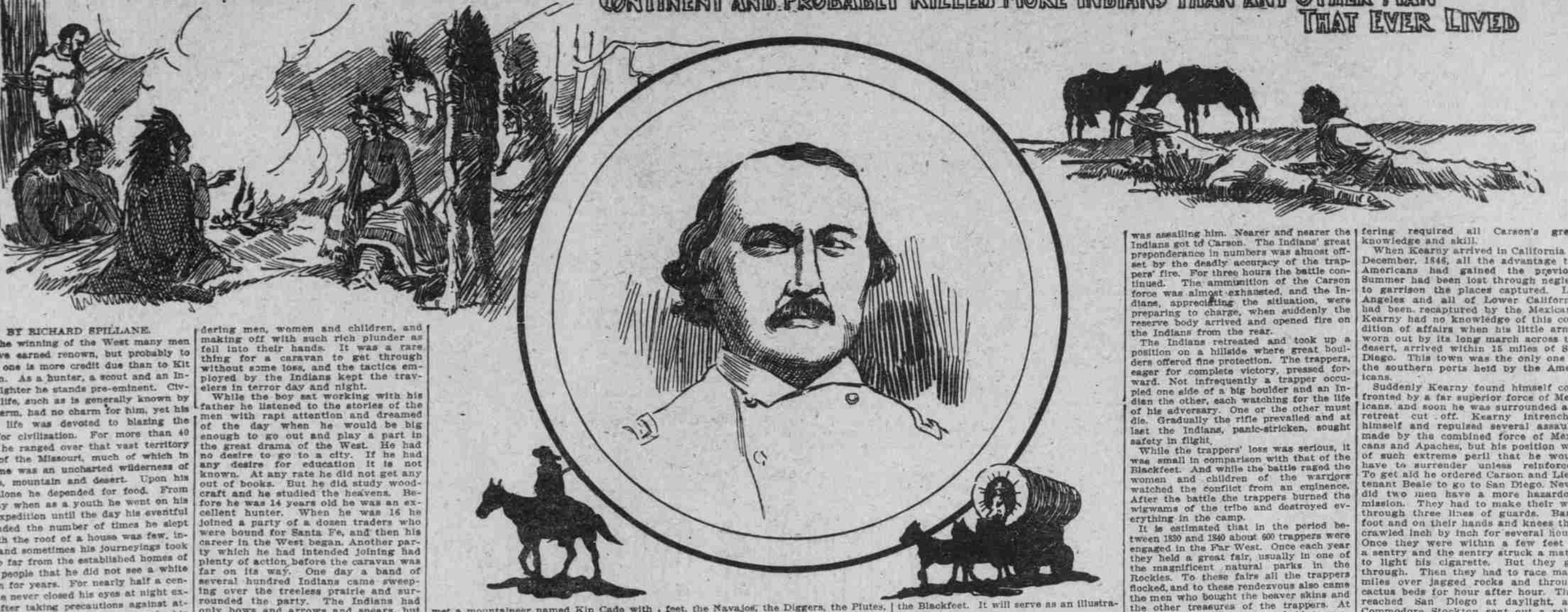


KIT CARSON GREATEST OF FRONTIERSMEN

SCOUT, PATHFINDER AND INDIAN FIGHTER ~ PREEMINENT AMONG THE ARGONAUTS OF CIVILIZATION YET KNEW NOTHING OF CIVILIZED LIFE ~ SAVED GENERAL STEPHEN KEARNEY'S ARMY FROM DISASTER ~ PILOTED FREMONT ACROSS THE CONTINENT AND PROBABLY KILLED MORE INDIANS THAN ANY OTHER MAN THAT EVER LIVED



BY RICHARD SPILLANE.

