

A WILD HORSE HUNT.

I T was in the fall of the second year I had been on the range, and I got to know the country pretty well by that time."

So spoke Frank Evans, an old college chum of mine, as he sat comfortably smoking a cigar, after a dinner at which we had lingered several hours, recalling old times, and he had been telling me some of his experiences "out West," on the great cattle ranges east of the Rocky mountains, where, when he should have fully mastered the business, his father, a wealthy farmer of Ohio, had promised to buy a ranch and stock it for him.

"Yes," he continued, "it was on the Sweetwater range, in Wyoming, or, to be more precise, in the hills at the headwaters of Bitter creek. I had been hunting horses all the morning, six of our band having strayed away from our night herder the evening before. It was about 2:00 o'clock, and the sun beat down on the sagebrush covered hills with an almost deadening intensity, the wind coming in fitful gusts, carrying the white alkali dust in clouds. I was heading for camp, some fifteen miles away, and my horse, a wiry little buckskin colored broncho, was comparatively fresh, in spite of the heat, although anyone looking at him jogging along at a little dog trot, head down, eyes half closed, ears flapping up and down, and an altogether dejected look about him, would have supposed him to have been completely tuckered out.

"I expected to find our six missing animals with a band of wild horses, of which there were two or three known to

run among the hills, and I had been reserving my buckskin for a run.

"As I got to the head of a long canyon I saw a band of horses off to the left. Dismounting, I looked at my cinch, pulled it up a little tighter, and being assured that my saddle was firm, I took another look at the band. There were about fifty horses scattered over a little "dry lake," standing with heads down, with flanks heaving, evidently distressed by the intense heat. Carefully looking them over I found they were all mares and colts, and our horses were not among them. There was one exception, a small blue stallion; I knew him in a moment as being the nery little captain of a band of wild horses that had never yet been run down, though we had all had a trial with him.

"Not caring to waste my horse's energies on them, I mounted and was about to move on, when my attention was attracted to a mare and colt that were evidently out of favor with the captain, for they were several hundred feet away from the main band. The mare was a large, clean-limbed animal, of beautiful proportions, and remarkable color—she was jet black, curiously marked with white, looking as if snow had fallen on her back and besprinkled both sides. The colt was a little runt, dwarfed and stunted to a degree, and with his long, ungainly body and short legs, formed a striking contrast to his handsome thoroughbred mother. On the instant I thought that there was a chance to get that mare, and away I went.