HELEN CODY WETMORE

LAST OF THE GREAT SCOUTS

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The True Life Story of Buffalo Bill

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GENEALOGY OF BUFFALO BILL.

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The following genealogical sketch was compiled in 1897. The crest is copied from John Rooney's "Genealogical History of Irish Families."

It is not generally known that genuine royal blood courses in Colonel Cody's veins. He is a lineal descendant of Milesius, king of Spain, that famous monarch whose three sons, Heber, Heremon, and Ir, founded the first dynasty in Ireland, about the beginning of the Christian era. The Cody family comes through the line of Heremon. The original name was Tireach, which signifies "The Rocks." Muiredach Tireach, one of the first of this line, and son of Fiacha Straivetine, was crowned king of Ireland, Anno Domini 320. Another of the line became king of Connaught, Anno Domini 701. The possessions of the Sept were located in the present counties of Clare, Galway, and Mayo. The names Connaught-Gallway, after centuries, gradually contracted to Connallway, Connellway, Connelly, Conly, Cory, Coddy, Coidy, and Cody, and is clearly shown by ancient indentures still traceable among existing records. On the maternal side, Colonel Cody can, without difficulty, follow his lineage to the best blood of England. Several of the Cody family emigrated to America in 1747, settling in Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. The name is frequently mentioned in Revolutionary history. Colonel Cody is a member of the Cody family of Revolutionary fame. Like the other Spanish-Irish families, the Codys have their proof of ancestry in the form of a crest, the one which Colonel Cody is entitled to use being printed

herewith. The lion signifies Spanish origin. It is the same figure that forms a part of the royal coat-of-arms of Spain to this day—Castile and Leon. The arm and cross denote that the descent is through the line of Heremon, whose posterity were among the first to follow the cross, as a symbol of their adherence to the Christian faith.

PREFACE.

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In presenting this volume to the public the writer has a twofold purpose. For a number of years there has been an increasing demand for an authentic biography of "Buffalo Bill," and in response, many books of varying value have been submitted; yet no one of them has borne the hall-mark of veracious history. Naturally, there were incidents in Colonel Cody's life—more especially in the earlier years—that could be given only by those with whom he had grown up from childhood. For many incidents of his later life I am indebted to his own and others' accounts. I desire to acknowledge obligation to General P. H. Sheridan, Colonel Inman, Colonel Ingraham, and my brother for valuable assistance furnished by Sheridan's Memoirs, "The Santa Fe Trail," "The Great Salt Lake Trail," "Buffalo Bill's Autobiography," and "Stories from the Life of Buffalo Bill."

A second reason that prompted the writing of my brother's life-story is purely personal. The sobriquet of "Buffalo Bill" has conveyed to many people an impression of his personality that is far removed from the facts. They have pictured in fancy a rough frontier character, without tenderness and true nobility. But in very truth has the poet sung:

"The bravest are the tenderest—
The loving are the daring."

The public knows my brother as boy Indian-slayer, a champion buffalo-hunter, a brave soldier, a daring scout, an intrepid frontiersman, and a famous exhibitor. It is only fair to him that a glimpse be given of the parts he played behind the scenes—devotion to a widowed mother, that pushed the boy so early upon a stage of ceaseless action, continued care and tenderness displayed in later years, and the generous thoughtfulness of manhood's prime.

Thus a part of my pleasant task has been to enable the public to see my brother through his sister's eyes—eyes that have seen truly if kindly. If I have been tempted into praise where simple narrative might to the reader seem all that was required, if I have seemed to exaggerate in any of my history's details, I may say that I am not conscious of having set down more than "a plain, unvarnished tale." Embarrassed with riches of fact, I have had no thought of fiction. H. C. W.

CODYVIEW, DULUTH, MINNESOTA, February 26, 1899.

CHAPTER I. — THE OLD HOMESTEAD IN IOWA.

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A PLEASANT, roomy farm-house, set in the sunlight against a background of cool, green wood and mottled meadow—this is the picture that my earliest memories frame for me. To this home my parents, Isaac and Mary Cody, had moved soon after their marriage.

