gang of ill-omened notoriety, and his Captain, Curry, another New Mexican sheriff of fame. The officers from the Indian Territory had almost all served as marshals and deputy-marshals; and in the Indian Territory, service as a deputy-marshal meant capacity to fight stand-up battles with the gangs of outlaws.

Three of our higher officers had been in the regular army. One was Major Alexander Brodie, from Arizona, afterward Lieutenant-Colonel, who had lived for twenty years in the Territory, and had become a thorough Westerner without sinking the West Pointer—a soldier by taste as well as training, whose men worshipped him and would follow him anywhere, as they would Bucky O'Neill or any other of their favorites. Brodie was running a big mining business; but when the Maine was blown up, he abandoned everything and telegraphed right and left to bid his friends get ready for the fight he saw impending.

Then there was Micah Jenkins, the captain of Troop K, a gentle and courteous South Carolinian, on whom danger acted like wine. In action he was a perfect game-cock, and he won his majority for gallantry in battle.

Finally, there was Allyn Capron, who was, on the whole, the best soldier in the regiment. In fact, I think he was the ideal of what an American regular army officer should be. He was the fifth in descent from father to son who had served in the army of the United States, and in body and mind alike he was fitted to play his part to perfection. Tall and lithe, a remarkable boxer and walker, a first-class rider and shot, with yellow hair and piercing blue eyes, he looked what he was, the archetype of the fighting man. He had under him one of the two companies from the Indian Territory; and he so soon impressed himself upon the wild spirit of his followers, that he got them ahead in discipline faster than any other troop in the regiment, while at the same time taking care of their bodily wants. His ceaseless effort was so to train them, care for them, and inspire them as to bring their fighting efficiency to the highest possible pitch. He required instant obedience, and tolerated not the slightest evasion of duty; but his mastery of his art was so thorough and his performance of his own duty so rigid that he won at once not merely their admiration, but that soldierly affection so readily given by the man in the ranks to the superior who cares for his men and leads them fearlessly in battle.

All—Easterners and Westerners, Northerners and Southerners, officers and men, cow-boys and college graduates, wherever they came from, and whatever their social position—possessed in common the traits of hardihood and a thirst for adventure. They were to a man born adventurers, in the old sense of the word.

The men in the ranks were mostly young; yet some were past their first youth. These had taken part in the killing of the great buffalo herds, and had fought Indians when the tribes were still on the war-path. The younger ones, too, had led rough lives; and the lines in their faces told of many a hardship endured, and many a danger silently faced with grim, unconscious philosophy. Some were originally from the East, and had seen strange adventures in different kinds of life, from sailing round the Horn to mining in Alaska. Others had been born and bred in the West, and had never seen a larger town than Santa Fé or a bigger body of water than the Pecos in flood. Some of them went by their own name; some had changed their names; and yet others possessed but half a name, colored by some adjective, like Cherokee Bill, Happy Jack of Arizona, Smoky Moore, the bronco-buster, so named because cow-boys often call vicious horses "smoky" horses, and Rattlesnake Pete, who had lived among the Moquis and taken part in the snake-dances. Some were professional gamblers, and, on the other hand, no less than four were or had been Baptist or Methodist clergymen—and proved first-class fighters, too, by the way. Some were men whose lives in the past had not been free from the taint of those fierce kinds of crime into which the lawless spirits who dwell on the border-land between civilization and savagery so readily drift. A far larger number had served at different times in those bodies of armed men with which the growing civilization of the border finally puts down its savagery.

There was one characteristic and distinctive contingent which could have appeared only in such a regiment as ours. From the Indian Territory there came a number of Indians—Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, and Creeks. Only a few were of pure blood. The others shaded off until they were absolutely indistinguishable from their white comrades; with whom, it may be mentioned, they all lived on terms of complete equality.

Not all of the Indians were from the Indian Territory. One of the gamest fighters and best soldiers in the regiment was Pollock, a full-blooded Pawnee. He had been educated, like most of the other Indians, at one of those admirable Indian schools which have added so much to the total of the small credit account with which the White race balances the very unpleasant debit account of its dealings with the Red. Pollock was a silent, solitary fellow—an excellent penman, much given to drawing pictures. When we got down to Santiago he developed into the regimental clerk. I never suspected him of having a sense of humor until one day, at the end of our stay in Cuba, as he was sitting in the Adjutant's tent working over the returns, there turned up a trooper of the First who had been acting as barber. Eying him with immovable face Pollock asked, in a guttural voice: "Do you cut hair?" The man answered "Yes"; and Pollock continued, "Then you'd better cut mine," muttering, in an explanatory soliloquy: "Don't want to wear my hair long like a wild Indian when I'm in civilized warfare."

