

The Desert Ship

She Sailed Between Omaha and Denver

By JOHN TOWNSEND

When gold was discovered in Colorado there was a hegra across "the plains" lying between the Missouri river and the Rocky mountains. The vehicles used were wagons with a white canvas top and were called prairie schooners.

That is a historic period in American history. The distance was but about 500 miles, but there were no roads, only flat alkali plains, with no shade, and the sun, together with the dry atmosphere, so shrank the fannies of the wagons that many a prairie schooner sank down in a heap. As the sea is strewn with wrecks of ships, so were the plains strewn with wrecks of wagons. Pike's peak was at the time the principal point at which gold had been discovered, and most of the caravans were headed for that mountain. A



SOME OF THEM WERE DISCOVERED CAUTIGUSLY RECONNOITERING.

story has been often told of a prairie schooner on which was chalked "Pike's peak or bust." The vehicle broke down and additional words appeared, "Busted, by thunder!"

One spring day a band of mounted Indians making their way down the Platte river not far from what is now Lincoln, Neb., looking for a solitary wagon to attack and plunder—they were not strong enough to attack a

train—saw one of the bucks deployed in front coming back, evidently with news of some kind. All pulled up in the hollow between two plains rollers, where they would not be seen, and awaited the arrival of their vedette. When he came he told them that a wagon such as never before had been seen in that region was coming. Its top was made of the same material as an ordinary plains wagon, but very much higher, and there seemed to be three tops, one very little one in front and two large ones back. But the strangest thing about it was that there were no horses, and yet it moved—moved faster than the ordinary wagon with horses to draw it. The great spirit must be propelling it.

The chief, dismounting, went to the top of the roller, where he saw the strange vehicle in the distance. It was coming rapidly toward him. There was the forward cover of triangular shape and the two behind rectangular, the bottom end being broader than the top. The body and wheels were an ordinary wagon, though larger than its kind. It was these three pieces of canvas that puzzled the redskin, and the fact that the thing moved of itself struck him with terror.

While the Indians are wondering what Manitou is riding in this strange vehicle let us get aboard of her and see what is going on there. She is simply a prairie schooner rigged with a canvas jib and the two sails with which schooners are equipped. Instead of sailing over ocean billows she was riding the rollers of the plains. Over the center of the rear axle sat a man working a wheel much like those now used to steer automobiles.

This man was Abner Swift, the owner of the veritable prairie schooner. Hearing of the difficulties encountered by the argonauts of the plains, the danger of his wagon wheels collapsing by means of the heat of the sun and the dryness of the atmosphere, he fact that fodder for horses must be carried in bulk, that the horses might die and leave the wagon without ground power, learning that the motive to be passed over was a dry, hard surface without a stick of timber on it, he conceived the idea of propulsion by sails. He had bought the largest plains wagon he could find, set upon it two masts and a jibboom, fitted them with sails and attached his own steering gear. For a cover he had none except when not moving. When laid up on account of adverse winds or at night the sails afforded ample protection.

And so this man in search of gold, having provisioned his land ship and put his family aboard, one bright morning, when a fine breeze was blowing from the southwest, hoisted sails, at Omaha and started for the land of the sunset.

A crowd saw him off and previous to loosening the brakes fired innumerable remarks at him.

"What y' goin' to do when the wind blows dead ahead?"

"Tack," was the reply.

"See yere, stranger; don't y' know that one man and two or three boys ain't enough to resist an attack of Indians? They'll raise yer ha'r for y'."

"I'm re'lyin' for that," replied Swift, "on the Injuns bein' skeered at somep'n they hain't seen before."

"So long! Hope you reach the peak all right."

"I've got to get there. And I expect to do it in a third of the time it would

take horses or mules to carry there."

The men holding the wagon wheels at this order loosened their grasp and the land ship sailed down the street toward the roadless west, amid the shouts of the populace.

All the first day he had free sailing, for the wind held and was from the most advantageous quarter. The chief difficulty was the bumps, and had he not used his brakes unsparingly he would have been wrecked in some of the rough places he was obliged to pass over. But even with this restriction he made twice the distance he could have made with horses.

It was on the fifth day after starting that the desert ship was espied by the band of Indians looking for prey. Abner Swift sat at the tiller, sailing before an easterly breeze, unconscious of the danger that lurked in his front. Suddenly a dozen Indians came dashing over a roller a couple of miles distant and dead ahead. The moment Swift saw them he put his tiller hard aport, swung round in a circle and, coming up into the wind, lowered all sails.

The effect of this maneuver produced instant consternation on the redskins. Pulling their horses back on their haunches, they wheeled about and fled across the roller over which they had come.

Abner with the headway he had on brought his ship up so that it faced in the direction of the savages. It was near sunset and he had been expecting soon to stop for the night, and the meeting determined him not to go any further. His children, four stout boys and three girls, each grasped a rifle, but their father, relying on the superstitious effect his desert craft had on their enemies, ordered them not to fire a shot.

Anticipating trouble during the night, the argonauts got their supper, made the beds in the wagon and were ready for an emergency. It was still an hour before dark, and what they feared was that the redskins would overcome their terror while they could still see. Indeed, twilight remained when some of them were discovered cautiously reconnoitering. But meanwhile the oldest boy, Peter, had brought out a hollow griffin's head that had been brought from a theater property room in Chicago as an implement of Indian warfare. He set it upon the ship's bow and as soon as darkness had fallen put a kerosene lamp in it.

During the night half the party watched while the other half slept. Not a sound of an Indian was heard. Could the ship's crew have seen the savages they might have all slept, for it was not till near morning that a redskin could screw up his courage to take a second look at the monster who was guarding the argonauts. Then a squaw was so frightened at the sight that she gave a shriek and ran away as fast as she could go.

