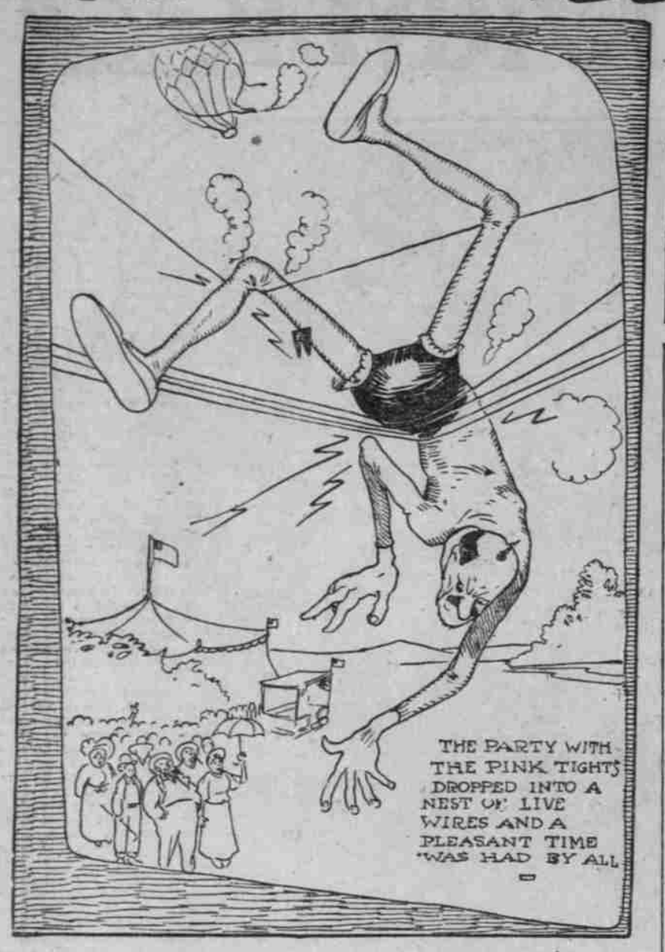
"PRACTICALLY ALL THE WRIGHTS ARE NOW SOARING ALOFT"



SAYS THE HOTEL CLERK BY IRVIN S. COBB.

"I BEEN down to Brighton to see that there new flyin' machine," said the House Detective of the St. Reckless; "never agin fer mine."

"What happened?" asked the Hotel Clerk.

"That wuz jist it," said the morose House Detective, "nothin' happened."

"Didn't she sail?" insisted the Hotel Clerk.

"Oh, yes, she sailed, if that's wot you want to call it," admitted the House Detective. "A Frenchy-lookin' guy with more'n nine dollars' worth of real hair whiskers on his face climbed a-straddle of somethin' that looked like a tin cigar, up amongst a lot of silly canvas wings, and started up a buzz fan that stuck out behind the works, and the thing raised right up off the ground and circled around the same as somebody ridin' a bicycle. But there wuzn't nothin' excitin' to it—it wuz all so blamed simple till it wuz mighty near foolish. When a feller pays his good money for a show like that he wants somethin' excitin'."

"To be sure he does," said the Hotel Clerk soothingly. "So does everybody else. That's what's helped to make ballooning so popular as an amusement among the masses. The first time in his life that a man goes to a balloon ascension he goes to the balloon ascension. After that he keeps on going in the hopes of being on hand the time the fellow's grip slips or the parachute refuses to open. I remember once at the county fair back home I went to ten balloon ascensions hand running. But on the last day I lost interest and stayed away, and that very afternoon the party with the red tights on dropped 600 feet into a nest of live wires, and a pleasant time was had by all. I s'pose you'd have come back here today with that bright young face of yours all wreathed in smiles if you'd only been able to report that the steering gear got out of fix at a height of half a mile and the ill-fated inventor spilled all over the roof of the grandstand."

"Well, anyway, I ain't so strong fer it," said the House Detective. "It's nothin' but a toy."