Another Indian came from Texas. He was a brakeman on the Southern Pacific, and wrote telling me he was an American Indian, and that he wanted to enlist. His name was Colbert, which at once attracted my attention; for I was familiar with the history of the Cherokees and Chickasaws during the eighteenth century, when they lived east of the Mississippi. Early in that century various traders, chiefly Scotchmen, settled among them, and the half-breed descendants of one named Colbert became the most noted chiefs of the Chickasaws. I summoned the applicant before me, and found that he was an excellent man, and, as I had supposed, a descendant of the old Chickasaw chiefs.

He brought into the regiment, by the way, his "partner," a white man. The two had been inseparable companions for some years, and continued so in the regiment. Every man who has lived in the West knows that, vindictive though the hatred between the white man and the Indian is when they stand against one another in what may be called their tribal relations, yet that men

of Indian blood, when adopted into white communities, are usually treated precisely like anyone else.

Colbert was not the only Indian whose name I recognized. There was a Cherokee named Adair, who, upon inquiry, I found to be descended from the man who, a century and a half ago, wrote a ponderous folio, to this day of great interest, about the Cherokees, with whom he had spent the best years of his life as a trader and agent.

I don't know that I ever came across a man with a really sweeter nature than another Cherokee named Holderman. He was an excellent soldier, and for a long time acted as cook for the head-quarters mess. He was a half-breed, and came of a soldier stock on both sides and through both races. He explained to me once why he had come to the war; that it was because his people always had fought when there was a war, and he could not feel happy to stay at home when the flag was going into battle.

Two of the young Cherokee recruits came to me with a most kindly letter from one of the ladies who had been teaching in the academy from which they were about to graduate. She and I had known one another in connection with Governmental and philanthropic work on the reservations, and she wrote to commend the two boys to my attention. One was on the Academy foot-ball team and the other in the glee-club. Both were fine young fellows. The foot-ball player now lies buried with the other dead who fell in the fight at San Juan. The singer was brought to death's door by fever, but recovered and came back to his home.

There were other Indians of much wilder type, but their wildness was precisely like that of the cowboys with whom they were associated. One or two of them needed rough discipline; and they got it, too. Like the rest of the regiment, they were splendid riders. I remember one man, whose character left much to be desired in some respects, but whose horsemanship was unexceptionable. He was mounted on an exceedingly bad bronco, which would bolt out of the ranks at drill. He broke it of this habit by the simple expedient of giving it two tremendous twists, first to one side and then to the other, as it bolted, with the result that, invariably, at the second bound its legs crossed and over it went with a smash, the rider taking the somersault with unmoved equanimity.

The life histories of some of the men who joined our regiment would make many volumes of thrilling adventure.

We drew a great many recruits from Texas; and from nowhere did we get a higher average, for many of them had served in that famous body of frontier fighters, the Texas Rangers. Of course, these rangers needed no teaching. They were already trained to obey and to take responsibility. They were splendid shots, horsemen, and trailers. They were accustomed to living in the open, to enduring great fatigue and hardship, and to encountering all kinds of danger.

Many of the Arizona and New Mexico men had taken part in warfare with the Apaches, those terrible Indians of the waterless Southwestern mountains—the most bloodthirsty and the wildest of all the red men of America, and the most formidable in their own dreadful style of warfare. Of course, a man who had kept his nerve and held his own, year after year, while living where each day and night contained the threat of hidden death from a foe whose goings and comings were unseen, was not apt to lose courage when confronted with any other enemy. An experience in following in the trail of an enemy who might flee at one stretch through fifty miles of death-like desert was a good school out of which to come with profound indifference for the ordinary hardships of campaigning.