The place was known as the Scott farm, and was situated in Scott County, Iowa, near the historic little town of Le Clair, where, but a few years before, a village of the Fox Indians had been located; where Black Hawk and his thousand warriors had assembled for their last war-dance; where the marquee of General Scott was erected, and the treaty with the Sacs and Foxes drawn up; and where, in obedience to the Sac chief's terms, Antoine Le Clair, the famous half-breed Indian scholar and interpreter, had built his cabin, and given to the place his name. Here, in this atmosphere of pioneer struggle and Indian warfare—in the farm-house in the dancing sunshine, with the background of wood and meadow—my brother, William Frederick Cody, was born, on the 26th day of February, 1846.

Of the good, old-fashioned sort was our family, numbering five daughters and two sons—Martha, Samuel, Julia, William, Eliza, Helen, and May. Samuel, a lad of unusual beauty of face and nature, was killed through an unhappy accident before he was yet fourteen.

He was riding "Betsy Baker," a mare well known among old settlers in Iowa as one of speed and pedigree, yet displaying at times a most malevolent temper, accompanied by Will, who, though only seven years of age, yet sat his pony with the ease and grace that distinguished the veteran rider of the future. Presently Betsy Baker became fractious, and sought to throw her rider. In vain did she rear and plunge; he kept his saddle. Then, seemingly, she gave up the fight, and Samuel cried, in boyish exultation:

"Ah, Betsy Baker, you didn't quite come it that time!"

His last words! As if she knew her rider was a careless victor off his guard, the mare reared suddenly and flung herself upon her back, crushing the daring boy beneath her.

Though to us younger children our brother Samuel was but a shadowy memory, in him had centered our parents' fondest hopes and aims. These, naturally, were transferred to the younger, now the only son, and the hope that mother, especially, held for him was strangely stimulated by the remembrance of the mystic divination of a soothsayer in the years agone. My mother was a woman of too much intelligence and force of character to nourish an average superstition; but prophecies fulfilled will temper, though they may not shake, the smiling unbelief of the most hard-headed skeptic. Mother's moderate skepticism was not proof against the strange fulfillment of one prophecy, which fell out in this wise:

To a Southern city, which my mother visited when a girl, there came a celebrated fortune-teller, and led by curiosity, my mother and my aunt one day made two of the crowd that thronged the sibyl's drawing-rooms.

Both received with laughing incredulity the prophecy that my aunt and the two children with her would be dead in a fortnight; but the dread augury was fulfilled to the letter. All three were stricken with yellow fever, and died within less than the time set. This startling confirmation of the soothsayer's divining powers not unnaturally affected my mother's belief in that part of the prophecy relating to herself that "she would meet her future husband on the steamboat by which she expected to return home; that she would be married to him in a year, and bear three sons, of whom only the second would live, but that the name of this son would be known all over the world, and would one day be that of the President of the United States." The first part of this prophecy was verified, and Samuel's death was another link in the curious chain of circumstances. Was it, then, strange that mother looked with unusual hope upon her second son?

That 'tis good fortune for a boy to be only brother to five sisters is open to question. The older girls petted Will; the younger regarded him as a superior being; while to all it seemed so fit and proper that the promise of the stars concerning his future should be fulfilled that never for a moment did we weaken in our belief that great things were in store for our only brother. We looked for the prophecy's complete fulfillment, and with childish veneration regarded Will as one destined to sit in the executive's chair.

My mother, always somewhat delicate, was so affected in health by the shock of Samuel's death that a change of scene was advised. The California gold craze was then at its height, and father caught the fever, though in a mild form;

for he had prospered as a farmer, and we not only had a comfortable home, but were in easy circumstances. Influenced in part by a desire to improve mother's health, and in part, no doubt, by the golden day-dreams that lured so many Argonauts Pacificward, he disposed of his farm, and bade us prepare for a Western journey. Before his plans were completed he fell in with certain disappointed gold-seekers returning from the Coast, and impressed by their representations, decided in favor of Kansas instead of California.

Father had very extravagant ideas regarding vehicles and horses, and such a passion for equestrian display, that we often found ourselves with a stable full of thoroughbreds and an empty cupboard. For our Western migration we had, in addition to three prairie-schooners, a large family carriage, drawn by a span of fine horses in silver-mounted harness. This carriage had been made to order in the East, upholstered in the finest leather, polished and varnished as though for a royal progress. Mother and we girls found it more comfortable riding than the springless prairie-schooners.