IN the winning of the West many men have earned renown, but probably no one is more credit due than to Kit Carson. As a hunter, a scout and an Indian fighter he stands pre-eminent. Civilized life, such as is generally known by that term, had no charm for him, yet his whole life was devoted to blazing the way for civilization. For more than 40 years he ranged over that vast territory west of the Missouri, much of which in his time was an uncharted wilderness of prairie, mountain and desert. Upon his rifle alone he depended for food. From the day when as a youth he went on his first expedition until the day his eventful life ended the number of times he slept beneath the roof of a house was few, indeed, and sometimes his journeys took him so far from the established homes of white people that he did not see a white woman for years. For nearly half a century he never closed his eyes at night except after taking precautions against attack and surprise. Two pistols were by his side and his rifle was under his arm. He probably had more battles with Indians and more escapes from death than any frontiersman the country has known, and his adventures would supply a Fenimore Cooper with ample material for a full Leather Stockings series, yet he was as unlike the typical frontiersman as night is from the day.

There was no suggestion of the bravo about Kit Carson. He was as mild-mannered and as unassuming as a woman, and his voice was soft and gentle. Those who knew his fame and met him for the first time wondered if this slender, quiet man could be the redoubtable Indian fighter. He spoke but little and seemed most of the time to be in a reflective mood, but he never relaxed his vigilance. Although perhaps no other man ever killed so many Indians as did Carson, he had no love for slaughter. He simply did it in the course of his work and what he considered to be his duty. He had no false notions about the Indians, and although he made his name a terror to them from Chihuahua on the south to the Canadian line on the north and from the Kaw on the east to the Sacramento on the west he had their respect, too, and later in his life he became one of their best counselors and friends.

Man Who Never Swore.
One of the queer things about Carson is that although he lived throughout his whole life among men who were wild and untamed, many of whom were fugitives from the States and to whom liberty meant license, he always remained pure-minded and modest. Once, when he was less than 20 years old, he drank to excess and got involved in a brawl, but he never drank liquor again, and it is said that he never uttered a profane word. And, although he was a man of a bar he was a deep student in his own primitive way. He studied animals, he studied nature and he studied men. There was hardly a stream in all the West where he did not know in all its important crooks and turns.

Wanted Elbow Room.
Carson was born in what now is Madison County, Kentucky, December 21, 1809. "Kit" is an abbreviation of Christopher. His father and mother were of an particular strength of character, the father being content to make a bare living as a backwoods harnessmaker, and the mother having no ideas beyond the common daily routine of household work. But the father loved solitude, and when Kit was a year old the family moved to what now is Howard County, Missouri. The elder Carson would not stay in Kentucky. It was getting too crowded for him. A settler had come in and built a cabin a mile from the Carson log cabin. There was another settler six miles away. Carson wanted elbow room and expected to have it beyond the Mississippi.

It was the intention to make a harness-maker out of Kit, and when the boy had grown up a bit he had to assist the father. Most of the work that came to the shop was from men who had traveled over the old Santa Fe trail. These men told wonderful stories of the wild West. A trip from St. Louis to Santa Fe in those days was one of great peril. Once or twice a year his wagon trains, guarded by nearly a hundred armed men, came through without molestation, but bands of Indians swooped down upon the smaller caravans occasionally, capturing, torturing and mur-

dering men, women and children, and making off with such rich plunder as fell into their hands. It was a rare thing for a caravan to get through without some loss, and the tactics employed by the Indians kept the travelers in terror day and night. While the boy sat working with his father he listened to the stories of the men with rapt attention and dreamed of the day when he would be big enough to go out and play a part in the great drama of the West. He had no desire to go to a city. If he had any desire for education it was not known. At any rate he did not get any out of books. But he did study woodcraft and he studied the heavens. Before he was 14 years old he was an excellent hunter. When he was 16 he joined a party of a dozen traders who were bound for Santa Fe, and then his career in the West began. Another party which he had intended joining had plenty of action before the caravan was far on its way. One day a band of several hundred Indians came sweeping over the treeless prairie and surrounded the party. The Indians had only bows and arrows and spears, but they were gallantly mounted. The traders prepared for defense, but their horses and mules as barricades. For 36 hours the Indians kept up some sort of an attack, sending in occasional showers of arrows and creeping through the grass as close up as they could with safety to get at the imprisoned men. They had a whole-some respect for the rifles of the traders and did not care to risk a charge. One of the traders had been killed and another wounded. But they held their ground. At midnight of the third night they sought escape in the only way possible. That was by creeping over the ridge and through the brush and into the Indians. Luck was with them and they were not discovered, but only ten remained of the party, and one of the traders was wounded.