As a rule, the men were more apt, however, to have had experience in warring against white desperadoes and law-breakers than against Indians. Some of our best recruits came from Colorado. One, a very large, hawk-eyed man, Benjamin Franklin Daniels, had been Marshal of Dodge City when that pleasing town was probably the toughest abode of civilized man to be found anywhere on the continent. In the course of the exercise of his rather lurid functions as peace-officer he had lost half of one ear—"bitten off," it was explained to me. Naturally, he viewed the dangers of battle with philosophic calm. Such a man was, in reality, a veteran even in his first fight, and was a tower of strength to the recruits in his part of the line. With him there came into the regiment a deputy marshal from Cripple Creek named Sherman Bell. Bell had a hernia, but he was so excellent a man that we decided to take him. I do not think I ever saw greater resolution than Bell displayed throughout the campaign. In Cuba the great exertions which he was forced to make, again and again opened the hernia, and the surgeons insisted that he must return to the United States; but he simply would not go.

Then there was little McGinty, the bronco-buster from Oklahoma, who never had walked a hundred yards if by any possibility he could ride. When McGinty was reproved for his absolute inability to keep step on the drill-ground, he responded that he was pretty sure he could keep step on horseback. McGinty's short legs caused him much trouble on the marches, but we had no braver or better man in the fights.

One old friend of mine had come from far northern Idaho to join the regiment at San Antonio. He was a hunter, named Fred Herrig, an Alsatian by birth. A dozen years before he and I had hunted mountain sheep and deer when laying in the winter stock of meat for my ranch on the Little Missouri, sometimes in the bright fall weather, sometimes in the Arctic bitterness of the early Northern winter. He was the most loyal and simple-hearted of men, and he had come to join his old "boss" and comrade in the bigger hunting which we were to carry on through the tropic mid-summer.

The temptation is great to go on enumerating man after man who stood pre-eminent, whether as a killer of game, a tamer of horses, or a queller of disorder among his people, or who, mayhap, stood out with a more evil prominence as himself a dangerous man—one given to the taking of life on small provocation, or one who was ready to earn his living outside the law if the occasion demanded it. There was tall Proffit, the sharp-shooter, from North Carolina—sinewy, saturnine, fearless; Smith, the bear-hunter from Wyoming, and McCann, the Arizona book-keeper, who had begun life as a buffalo-hunter. There was Crockett, the Georgian, who had been an Internal Revenue officer, and had waged perilous war on the rifle-bearing "moonshiners." There were Darnell and Wood, of New Mexico, who could literally ride any horses alive. There were Goodwin, and Buck Taylor, and Armstrong the ranger, crack shots with rifle or revolver. There was many a skilled packer who had led and guarded his trains of laden mules through the Indian-haunted country surrounding some out-post of civilization. There were men who had won fame as Rocky Mountain stage-drivers, or who had spent endless days in guiding the slow wagon-trains across the grassy plains. There were miners who knew every camp from the Yukon to Leadville, and cow-punchers in whose memories were stored the brands carried by the herds from Chihuahua to Assiniboia. There were men who had roped wild steers in the mesquite brush of the Nueces, and who, year in and year out, had driven the trail herds northward over desolate wastes and across the fords of shrunken rivers to the fattening grounds of the Powder and the Yellowstone. They were hardened to the scorching heat and bitter cold of the dry plains and pine-clad mountains. They were accustomed to sleep in the open, while the picketed horses grazed beside them near some shallow, reedy pool. They had wandered hither and thither across

the vast desolation of the wilderness, alone or with comrades. They had cowered in the shelter of cut banks from the icy blast of the norther, and far out on the midsummer prairies they had known the luxury of lying in the shade of the wagon during the noonday rest. They had lived in brush lean-tos for weeks at a time, or with only the wagon-sheet as an occasional house. They had fared hard when exploring the unknown; they had fared well on the round-up; and they had known the plenty of the log ranch-houses, where the tables were spread with smoked venison and calf-ribs and milk and bread, and vegetables from the garden-patch.

Such were the men we had as recruits: soldiers ready made, as far as concerned their capacity as individual fighters. What was necessary was to teach them to act together, and to obey orders. Our special task was to make them ready for action in the shortest possible time. We were bound to see fighting, and therefore to be with the first expedition that left the United States; for we could not tell how long the war would last.