"Right again, as ever," said the Hotel Clerk, warmly. "It's only a toy. The deluded creature that built it pushes a button and it gets up in the air and sails with the wind and against the wind and circles around as reliable as a circus horse, and you stand there on terry firmah, which is an Irish pet name for the earth, upon your two large, self-reliant feet, and say it's a toy. Out in Ohio a couple of chaps spend seven or eight years pottering around, putting together a machine that looks something like an insane linen shower and something like a collection of intoxicated fruit crates. The sympathetic neighbors on their way to the rolling mill or the notions store come by and look over the alley fence and see these two brothers in their shirt sleeves, tinkering away at their stupid velocipede works and their piffling clothes poles, and they shake their heads and say, 'Poor, demented wretches—there's nothing to it! To think of large grown men that might be getting their two dollars a day putting the insides into cash registers, frittering away their lives on a backyard full of truck like that. Well, praises be: it won't be long till they'll be up at the state asylum, where they belong, running around a little tin wheel and sitting up on their hind legs to beg for hickorynuts.'

"But about two days before the really intelligent citizens on the block are going to call in the lunacy commission and have 'em put in the official squirrel cage along with all the other chipmunks, they step aboard their crazy device some morning and yank a couple of levers back a notch or two and there is a low whirring noise and by the time the safe and sane shoedealer who lives next door can get out on his kitchen steps they are making the second circuit around the spire of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

"After a bit they settle down gracefully and step out; may be expecting a few kind plaudits from the populace. Do they get them? They do not. We're just out of plaudits, but we have a few neat underhand knocks in stock, and maybe they'll do. We say, 'Oh, yes, it flew, although we have our doubts about it ever flying again. But can you carry freight on it? Is there any arrangement for handling excursions and large picnic parties? Has it got hot and cold water connections, and is there an all-night janitor service? Ah-hah, we thought so. It's merely a toy you have there and we're too old to be playing with toys at our age.'

"So they, the Ohio parties, have to go to France, where the government, the army and the clergy are constantly taking short excursions into mid-air, with or without provocation, before they can get popular consideration. Over on this side none of us thought so well of that German Count's sausage-shaped airship while it was merrily coursing like a large winged frankfurter up and down the valley of the Wacht am Rhein River. But the next day when it got hit by lightning and a cyclone and was burned to the roots with a loud gutteral sound, the American public came out very strong for the idea and we gave it our hearty indorsement.

It's like this, Larry. For 200 years we have been waiting for this glorious day. To circumnavigate the blue empyrian in the presence of loud cheering multitudes has been the dread of baseball pitchers but the dream of everyone else. There's been many false alarms from time to time. Often it would be Walter Wellman, National president of the Hearth and Home Society of Indoor Polar Explorers, getting ready to start for the Arctic Circle in an airship but postponed on account of wet grounds or cold feet or something. Or else Nick Tesla, the Eva Tanquay of the electrical world, would make his usual semi-weekly announcement of the exclusive discovery of the true secret of aerial navigation; parties with money to invest, please write.

"But we never lost our abounding hope in the ultimate solution of the problem that has been hanging such a fatal operation. We had a feeling that we were meant to fly. We had this feeling stronger, perhaps, after a champagne dinner, but we had it at other times, too. Something seemed to tell us that the hour would come when we'd know how to travel at will upon that treacherous substance which exerted a pressure of I don't know how many pounds to the square inch, until you tried to step on some night, when you came home late, gently simmering, whereupon it slipped out from under you and slammed you prostrate on your abashed map. Every time an adventurous gent took a chance with a new style of heaven-scaling caboose, we'd wait until he was through spattering down from aloft, and then we'd shake our heads and say, 'Poor hair-brained dope that he was; yet, still, his death was not in vain, for it was seen and enjoyed by a large crowd, and, besides, some day posterity, recognizing that he was one of a noble band of pioneers blazing the starry path of progress, will come and sink a shaft to his memory in the hole that he made when he hit.'

"And then, all of a sudden, after all these years, the air gets full of foreign suspended matter, like a chowder. All over this fair land and other lands that are fair, except when holding the Olympian games on the home grounds, we see airships flitting to and fro, some shaped like a Morris chair in a nest of bladders and some like a pineapple cheese that's succeeded in sprouting fins and gills, and some like a sectional bookcase with neat flippers attached.