Brother Will constituted himself an armed escort, and rode proudly alongside on his pony, his gun slung across the pommel of his saddle, and the dog Turk bringing up the rear.

To him this Western trip thrilled with possible Indian skirmishes and other stirring adventures, though of the real dangers that lay in our path he did not dream. For him, therefore, the first week of our travels held no great interest, for we were constantly chancing upon settlers and farm-houses, in which the night might be passed; but with

every mile the settlers grew fewer and farther between; until one day Will whispered to us, in great glee: "I heard father tell mother that he expected we should have to camp to-night. Now we'll have some fun!"

Will's hope was well founded. Shortly before nightfall we reached a stream that demanded a ferry-boat for its crossing, and as the nearest dwelling was a dozen miles away, it was decided that we should camp by the stream-side. The family was first sent across the ferry, and upon the eight-year-old lad of the house father placed the responsibility of selecting the ground on which to pitch the tents.

My brother's career forcibly illustrates the fact that environment plays as large a part as heredity in shaping character. Perhaps his love for the free life of the plains is a heritage derived from some long-gone ancestor; but there can be no doubt that to the earlier experiences of which I am writing he owed his ability as a scout. The faculty for obtaining water, striking trails, and finding desirable camping-grounds in him seemed almost instinct.

The tents being pitched upon a satisfactory site, Will called to Turk, the dog, and rifle in hand, set forth in search of game for supper. He was successful beyond his fondest hopes. He had looked only for small game, but scarcely had he put the camp behind him when Turk gave a signaling yelp, and out of the bushes bounded a magnificent deer. Nearly every hunter will confess to "buck fever" at sight of his first deer, so it is not strange that a boy of Will's age should have stood immovable, staring dazedly at the graceful animal until it vanished from sight. Turk gave

chase, but soon trotted back, and barked reproachfully at his young master. But Will presently had an opportunity to recover Turk's good opinion, for the dog, after darting away, with another signaling yelp fetched another fine stag within gun range. This time the young hunter, mastering his nerves, took aim with steady hand, and brought down his first deer.

On the following Sabbath we were encamped by another deep, swift-running stream. After being wearied and overheated by a rabbit chase, Turk attempted to swim across this little river, but was chilled, and would have perished had not Will rushed to the rescue. The ferryman saw the boy struggling with the dog in the water, and started after him with his boat. But Will reached the bank without assistance.

"I've hearn of dogs saving children, but this is the first time I ever hearn of a child saving a dog from drowning," ejaculated the ferryman. "How old be you?"

"Eight, going on nine," answered Will.

"You're a big boy for your age," said the man. "But it's a wonder you didn't sink with that load; he's a big old fellow," referring to Turk, who, standing on three feet, was vigorously shaking the water from his coat. Will at once knelt down beside him, and taking the uplifted foot in his hands, remarked: "He must have sprained one of his legs when he fell over that log; he doesn't whine like your common curs when they get hurt."

"He's blooded stock, then," said the man. "What kind of dog do you call him?"

"He's an Ulm dog," said Will.

"I never heard tell of that kind of dog before."

"Did you ever hear of a tiger-mastiff, German mastiff, boar-hound, great Dane? Turk's all of them together."

"Well," said the ferryman, "you're a pretty smart little fellow, and got lots of grit. You ought to make your mark in the world. But right now you had better get into some dry clothes." And on the invitation of the ferryman, Will and the limping dog got into the boat, and were taken back to camp.

Turk played so conspicuous and important a part in our early lives that he deserves a brief description. He was a large and powerful animal of the breed of dogs anciently used in Germany in hunting the wild boars. Later the dogs were imported into England, where they were particularly valued by people desiring a strong, brave watch-dog. When specially trained, they are more fierce and active than the English mastiff. Naturally they are not as fond of the water as the spaniel, the stag-hound, or the Newfoundland, though they are the king of dogs on land. Not alone Will, but the rest of the family, regarded Turk as the best of his kind, and he well deserved the veneration he inspired. His fidelity and almost human intelligence were time and again the means of saving life and property; ever faithful, loyal, and ready to lay down his life, if need be, in our service.