They were afraid, and the Indians might have captured them, but the Indians, after the long siege, were content with the plunder they obtained in the night. The traders, however, were afraid of the white men fled night and day, ever fearful of encountering Indians. The wounded man had to be abandoned. Then the remaining traders were disgraced as the route to traverse, and they split into two bands, one of four men and one of five. The five fell into the hands of a band of Creeks. Of the other four only two survived. Had Kit Carson joined this unfortunate band of traders instead of the one he did, the West probably never would have known him, but the caravan in which he traveled was not attacked.

Bit of Surgery.
One of his experiences on this trip, however, gives a fair illustration of methods employed in those days. A member of the party had been shot accidentally and his arm shattered. The wound became inflamed, and to save the man's life an operation was necessary. The only instruments available were a razor and a bar of iron. The iron was put in the fire, and while half a dozen men held the wounded man the boy Carson used the razor and then the iron. He shattered the arm, and next cauterized the stump of the arm with the hot iron. And the wound was almost healed by the time the caravan reached Santa Fe.

It has been the custom to picture the men of the frontiers as heroes and the Indians as bloodthirsty savages. As a matter of fact, many of the frontiersmen were more of the savage than the Indians. They were rovers, vagabonds and adventurers mostly, with here and there a worthy man. They had little respect for human life and some of them had been murderers back in the States. Drink was their bane and their carouses usually brought about bloodshed. For the Indians they had no respect. They made no effort to treat the aborigines honestly, as did the French voyageurs and trappers. Their creed was that the only good Indian was a dead one, and usually they did their best to make the creed good.

But the Indians were many and the whites were few in the trans-Mississippi country. Each Indian tribe had its own hunting ground beyond which it did not venture without danger of invoking the wrath of the vengeance of another tribe. The Indians felt the land was theirs, for God had placed them there. The whites were invaders. The Indians were honest, truthful and loyal before the whites arrived. The whites brought theft, untruth, whisky and immorality. And when savage white men robbed or murdered Indians it was difficult for the Indian to understand why he should not seek vengeance on the tribe of whites generally. There were so few good whites that it was difficult for the Indians, even if bent on search, to find them. And then the Indian asked himself what right had the white man in the Indian's land. The white man had the right of might. He was the stronger. He was the more numerous. He was the more advanced. He was the more civilized. He was the more powerful. He was the more numerous. He was the more advanced. He was the more civilized. He was the more powerful.

met a mountaineer named Kin Cade with whom he lived for a year and who taught him Spanish and French. Cade was a man of education. He took a deep interest in the boy and had a good influence over him for years. In 1827 Carson went out as an escort to a party of traders who were going East. Santa Fe was the great depot of supplies in the Southwest. Traders brought goods from the East and exchanged them for beaver skins, deer skins, gold, copper, silver and other products of the far Southwest. Carson went only to the forks of the Arkansas River and then returned with another caravan to Santa Fe. He had decided what he was to do. He had determined to become a trapper—to fare forth after the beaver, whose skin at that time was the only currency in the Far West.

For fifteen years Carson hunted, and in that time he set his traps in nearly every stream in the West. He went into the country of the Comanches, the Black-

feet, the Navajos, the Diggers, the Plutes, the Apaches, the Crows, the Arapahoes, the Flatheads, the Uthas, the Cheyennes, the Kiowas, the Sioux, the Pawnees, the Snakes, the Delawares, the Mojaves, and other tribes, and rare was the month in which he or the party of which he was a member did not have battle with the Indians. It was a long succession of conflicts. The whites sought the game pastures of the land and the Indians, for their own safety and protection, endeavored to keep them out. The whites were in ever present danger of ambush and of night attack. Craft had to be measured against craft. Tragedies were enacted the only record of which is in God's book of remembrance. Occasionally bands of trappers would unite to make war on one particular tribe of Indians. Usually Carson, by reason of his executive skill, was chosen to command. One of these little wars was on

the Blackfeet. It will serve as an illustration.