"The great day has dawned, or anyway it's verging on a dawn. But do we get excited? We do not. An epoch has burst upon us, but it's an off year for epochs or else epoching is not the thing it once was. From what I gather, an epoch is a tremendous thing before it comes and a tremendous thing after it's gone, but doesn't amount to a dern while it's here. This epoch should have chosen a time for bursting when we were not so deeply interested in things of great moment, such as the importation of the style of skirt which shows up a woman's figure when she's got one and shows it up just the same when she hasn't got one, and the Salome movement. We merely cast an eye aloft and say to ourselves that it seems a mighty foolish thing for a lot of grown men to waste their time trying to get a few hundred feet into the air in one of these dirigible toys, when a skyscraper is more durable and an elevator much handier.

"You remember the first automobile, Larry—a small, scared-looking thing resembling a kitchen range on a truck, that smelled like the mink cage in a warm zoo and sounded like the finish of a musical act? It could run four miles an hour if it took a team along, but if you treated it rough its insides all fell down on the bottom in a heap and made a noise like shaking pennies out of a kid's bank. But now automobiling is an industry that provides occupations for thousands in workshop, hospital and marble yard, and on every hand we see the large, dark red, 40-horsepower harvesting machine flitting about, laden with gallant men wearing goggles and a set expression, and lovely ladies with their heads wrapped up in netting like father's oil portrait in flytime. Yet it's only been 10 years since we had the first one and I'll bet you that since that time the wise party who first called it a toy has been run over no less than seven distinct times by both the domestic and the imported makes.

"When an unhappy dippy party named Fulton, with a brain like a sofa pillow, churned up the Hudson River on an insane thing that he'd thought up out of his poor feather-infested head, I understand the banks were lined for miles with the intelligence and culture of the vicinity, who spent a pleasant day making fun of the freak. I might state in passing that some of the descendants of those same merrymakers are now straining their resources so as to be able to buy a $300,000 grandchild of Fulton's ark and float a yacht club flag that shows a saffron stripe across an azure field, thus denoting some blue blood and a broad yellow streak. There's not a doubt in my mind that the distinguished English gentleman who got killed on the first trip of the first locomotive was standing on the track so he could speak a few loud, clear words regarding the folly of expecting that a flighty, steam-driven, animated toy teapot could ever hope to compete with the reliable stage coach. And as for Galileo and Harvey and other ancient dubs, you remember what happened to them. We do things to a great inventor while he lives, and for him after he dies.

"In the years to come, Larry, when a gentleman who doesn't seem to care for his wife will take her half a mile up in the family aeroplane runabout and boost her overboard above the stone quarry; when the younger society set are having kite chases over the Orange Mountains instead of aniseseed bag hunts through the truck farms of Westchester County; when the Jersey-bred commuter, no longer depending on the 10:46 ferry, will be able for the first time in his whole sad life to see how the last act ends; when the Board of Aldermen are taking steps to prevent the Big Tim Sullivan Chowder Club from littering up the front stoops and premises of private citizens, with clam shells and beer bottles and mussy outsiders while upon their annual upping—you and me'll go up to the Hall of Fame to see 'em unveil a couple of large tablets to the Messrs. Wright brothers. And there'll be nothing said about toys in the dedication address, either."

"Tell me," asked the House Detective, "are these here Wrights any kin to the old gent from down South that's been made Secretary of War?"

"I don't think it's possible," said the Hotel Clerk. "The Wrights from Ohio come down sometimes, but the Wright from Tennessee has been up in the air ever since he got the job."

THE FRISKING OF CARIBOU JOE

BY SEWELL FORD

PROFESSOR SHORTY McCABE ENTERTAINS A MAINE GUIDE IN NEW YORK FOR JUST ONE EVENING—

SAY, if you've got any dippy relations or freak friends comin' to town, or if you're expectin' anybody that's troubled with enlargement of the ego, just send 'em my way. I seem to be a kind of receiver for all such that's missed the squirrel house. I'm as handy as a day nursery in a department store, and as willin' as a new hired girl.