Outlaws and desperadoes were always to be met with on Western trails in those rugged days, and more than once Turk's constant vigilance warned father in time to prevent attacks from suspicious night prowlers. The attachment which had grown up between Turk and his young master was but the natural love of boys for their dogs intensified. Will at that time estimated dogs as in later years he did

men, the qualities which he found to admire in Turk being vigilance, strength, courage, and constancy. With men, as with dogs, he is not lavishly demonstrative; rarely pats them on the back. But deeds of merit do not escape his notice or want his appreciation. The patience, unselfishness, and true nobility observed in this faithful canine friend of his boyhood days have many times proved to be lacking in creatures endowed with a soul; yet he has never lost faith in mankind, or in the ultimate destiny of his race. This I conceive to be a characteristic of all great men.

This trip was memorable for all of us, perhaps especially so for brother Will, for it comprehended not only his first deer, but his first negro.

As we drew near the Missouri line we came upon a comfortable farm-house, at which father made inquiry concerning a lodging for the night. A widow lived there, and the information that father was brother to Elijah Cody, of Platte County, Missouri, won us a cordial welcome and the hospitality of her home.

We were yet in the road, waiting father's report, when our startled vision and childish imagination took in a seeming apparition, which glided from the bushes by the wayside.

It proved a full-blooded African, with thick lips, woolly hair, enormous feet, and scant attire. To all except mother this was a new revelation of humanity, and we stared in wild-eyed wonder; even Turk was surprised into silence. At this point father rejoined us, to share in mother's amusement, and to break the spell for us by pleasantly addressing the negro, who returned a respectful answer,

accompanied by an ample grin. He was a slave on the widow's plantation.

Reassured by the grin, Will offered his hand, and tasted the joy of being addressed as "Massa" in the talk that followed. It was with difficulty that we prevailed upon "Masse" to come to supper.

After a refreshing night's sleep we went on our way, and in a few days reached my uncle's home. A rest was welcome, as the journey had been long and toilsome, despite the fact that it had been enlivened by many interesting incidents, and was thoroughly enjoyed by all of the family.

CHAPTER II. — WILL'S FIRST INDIAN.

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MY uncle's home was in Weston, Platte County, Missouri, at that time the large city of the West. As father desired to get settled again as soon as possible, he left us at Weston, and crossed the Missouri River on a prospecting tour, accompanied by Will and a guide. More than one day went by in the quest for a desirable location, and one morning Will, wearied in the reconnoissance, was left asleep at the night's camping-place, while father and the guide rode away for the day's exploring.

When Will opened his eyes they fell upon the most interesting object that the world just then could offer him—an Indian!

The "noble red man," as he has been poetically termed by people who have but known him from afar, was in the act of mounting Will's horse, while near by stood his own, a miserable, scrawny beast.

Will's boyish dreams were now a reality; he looked upon his first Indian. Here, too, was a "buck"—not a graceful, vanishing deer, but a dirty redskin, who seemingly was in some hurry to be gone. Without a trace of "buck fever," Will jumped up, rifle in hand, and demanded:

"Here, what are you doing with my horse?"

The Indian regarded the lad with contemptuous composure.

"Me swap horses with paleface boy," said he.

The red man was fully armed, and Will did not know whether his father and the guide were within call or not; but

to suffer the Indian to ride away with Uncle Elijah's fine horse was to forfeit his father's confidence and shake his mother's and sisters' belief in the family hero; so he put a bold face upon the matter, and remarked carelessly, as if discussing a genuine transaction:

"No; I won't swap."

"Paleface boy fool!" returned the Indian, serenely.

Now this was scarcely the main point at issue, so Will contented himself with replying, quietly but firmly:

"You cannot take my horse."

The Indian condescended to temporize. "Paleface horse no good," said he.

"Good enough for me," replied Will, smiling despite the gravity of the situation. The Indian shone rather as a liar than a judge of horseflesh. "Good enough for me; so you can take your old rack of bones and go."

Much to Will's surprise, the red man dropped the rein, flung himself upon his own pony, and made off. And down fell "Lo the poor Indian" from the exalted niche that he had filled in Will's esteem, for while it was bad in a copper hero to steal horses, it was worse to flee from a boy not yet in his teens. But a few moments later Lo went back to his lofty pedestal, for Will heard the guide's voice, and realized that it was the sight of a man, and not the threats of a boy, that had sent the Indian about his business—if he had any.