I had been quite prepared for trouble when it came to enforcing discipline, but I was agreeably disappointed. There were plenty of hard characters who might by themselves have given trouble, and with one or two of whom we did have to take rough measures; but the bulk of the men thoroughly understood that without discipline they would be merely a valueless mob, and they set themselves hard at work to learn the new duties. Of course, such a regiment, in spite of, or indeed I might almost say because of, the characteristics which made the individual men so exceptionally formidable as soldiers, could very readily have been spoiled. Any weakness in the commander would have ruined it. On the other hand, to treat it from the stand-point of the martinet and military pedant would have been almost equally fatal. From the beginning we started out to secure the essentials of discipline, while laying just as little stress as possible on the non-essentials. The men were singularly quick to respond to any appeal to their intelligence and patriotism. The faults they committed were those of ignorance merely. When Holderman, in announcing dinner to the Colonel and the three Majors, genially remarked, "If you fellars don't come soon, everything 'll get cold," he had no thought of other than a kindly and respectful regard for their welfare, and was glad to modify his form of address on being told that it was not what could be described as conventionally military. When one of our sentinels, who had with much labor learned the manual of arms, saluted with great pride as I passed, and added, with a friendly nod, "Good-evening, Colonel," this variation in the accepted formula on such occasions was meant, and was accepted, as mere friendly interest. In both cases the needed instruction was given and received in the same kindly spirit.

One of the new Indian Territory recruits, after twenty-four hours' stay in camp, during which he had held himself distinctly aloof from the general interests, called on the Colonel in his tent, and remarked, "Well, Colonel, I want to shake hands and say we're with you. We didn't know how we would like you fellars at first; but you're all right, and you know your business, and you mean business, and you can count on us every time!"

That same night, which was hot, mosquitoes were very annoying; and shortly after midnight both the Colonel and I came to the doors of our respective tents, which adjoined one another. The sentinel in front was also fighting mosquitoes. As we came out we saw him pitch his gun about ten feet off, and sit down to attack some of the pests that had swarmed up his trousers' legs. Happening to glance in our direction, he nodded pleasantly and, with unabashed and friendly feeling, remarked, "Ain't they bad?"

It was astonishing how soon the men got over these little peculiarities. They speedily grew to recognize the fact that the observance of certain forms was essential to the maintenance of proper discipline. They became scrupulously careful in touching their hats, and always came

to attention when spoken to. They saw that we did not insist upon the observance of these forms to humiliate them; that we were as anxious to learn our own duties as we were to have them learn theirs, and as scrupulous in paying respect to our superiors as we were in exacting the acknowledgment due our rank from those below us; moreover, what was very important, they saw that we were careful to look after their interests in every way, and were doing all that was possible to hurry up the equipment and drill of the regiment, so as to get into the war.

Rigid guard duty was established at once, and everyone was impressed with the necessity for vigilance and watchfulness. The policing of the camp was likewise attended to with the utmost rigor. As always with new troops, they were at first indifferent to the necessity for cleanliness in camp arrangements; but on this point Colonel Wood brooked no laxity, and in a very little while the hygienic conditions of the camp were as good as those of any regular regiment. Meanwhile the men were being drilled, on foot at first, with the utmost assiduity. Every night we had officers' school, the non-commissioned officers of each troop being given similar schooling by the Captain or one of the Lieutenants of the troop; and every day we practised hard, by squad, by troop, by squadron and battalion. The earnestness and intelligence with which the men went to work rendered the task of instruction much less difficult than would be supposed. It soon grew easy to handle the regiment in all the simpler forms of close and open order. When they had grown so that they could be handled with ease in marching, and in the ordinary manoeuvres of the drill-ground, we began to train them in open-order work, skirmishing and firing. Here their woodcraft and plainscraft, their knowledge of the rifle, helped us very much. Skirmishing they took to naturally, which was fortunate, as practically all our fighting was done in open order.

Meanwhile we were purchasing horses. Judging from what I saw I do not think that we got heavy enough animals, and of those purchased certainly a half were nearly unbroken. It was no easy matter to handle them on the picket-lines, and to provide for feeding and watering; and the efforts to shoe and ride them were at first productive of much vigorous excitement. Of course, those that were wild from the range had to be thrown and tied down before they could be shod. Half the horses of the regiment bucked, or possessed some other of the amiable weaknesses incident to horse life on the great ranches; but we had abundance of men who were utterly unmoved by any antic a horse might commit. Every animal was speedily mastered, though a large number remained to the end mounts upon which an ordinary rider would have felt very uncomfortable.