When it comes to references, there's Purdy Pell. I've just been doin' a stunt for him that ought to get me a recommend. It ain't clear to me yet, though, how I come to be put on the job. Course I know him more or less, havin' been out to his place on the sound a few times, and he's been one of my reg'lars here at the studio for quite a spell; but I can't say we ever got real thick. Purdy Pell ain't that kind. He couldn't limber up an more'n a length of gas pipe.

Now, Mrs. Purdy Pell's just the other way. She's a born mixer, she is; and so long as it's her makes out the invitation lists, you're liable to run into all sorts out to Rockywold. Not that Purdy don't try hard enough to be sociable; but unless he gets in with his own kind he acts about as much to home as an icicle at a May party—you know, one of them human cold storage plants.

Still, even the frostiest of 'em has their little fads. Trout fishin' is his. You let anyone come along and open up about fly rods and click reels and brush castin', and Purdy thaws out like a water pipe that's been given the bonfire test. He's about the last man you'd look for to develop any sportin' blood; but I guess it's there. Every Spring he goes way off up into Maine, where all the places has names ending in "untic" and "bago," and stays with the game a couple of weeks.

Maybe I'd heard about his havin' been up there this year, and maybe I hadn't. The news wouldn't have kept me awake nights, if I had. But when he shows up at the studio the other day he seems to take it for granted that I've had a full report and know all the details.

"Professor McCabe," says he (it's never Shorty with him, always professor), "I really don't know what I am going to do about Caribou Joe."

"That so?" says I. "Is it glanders, or a touch of the mange that ails him?"

"Beg pardon," says he; "I don't get the connection."

"Me either," says I. "You was sayin' something about some Joe or other; but you didn't mention whether he was a trottin' horse or a bulldog."

"Why," says he, "Caribou Joe is my old trout guide—the best guide in the Rangeleys—and he is making his first trip to the city."

"Well," says I, "if he's a guide, he ought to be able to find his way 'round a place that's as well labeled as New York. What's the trouble?"

"He is coming as my guest," says Pell, "and unfortunately there is a directors' meeting which prevents my meeting him at the train, as I promised to do."

"That's too bad," says I. "Now, if I knew this Joe of yours by sight, I'd just as soon sub for you as not."

"Oh, you couldn't help knowing him after he sad once been described," says Pell. "Besides, I have a photo of him in my pocket, and if it wouldn't be too much trouble, professor, I should be—"

"Why, sure!" says I. "Show us his map, and I'll try my hand at the retrievin' act."

Say, you'd think I'd been stung times enough to know better'n that, wouldn't you? But that first offer of mine was only a bluff, and when he took me up on it unexpected there was nothin' to do but look cheerful. He don't leave me any chance to renig, but starts in givin' me a description and life hist'ry of this Caribou gent.

Seems that Joe was a French Canuck who'd drifted over the border into Maine so long ago that he was almost a native, and had worked up a reputation in the guide business that must have gone to his head. Accordin' to Purdy, Joe could smell a trout lyin' under a log at the bottom of a 20-foot pool and mesmerize him into thinkin' he was hungry for rubber flies. Anyway, this last trip he'd steered Pell to a place where he caught 'em big enough so they didn't need much lyin' about, and Purdy has such a spasm of gratiture that he turns around and invites Joe to come down and have a look at the reddest spot on the chart. Joe shies at first; but after Purdy gets home and Mrs. Pell hears him tell what a wonder Joe is, she makes him send another invite wrapped up in railroad passes. That fetches him. I'll bet if it had been a one-way pass to the Main Sulphur Works, Joe wouldn't have missed takin' a free ride. And he was due on the 4 o'clock Boston express.

"It's awfully kind of you," says Pell. "There isn't another person I could trust with this errand; for Joe is such a wild, impulsive fellow—rather a desperate character, I fancy. But you have the knack of managing such—"

"Say," says I, "I didn't know they grew any bad men up Bangor way. What's his specialty, gun fightin' or knife carvin'?"