The guide had returned to escort Will to the spot which father, after a search of nearly a week, had discovered, and where he had decided to locate our home. It was in Salt Creek Valley, a fertile blue-grass region, sheltered by an amphitheater range of hills. The old Salt Lake trail traversed

this valley. There were at this time two great highways of Western travel, the Santa Fe and the Salt Lake trails; later the Oregon trail came into prominence. Of these the oldest and most historic was the Santa Fe trail, the route followed by explorers three hundred years ago. It had been used by Indian tribes from time, to white men, immemorial. At the beginning of this century it was first used as an artery of commerce. Over it Zebulon Pike made his well-known Western trip, and from it radiated his explorations. The trail lay some distance south of Leavenworth. It ran westward, dipping slightly to the south until the Arkansas River was reached; then, following the course of this stream to Bent's Fort, it crossed the river and turned sharply to the south. It went through Raton Pass, and below Las Vegas it turned west to Santa Fe.

Exploration along the line of the Salt Lake trail began also with this century. It became a beaten highway at the time of the Mormon exodus from Nauvoo to their present place of abode. The trail crossed the Missouri River at Leavenworth, and ran northerly to the Platte, touching that stream at Fort Kearny. With a few variations it paralleled the Platte to its junction with the Sweetwater, and left this river valley to run through South Pass to big Sandy Creek, turning south to follow this little stream. At Fort Bridger it turned westward again, passed Echo Canon, and a few miles farther on ran into Salt Lake City. Over this trail journeyed thousands of gold-hunters toward California, hopeful and high-spirited on the westerly way, disappointed and depressed, the large majority of them, on the back track. Freighting outfits, cattle trains, emigrants—nearly all the

western travel—followed this track across the new land. A man named Rively, with the gift of grasping the advantage of location, had obtained permission to establish a trading-post on this trail three miles beyond the Missouri, and as proximity to this depot of supplies was a manifest convenience, father's selection of a claim only two miles distant was a wise one.

The Kansas-Nebraska Bill, which provided for the organizing of those two territories and opened them for settlement, was passed in May. 1854. This bill directly opposed the Missouri Compromise, which restricted slavery to all territory south of 36'0 30" north latitude. A clause in the new bill provided that the settlers should decide for themselves whether the new territories were to be free or slave states. Already hundreds of settlers were camped upon the banks of the Missouri, waiting the passage of the bill before entering and acquiring possession of the land. Across the curtain of the night ran a broad ribbon of dancing camp-fires, stretching for miles along the bank of the river.

None too soon had father fixed upon his claim. The act allowing settlers to enter was passed in less than a week afterward. Besides the pioneers intending actual settlement, a great rush was made into the territories by members of both political parties. These became the gladiators, with Kansas the arena, for a bitter, bloody contest between those desiring and those opposing the extension of slave territory.

Having already decided upon his location, father was among the first, after the bill was passed, to file a claim and procure the necessary papers, and shortly afterward he had a transient abiding-place prepared for us. Whatever mother

may have thought of the one-roomed cabin, whose chinks let in the sun by day and the moon and stars by night, and whose carpet was nature's greenest velvet, life in it was a perennial picnic for the children. Meantime father was at work on our permanent home, and before the summer fled we were domiciled in a large double-log house—rough and primitive, but solid and comfort-breeding.

This same autumn held an episode so deeply graven in my memory that time has not blurred a dine of it. Jane, our faithful maid of all work, who went with us to our Western home, had little time to play the governess. Household duties claimed her every waking hour, as mother was delicate, and the family a large one; so Turk officiated as both guardian and playmate of the children.

One golden September day Eliza and I set out after wild flowers, accompanied by Turk and mother's caution not to stray too far, as wild beasts, 'twas said, lurked in the neighboring forest; but the prettiest flowers were always just beyond, and we wandered afield until we reached a fringe of timber half a mile from the house, where we tarried under the trees. Meantime mother grew alarmed, and Will was dispatched after the absent tots.

Turk, as we recalled, had sought to put a check upon our wanderings, and when we entered the woods his restlessness increased. Suddenly he began to paw up the carpet of dry leaves, and a few moments later the shrill scream of a panther echoed through the forest aisles.