My own horses were purchased for me by a Texas friend, John Moore, with whom I had once hunted peccaries on the Nueces. I only paid fifty dollars apiece, and the animals were not showy; but they were tough and hardy, and answered my purpose well.

Mounted drill with such horses and men bade fair to offer opportunities for excitement; yet it usually went off smoothly enough. Before drilling the men on horseback they had all been drilled on foot, and having gone at their work with hearty zest, they knew well the simple movements to form any kind of line or column. Wood was busy from morning till night in hurrying the final details of the equipment, and he turned the drill of the men over to me. To drill perfectly needs long practice, but to drill roughly is a thing very easy to learn indeed. We were not always right about our intervals, our lines were somewhat irregular, and our more difficult movements were executed at times in rather a haphazard way; but the essential commands and the essential movements we learned without any difficulty, and the men performed them with great dash. When we put them on horseback, there was, of course, trouble with the horses; but the horsemanship of the riders was consummate. In fact, the men were immensely interested in

making their horses perform each evolution with the utmost speed and accuracy, and in forcing each unquiet, vicious brute to get into line and stay in line, whether he would or not. The guidon-bearers held their plunging steeds true to the line, no matter what they tried to do; and each wild rider brought his wild horse into his proper place with a dash and ease which showed the natural cavalryman.

In short, from the very beginning the horseback drills were good fun, and everyone enjoyed them. We marched out through the adjoining country to drill wherever we found open ground, practising all the different column formations as we went. On the open ground we threw out the line to one side or the other, and in one position and the other, sometimes at the trot, sometimes at the gallop. As the men grew accustomed to the simple evolutions, we tried them more and more in skirmish drills, practising them so that they might get accustomed to advance in open order and to skirmish in any country, while the horses were held in the rear.

Our arms were the regular cavalry carbine, the "Krag," a splendid weapon, and the revolver. A few carried their favorite Winchesters, using, of course, the new model, which took the Government cartridge. We felt very strongly that it would be worse than a waste of time to try to train our men to use the sabre—a weapon utterly alien to them; but with the rifle and revolver they were already thoroughly familiar. Many of my cavalry friends in the past had insisted to me that the revolver was a better weapon than the sword—among them Basil Duke, the noted Confederate cavalry leader, and Captain Frank Edwards, whom I had met when elk-hunting on the head-waters of the Yellowstone and the Snake. Personally, I knew too little to decide as to the comparative merits of the two arms; but I did know that it was a great deal better to use the arm with which our men were already proficient. They were therefore armed with what might be called their natural weapon, the revolver.

As it turned out, we were not used mounted at all, so that our preparations on this point came to nothing. In a way, I have always regretted this. We thought we should at least be employed as cavalry in the great campaign against Havana in the fall; and from the beginning I began to train my men in shock tactics for use against hostile cavalry. My belief was that the horse was really the weapon with which to strike the first blow. I felt that if my men could be trained to hit their adversaries with their horses, it was a matter of small amount whether, at the moment when the onset occurred, sabres, lances, or revolvers were used; while in the subsequent mêlée I believed the revolver would outclass cold steel as a weapon. But this is all guesswork, for we never had occasion to try the experiment.

It was astonishing what a difference was made by two or three weeks' training. The mere thorough performance of guard and police duties helped the men very rapidly to become soldiers. The officers studied hard, and both officers and men worked hard in the drill-field. It was, of course, rough and ready drill; but it was very efficient, and it was suited to the men who made up the regiment. Their uniform also suited them. In their slouch hats, blue flannel shirts, brown trousers, leggings and boots, with handkerchiefs knotted loosely around their necks, they looked exactly as a body of cow-boy cavalry should look. The officers speedily grew to realize that they must not be over-familiar with their men, and yet that they must care for them in every way. The men, in return, began to acquire those habits of attention to soldierly detail which mean so much in making a regiment. Above all, every man felt, and had constantly instilled into him, a keen pride of the regiment, and a resolute purpose to do his whole duty uncomplainingly, and, above all, to win glory by the way he handled himself in battle.