"Well, really," says Pell, "I can't say that he is as bad as that. In fact, I have never seen him do anything realy violent or vicious; but I have gathered, from things he has said, that perhaps he was somewhat of a desperate character when crossed."

"Oh, you got it from him, did you?" says I.

He had. He thought, too, there was a wild strain in Joe that might make him bloodthirsty at times, if not handled right.

"Gee!" says I, "I hope he don't bring his appetite for gore all the way to New York. I'd look nice, wouldn't I, bein' chased down Fifth ave. by a mosseback from the State of Maine."

But Pell says that as soon as I mention his name there won't be any trouble, and all I has to do is to spot Joe when he gets off the express, steer him round to the New Haven local, take him out to Rockywold and hand him over to Mrs. Pell.

So that afternoon finds me over to the Grand Central waitin' in the concourse, holdin' a snapshot picture in one hand and lookin' sharp for a stoop-shouldered, long-haired gent with a pair of little black eyes and a grizzly mustache long enough to tie under his chin.

If I hadn't always tended out reg'lar on the sportin' shows at the Garden, maybe I'd been expectin' somethin' picturesque in the way of costume; but I've seen enough Maine guides to know that they're apt to hit town dressed to the minute, even if it takes the last celluloid collar in the box. So I was dependin' mostly on spottin' Joe by the bonnet string lip whisker. That's why, when the train pulls in and the procession begins to form on the asphalt walks, I come mighty near oyelookin' the party in the coon-skin cap and the red sash. Just as he's passin', though, I gets a glimpse of the six-inch soup strainers and the rat terrier eyes, and then I knows it must be Caribou Joe.

He's a little, squizzled up old chap, wearin' felt boots with rubber bottoms, a blue flannel shirt and a greasy old huntin' coat with cartridge loops and pockets all over it. Slung over his shoulder is a blanket roll with a coffee pot and a fryin' pan strapped on top; but, outside of somethin' wrapped up in a newspaper, that's all the baggage he has. From the cookin' tools, it looks like Joe wa'n't goin' to take any chances on missin' Pell and findin' all the taverns shut up. He was fixed to camp on Broadway or anywhere else. Say, he was a nice article to step up and claim in a crowd. I'd paid money to have been there and seen Purdy Pell done it. But it was up to me just then; so I falls into step alongside of Joe, hits him a pat on the back and sings out:

"Hello, Caribou! How's things up along the Allegash?"

It was the wrong openin'; I see that the minute I makes the play. Joe goes right up in the air, side steps into a pussy old party with a cane, caroms off against one of them red-capped brunette baggage wrastlers and nearly raises a panic.

"Hay!" he squeals. "You quit that or I'll lambaste ye!"

"Don't get excited now," says I ,tryin' to calm him down; "I'm only—"

"I know ye, gol ding ye!" says he, edgin' off. "You're one of them bunkum fellers. Scat!"

"Ah, can that kind of hollerin'!" says I. "I'm subbin' for Mr. Purdy Pell, Joe. He couldn't be here himself, and he wants me to take you out to his house. See, here's your picture he gave me."

Well, that soothes him a little, and after I've said it over three or four times and give the run to a couple of butt-ins that tried to take Joe's part, he looks me up and down real careful and concludes to take a chance. I didn't lose any time about leadin' him into the smokin' car of the local; but even after I'd got him stowed safe his little rat eyes was dartin' four ways watchin' for trouble.

"You're all right now, Joe," says I.

"Mebby so," says he; "but I got fourteen dollars sewed inside my shirt, and the man that gits it has got to take it off'm my dead body. I'm Caribou Joe, b'gosh!"

"Well," says I, "you look it. I hear you're a bad man in a muss, too."

And say, I could see right away that was the lead to follow. His eyes snaps and his chest begins to swell out.

"Where'd you hear that?" says he.

"Why, most every one in New York knows about you," says I. "They says you're the ripsnorter of the Rangeleys."

That fetches a great big grin out of him, and inside of about two minutes I had him goin' just right.