Battle With the Blackfeet.
The Blackfeet had driven various bands of trappers out of their territory, stolen their horses and killed some of the men. A company of 100 trappers, with nearly 200 horses and mules, set out to seek vengeance. When near the Blackfeet encampment Carson went forward to reconnoiter. There were more than 1000 warriors in the Blackfeet force. So soon as he got the position of the Indians, Carson planned his battle. With 45 men he attacked the camp on one side, while the remaining force made a detour to strike the Indians in the rear. The Indians fought heroically. At the approach of Carson's force each Indian sprang behind a tree and so soon as a rifle was discharged the Indian would shoot an arrow and dodge to get under cover of a tree near the white man who

was assaulting him. Nearer and nearer the Indians got to Carson. The Indians' great preponderance in numbers was almost offset by the deadly accuracy of the trappers' fire. For three hours the battle continued. The ammunition of the Carson force was almost exhausted, and the Indians, appreciating the situation, were preparing to charge, when suddenly the reserve body arrived and opened fire on the Indians from the rear.

The Indians retreated and took up a position on a hillside where great boulders offered the protection. The trappers, eager for complete victory, pressed forward. Not infrequently a trapper occupied one side of a big boulder and an Indian the other, each watching for the life of his adversary. One of the other must die. Gradually the rifle prevailed and at last the Indians, panic-stricken, sought safety in flight.

While the trappers' loss was serious, it was small in comparison with that of the Blackfeet. And while the battle raged the women and children of the warriors watched the conflict from an eminence. After the battle the trappers burned the wigwams of the tribe and destroyed everything in the camp.

It is estimated that in the period between 1830 and 1840 about 600 trappers were engaged in the Far West. Once each year they held a great fair, usually in the Rocky Mountains. To these fairs all the trappers flocked, and to these rendezvous also came the men who bought the beaver skins and the other treasures of the trappers. These gatherings were pictureque in the extreme, and the men who took part in the games probably were as fine a body of physical specimens as North America could furnish.

Duel at a Wilderness Fair.

At one of these fairs Carson fought a duel with a renowned desperado named Shuman. Shuman was French, and had made a remark that Carson resented. In accordance with the code of the fair they rode over the plain and then approached each other, each watching for the first move on the part of the other that would be the signal for firing. Neither man made a move until their horses were almost abreast. Then the Frenchman moved suddenly, but before he could shoot Carson's bullet had gone through his wrist and up his arm. The strong man was a terror no longer. He was crippled for life.

One year when the hunters gathered for the fair they had nothing to make merry over. Silk had replaced beaver, and their most remunerative "crop" brought little. Carson, who had been provident, took advantage of the condition to make a trip East. He had married an Indian girl some years before, and the wife had died a few weeks after giving birth to a daughter. Carson wanted to place his daughter in a good home, and he also wished to see the home of his boyhood. He started East in 1832, but the home of his boyhood was in ruins and all his family had died.

After providing for the care and education of his child he longed for the Missouri again. He took passage up the Missouri on a steamboat—the first vessel of that character he ever had seen—and on the boat he met Lieutenant John C. Fremont, who was on his way West with an engineering party to make surveys and map the country between Missouri and the Rockies. Fremont engaged Carson as his guide. Through the territory now embraced by Kansas, Nebraska and Colorado, Carson piloted the expedition, and when his work was supposed to be done he left it and went to his home at Taos, N. M., where he married Senora Josepha Jamilla, a Mexican woman of beauty and refinement.