The cry awakened the head of the family, who listened and, hearing other sounds among the savages, felt some fear of an attack. He therefore got out a roman candle, with a number of which he had provided himself, and, fixing it in the griffin's mouth, touched a match to it. The sight of the unearthly monster spitting red, green and blue fire balls at them was too much for the redskins, and, starting in the opposite direction, they did not stop till they had put miles between them

and the monster ship.

The next morning, a favorable breeze springing up, after breakfast the party got aboard the wagon ship and proceeded on their journey. Having thus far averaged some fifty miles a day, they were not more than 150 miles from Denver, where they proposed to stop for awhile. Leaving the Platte, they steered a southwesterly course, finding the country still perfectly level and easy to travel over. Once again they saw Indians lurking near them, but they kept so great a distance that the argonauts felt assured they experienced the same terror the desert ship had inspired before. Not far from Denver the travelers struck a stage road, and with the wind blowing out of the northeast they spun along gayly, passing the daily coach on the way.

It was about midday that they sailed into the then village of Denver, and the inhabitants who were taking their nooning lined the streets to see them pass. Luffing up to the wind at the hotel, the family disembarked and went in to enjoy for a few days good cooking and comfortable beds.

The desert ship is now a legend. Old men who were boys when it sailed the prehistoric bottom of an ocean bed tell about it, but younger persons shake their heads and whisper that the old fellows are beginning to believe that it actually made the voyage.

Heart to Heart Talks.

By EDWIN A. NYE.

"ENTERING JOURNALISM."

A young man wants me to tell him what is necessary to "enter journalism."

Everything is necessary. Daily newspaper work on the editorial side is the most exacting business on earth.

First the beginner must have a strong body. He should have a reservoir of vitality to withstand the killing strain of intense labors concentrated into a brief time.

Next he must have that sixth sense known as "the nose for news." It is a faculty difficult to describe, usually bred in the bone. It is the ability to "see a story" where others do not.

Then add to these requirements the scent to follow a lead, accurate judgment, ability to make and hold friends, patience, poise, initiative, loyalty to orders.

What about ability to write? you say. Any school graduate can write. It is only necessary to tell things in straight, simple, clear English.

Mind you, all these things are necessary to put your foot on the lowest rung of the ladder as a "cub" reporter. You can climb only by experience and trials under difficulty.

Young man, don't enter journalism unless—

You feel you were predestined from all eternity to be a newspaper man or—

Unless you know you will not be happy outside a newspaper office or—

Unless the stern requirements are like a bugle call of challenge.

Because—

The demands of a modern daily

newspaper, if you would climb, are keyed as high as human flesh and blood can stand, and the pay is not in proportion. The discipline is as severe as that of military service, and there is no mercy for those who fall.

But—

If the odor of printer's ink is incense to your nostrils, if you feel it is in your power to make good, if the

strong soul of you rises to the call for service, why, then—

In the name of Benjamin Franklin, pitch in!

You will get your chance once started, and never, never fear. "Pull" will not promote some fellow less worthy above you. You stand on your own foundation. Merit wins.

And there are compensations. The

fascination of the business is beyond that of any other.

But, by the price of your eternal salvation, do not misunderstand the requirements!

The time to read the Morning Enterprise is at the breakfast table or a little before.

Makes Sewing a Pleasure

If you could eliminate the tiresome drudgery of pedaling—wouldn't sewing be a pleasure instead of a task?

An electric sewing machine motor attached to your machine does all the WORK, giving any speed desired by the mere pressure of the foot on the treadle.

Current can be drawn from any one of your electric light sockets—at any time—in any room—at a cost of but a half-cent an hour.

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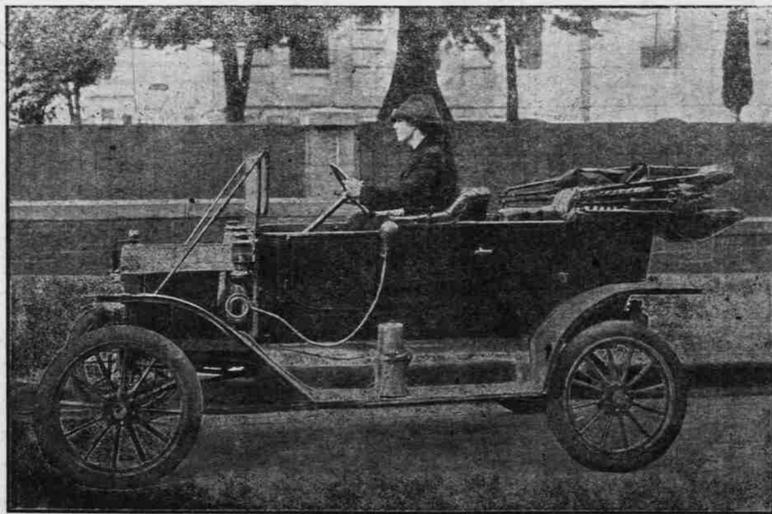
Working for the other fellow and Get Busy for Yourself

What can be won with a little work a fine prize every 10 days BESIDES THE AUTO

To what people are saying and you will see how popular you are THEN GET IN AND WIN



Yours for the asking



Don't it look good to you

To stimulate interest in the voting and give each one a chance to profit by their work we will give a prize every ten days. These prizes will not affect the final count in any way as all votes will count on

THE GRAND AUTOMOBILE

These prizes will be given to the one that hands in the largest number of votes very ten days.

\$100 In Gold

We will give \$100 to the contestant who makes the second best showing. If you don't think you can win the car get in and win the \$100. Just think; \$100 for a few week's work in the evening or before work.