"What's your particular line, Joe?" says I.

"Injuns," says he, tappin' himself on the breastbone. "I don't cal'late to talk much about it; but when it comes to Injun fightin', I'm home."

"Didn't know them Bangor Injuns went on the warpath often," says I.

"Bangor!" he snorts. "Guess you mean Oldtown? Wall, them kind don't. That's why I ain't never had a chance to show what I'm made of; but if ever I start West once, after them Si-ox and Aypaches, you'll hear of things that'll make yer blood run cold."

"Ain't tackled any of 'em yet, then?" says I.

"No," says he; "but I've read lots about the cusses in books. See?"

And what do you suppose he shows up? A roll of nickel lib'ries, same's you see these D. T. kids and office boys readin' in the subway trains. Say, them waybackers get some queer bubbles in their gray matter, eh? Here was this old rooster, almost old enough to be a granddaddy, and goin' daffy over such stuff as that.

Well, I jollies him along and he pulls the throttle wide open. Blow! Why, to listen to him dope it out, you might think he'd caught all the fish and killed all the game the Maine woods ever produced, and that when it came to hero stunts all he needed was room to swing himself. Compared to him a Rialto hamfatter admittin' how good he was could be convicted of bein' modest.

Next thing Joe does is to open his coat and exhibit his medals. It was a collection that most covers his shirt front; and they was all kinds, from a Grand Army badge to a silver shield won at a turkey shoot. I judged that most of 'em had been faked up by city sports that wanted to string him; but Joe seemed as proud of the lot as if they'd all been presented by Congress.

It was a heap easier to start Joe talkin' about himself than it was to switch him off; but at last I strikes the combination.

"I expect Mrs. Pell will be glad to see you," says I.

"Huh," he grunts. "I don't want to see no women."

"What's wrong with the ladies?" says I.

"Don't like 'em," says he, and shuts up like a clam.

"Oh, I guess you'll take to Mrs. Purdy Pell," says I.

But that's where I wa'n't a prophet. She's waitin' at the station with the rig; but Joe wouldn't so much as shake hands with her, and when she moves over to make room for him on the same seat, he sniffs and climbs up alongside the coachman.

"What a delightfully odd character he is," says Mrs. Pell to me.

"He's all of that," says I. "Hope you enjoy his visit."

With that I goes back to town, glad enough to get him off my hands; and when I fetches the studio who should I meet comin' out but my old side partner, Leonidas Dodge, all rigged out in sporty clothes and wearin' a puff tie with a Brazilian diamond horseshoe almost life size.

"Gee, Leonidas," says I, "you look like money was easy and you'd let some Bowery tailor go as far as he liked. Why the noisy uniform?"

"It's part of the business, son," says he. "You ain't gone to makin' a book, have you?" says I.

"I might of known he hadn't. He explains that he's got a job managin' the Deadwood Dick Wild West Company that's gettin' together here for an early start on the Southern circuit. But even with a backer that's a willin' performer on the check book, Leonidas is havin' his troubles.

"It's because the noble red man is gettin' to be such a scarce article," says he. "Never saw anything like it before in the hist'ry of the tent show business. Here I am offering forty-five a month, board and transportation free, and the best I can do towards assemblin' my troupe of genuine war chiefs, each and everyone of whom was in the thick of the fight at Wounded Knee, is to collect a scrubby bunch of Cattaraugus County basket-makers, that never wore a blanket in their lives, and wouldn't know a snake dance from the minuet. Wild, untutored savages, straight from the reservations of the great West, they're supposed to be; but say, where I've been boardin' 'em over in Brooklyn they kick if they don't have fresh napkins every meal. Forty-five a month, and me rehearsin' 'em in the yip-yip chorus until my throat is sore! I'm even showin' some of 'em how to handle their guns. That's what comes of overdoin' this Wild West game, Shorty."

Well, I sympathizes with Leonidas, and promises to take a run over that evenin' and watch him put his gang of near reds through their drill. I was just gettin' ready to do it too, when Mrs. Pell gets me on the wire. She wants to know if I can't come out to Rockywold right away.