But Fremont's expedition to Colorado was only a blind. The authorities in Washington, anticipating trouble with Mexico over the Texas boundary, controlled on the Pacific shore, for it was certain that in event of war the United States would seize California. Fremont, therefore, was ordered to proceed to the Pacific and Carson was again engaged as his scout.

From the Rockies in Colorado Carson piloted the party over the route that now is the line of the Union Pacific Railroad, and one day they came into sight of the Pacific Ocean. It was Fremont's purpose to go to Monterey for supplies and to recuperate, but when near that city a message came from General Castro, Mexican commander of California, ordering Fremont and his party to leave the country. Although Fremont had only 45 men, he refused to obey. He established his force in a strong defensive position and prepared for battle. General Castro came up with several hundred troops and camped close to Fremont's quarters. The two forces watched each other for three days. Then Fremont turned his attention to the north. He explored the Columbia River district, and incidentally had a battle with the Klamath Indians. He was soon after this battle that Fremont learned that war between the United States and Mexico had begun. Immediately the exploring force was turned into a military army, and it started back toward Monterey. Before it got to that city Commodore Sloat had captured the Mexican fleet, so Fremont and his party took ship to San Diego and marched from there to attack Los Angeles. From San Diego Fremont sent Carson with dispatches to Washington.

Pilot of an Army.

To go from California to Washington today is not much of a task, but then it meant that nearly 3000 miles of the trip was through desert, mountains and plain, every foot of the way one of danger from hostile Indians. When Carson reached New Mexico he met the little army of General Kearney, which was marching overland for the conquest of California. Kearney asked Carson to guide the army over the Great American Desert. Kearney relieved Carson of responsibility for the safe delivery of Fremont's dispatches. But before Carson would pilot the army, the army had to fight a few battles for the control of New Mexico. Then the march across the desert began. The force was too formidable for the Indians to give it much trouble, but to provision it and to save it from suf-

fering required all Carson's great knowledge and skill.

When Kearney arrived in California in December, 1846, all the advantage the Americans had gained the previous Summer had been lost through neglect to garrison the places captured. Los Angeles and all of Lower California had been recaptured by the Mexicans. Kearney had no knowledge of this condition of affairs when his little army, worn out by its long march across the desert, arrived within 15 miles of San Diego. This town was the only one of the southern ports held by the Americans.

Suddenly Kearney found himself confronted by a far superior force of Mexicans, and soon he was surrounded and retreat cut off. Kearney intrenched himself and repulsed several assaults made by the combined force of Mexicans and Apaches, but his position was of such extreme peril that he would have to surrender unless reinforced. To get aid he ordered Carson and Lieutenant Beale to go to San Diego. Never did two men have a more hazardous journey. They were within a few feet of a sandy and rocky beach when they reached San Diego at daylight. Both of Carson's feet and legs were so terribly torn and lacerated by the rocks and cactus that for a time it was thought that he would not recover. Lieutenant Beale did not recover for nearly two years, and for several days after his arrival at San Diego he

was in a state of delirium. In March Carson was sent East with dispatches telling of the conquest of California. Marked honors were shown to him when he reached Washington. He was presented to the President, and a few days later he was nominated for appointment as Lieutenant in the Army. Back to California he was sent, again with dispatches, and as soon as he reached there he was put in charge of a company of dragoons.

With the close of the war he expected to enjoy some of the pleasures of life. With a man named Maxwell he purchased a great ranch near Taos, and there Indians came to smoke the pipe of peace and to trade their goods for the whites. He was called to the warpath again. The Apaches were on a marauding and murdering expedition. When they were subdued he was called to the warpath again.

In the Summer of 1860 he set out with Maxwell and a large train of wagons for St. Louis. After selling his stuff he bought an Indian girl and some horses, and the long return trip to New Mexico. Just before reaching the forks of the Arkansas River a band of Cheyennes came down upon them, and the Indians, armed with bows and arrows, killed Maxwell, who, shaven, and shorn, had discarded the garb of the plains and was in civilian clothes. While seated about the wagon train the Cheyennes in their own dialect discussed a plan for massacring the whole party. Quickly Carson advised his companions of the situation. Then, addressing the Indians in their own tongue, he told them that the first one who made an offensive move would die.

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The following year Carson visited California, and the whole state united in doing honor to him. Then the National Government appointed him special Indian agent, and he traversed the West, settling disputes and making treaties with Indian tribes. When Indians got bad he took the warpath and served as before as leader or as scout. He had plenty of action.

Soon after the Civil War began the Confederate General Sibley made raid into New Mexico. There was only a small force of Union troops in the territory and the Indians took advantage of the situation to settle old scores with the whites. The Mescalero Apaches, the Gila Apaches and the Navajos in turn made war. Carson, commissioned as a Colonel, overpowered both the Mescaleros and the Gilas and then dealt a crushing blow to the Navajos by capturing their famous stronghold in the Canyon de Chelly. Later in the war with the Kiowas, he again distinguished himself and was made Brigadier-General by brevet. After the Civil War closed he again was appointed Special Indian Commissioner, this time with jurisdiction over the Kiowas, Cheyennes and Arapahoes.

In 1868 he was called to Washington to give evidence and advice in a dispute between the Government and the Apaches. He was accompanied on his trip by various Indian chiefs, and cities vied with each other in inviting the scout and his chiefs to see the sights.

On his way back West Carson went to Fort Lyons, Colo., to see his son, and there, while mounting his horse, he burst a blood vessel in his neck and died instantly.

A simple headstone in the graveyard at Taos, N. M., marks Carson's last resting place. A marble shaft, severe in its plainness stands in a public square at Santa Fe. These are all the monuments that exist to his memory.

So far as known, but one of Carson's old companions is still living—Charles Simpson, of Taos. Simpson was by various titles Carson's Indian Commissioner, and was with him when he died.

This year at various places throughout the West it is planned to have services in honor of Carson, for the year 1909 is the centenary of America's greatest scout and Indian fighter.—Copyright, 1909, by Richard Spillane.

PORTRAITS OF MEN WHO ARE PROMINENT FIGURES IN THE NEWS OF THE WEEK



J. E. ASTOR
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J. J. JUSSELAND
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J. M. LYNCH.
NEW YORK, August 14.—(Special.)—Ambassador J. M. Lynch sailed for France this week for his vacation. The other members of the Embassy have gone to the Massachusetts Coast. Before sailing Mr. Jusseland said that possibly the reason for our stocks was that we discriminated against French industries in our tariff. He mentioned the tariff on ribbons and curtains.

L. B. HANNA.
The International Typographical Union began its annual meeting at St. Joseph, Mo., August 3. J. M. Lynch, the president of the organization, presented a report telling that during the year there had been very general employment of the members owing to the increase of union offices. The members of the organization have earned in the past year about \$40,000,000. Among the results achieved by the union are the improvement of sanitary conditions in composing-rooms; increase of the rate of the union label; help in the campaign against consumption; betterment of the conditions of the tollers of the country. The average membership for the year has been 44,921. President Lynch said: "I have always opposed the strike, and I have sought a settlement in every instance where trouble did occur through every channel that offered before the strike was resorted to. But I am not one of those who would abandon the strike as the last weapon in the hands of organized labor." The report of J. W. Hays, the

secretary is equally satisfactory. The most important subject that came before the convention was a proposition for the establishment of a burial benefit fund for the members in good standing, and the future of the old-age pension plan.

J. W. HERRON.
Louis B. Hanna is one of the new Congressmen. He comes from Fargo, N. D., but was born in Pennsylvania and his father was a veteran of the Civil War. Mr. Hanna is a banker but he has also big farming interests. He has been a member of the State Legislature in both houses.

J. J. JUSSELAND.
Colonel John Jacob Jusseland sailed for Europe this week on the Kaiser Wilhelm II. He was accompanied by his son Vincent. Colonel Astor sails about this time every year. He has no special destination but it is thought he

may attend the aeroplane races which are to be held at Rheims in France, August 22.

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