"It's that horrid guide," says she. "He's frightened all the maids half to death, threatened the butler with a knife, and now he's in the library rolled up in a Turkish rug before the fireplace, snoring dreadfully. I have a lot of guests here, and Purdy has sent word that he can't get out until late, and we don't know what to do."

"Haven't tried turning the hose on him, have you?" says I.

"Oh, we wouldn't dare," says she. "Purdy has told me all about how desperate he is. I don't want to send for the police; but I thought perhaps you might bring out a—what do you call it—a posse, or something like that, and—"

"Sure!" says I. "I've got one right handy. We'll be out on the nine-thirty."

Course, I'd thought of Leonidas and his basketmakers. I makes a break for the subway, catches a bridge express, hikes across to Brooklyn, and rushes into the hall where Dodge was holdin' his Injun kindergarten.

"Leonidas," says I, "if you want to give your braves some field work, and mingle a little with the fat wads at the same time, jerk half a dozen out of the front row and follow me."

It didn't take much argument to get Leonidas warmed up to a proposition of that kind. Soon's I've named the place, he begins to hustle. He loads up a couple of suitcases with feather bonnets, cowboy pistols, and blank cartridges, picks out his squad, and off we starts to the rescue. On the way up we plans the campaign. And that's where Dodge's dramatic talent comes out strong.

"Leonidas," says I, awter he's told me the scheme he's thought up, "you hadn't ought to be managin' a phony Wild West show; you ought to be runnin' a joint like the Hippodrome."

When we gets up to the Rockywold gates I leaves Dodge and his crew behind and goes in alone. Mrs. Pell and a lot of other ladies has barricaded themselves in the parlor, but they comes out when I shows up and almost falls on my neck.

"Thank goodness you're here!" says she just the way the heroine does in a war play.

"Say, I think you might have played me on with a little snare drum music," says I, grinning.

"But it's no joke," says she. "He has built a fire in there, and we didn't know what he would do next. Have you brought help?"

"A wagonload," says I.

Then I tells her not to get scared if she hears a little racket outside, because nobody's going to get hurt, and there wa'n't goin' to be any damage done. Next I tiptoes over to the lib'ry and does a little scoutin'.

Caribou Joe is camped out in front of the fireplace, as cozy as if he was in the tall timber. He has woke up from his snooze and is squattin' in front of the fire makin' himself a cup of coffee. For a first call, he was actin' right to home. I sneaks to the front door and holds up a lighted match, just as Leonidas has said, and then I goes back and butts in on the Terror of the Rangeleys.

"Joe," says I, "didn't I hear you say somethin' about your just achin' to get a whack at real, sure enough Injuns?"

Joe don't deny it. He's ready to go over the whole story again; but I cuts him off.

"Then your chance has come at last," says I, "and you'll never have another like it as long as you live."

He looks kind of suspicious, and wants to know how.

"How?" says I. "Why there's Injuns around this house this very minute. I've come to get you to help me wipe 'em out. They're a band that was brought on from the plains to go in a show; but they must have got away from their keepers, for they're cavortin' around outside like so many red devils. There's no tellin' when they'll break in and scalp all these helpless women folks."

"Injuns?" says Joe. "I don't believe no such durned yarn."

"You don't?" says I. Listen to that, then! There it goes again! Hear 'em?"

Say, Leonidas didn't run a Sagawa show two seasons for nothin'. Them war whoops, the way they was handin' 'em out, would have done credit to old Sittin' Bull himself.

"Come on, Joe!" says I. "We've got to drive 'em off or die in the attempt."

But Joe did't make any grand rush to get at 'em. As near as I could judge by the symptoms, he was gettin' nervous.

"I'd like to," says he; "but I ain't got a wepping of any kind about me, nothin' but my hunting knife, and if they're real Injuns I wouldn't stand no show at all. Now, if I only had my old deer rifle, or even a pistol—"

"Here you are; take your pick," says I, flashin' a couple of overgrown Colts. "I've got a box of cartridges, too. Come on! There goes their yell again. Gee! but I'm

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