Eliza was barely six years old, and I was not yet four. We clung to each other in voiceless terror. Then from afar came a familiar whistle—Will's call to his dog. That heartened us,

babes as we were, for was not our brother our reliance in every emergency? Rescue was at hand; but Turk continued tearing up the leaves, after signaling his master with a loud bark. Then, pulling at our dresses, he indicated the refuge he had dug for us. Here we lay down, and the dog covered us with the leaves, dragging to the heap, as a further screen, a large dead branch. Then, with the heart of a lion, he put himself on guard.

From our leafy covert we could see the panther's tawny form come gliding through the brush. He saw Turk, and crouched for a spring. This came as an arrow, but Turk dodged it; and then, with a scream such as I never heard from dog before or since, our defender hurled himself upon the foe.

Turk was powerful, and his courage was flawless, but he was no match for the panther. In a few moments the faithful dog lay stunned and bleeding from one stroke of the forest-rover's steel-shod paw. The cruel beast had scented other prey, and dismissing Turk, he paced to and fro, seeking to locate us. We scarcely dared to breathe, and every throb of our frightened little hearts was a prayer that Will would come to us in time.

At last the panther's roving eyes rested upon our inadequate hiding-place, and as he crouched for the deadly leap we hid our faces.

But Turk had arisen. Wounded as he was, he yet made one last heroic effort to save us by again directing the panther's attention to himself.

The helpless, hopeless ordeal of agony was broken by a rifle's sharp report. The panther fell, shot through the heart,

and out from the screen of leaves rushed two hysterical little girls, with pallid faces drowned in tears, who clung about a brother's neck and were shielded in his arms.

Will, himself but a child, caressed and soothed us in a most paternal fashion; and when the stone of sobs was passed we turned to Turk. Happily his injuries were not fatal, and he whined feebly when his master reached him.

"Bravo! Good dog!" cried Will. "You saved them, Turk! You saved them!" And kneeling beside our faithful friend, he put his arms about the shaggy neck.

Dear old Turk! If there be a land beyond the sky for such as thou, may the snuggest corner and best of bones be thy reward!

CHAPTER III. — THE SHADOW OF PARTISAN STRIFE.

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OWING to the conditions, already spoken of, under which Kansas was settled, all classes were represented in its population. Honest, thrifty farmers and well-to-do traders leavened a lump of shiftless ne'er-do-wells, lawless adventurers, and vagabonds of all sorts and conditions. If father at times questioned the wisdom of coming to this new and untried land, he kept his own counsel, and set a brave face against the future.

He had been prominent in political circles in Iowa, and had filled positions of public trust; but he had no wish to become involved in the partisan strife that raged in Kansas. He was a Free Soil man, and there were but two others in that section who did not believe in slavery. For a year he kept his political views to himself; but it became rumored about that he was an able public speaker, and the pro-slavery men naturally ascribed to him the same opinions as those held by his brother Elijah, a pronounced pro-slavery man; so they regarded father as a promising leader in their cause. He had avoided the issue, and had skillfully contrived to escape declaring for one side or the other, but on the scroll of his destiny it was written that he should be one of the first victims offered on the sacrificial altar of the struggle for human liberty.

The post-trader's was a popular rendezvous for all the settlers round. It was a day in the summer of '55 that father

visited the store, accompanied, as usual, by Will and Turk. Among the crowd, which was noisy and excited, he noted a number of desperadoes in the pro-slavery faction, and noted, too, that Uncle Elijah and our two Free Soil neighbors, Mr. Hathaway and Mr. Lawrence, were present.

Father's appearance was greeted by a clamor for a speech. To speak before that audience was to take his life in his hands; yet in spite of his excuses he was forced to the chair.

It was written! There was no escape! Father walked steadily to the dry-goods box which served as a rostrum. As he passed Mr. Hathaway, the good old man plucked him by the sleeve and begged him to serve out platitudes to the crowd, and to screen his real sentiments.

But father was not a man that dealt in platitudes.

"Friends," said he, quietly, as he faced his audience and drew himself to his full height—"friends, you are mistaken in your man. I am sorry to disappoint you. I have no wish to quarrel with you. But you have forced me to speak, and I can do no less than declare my real convictions. I am, and always have been, opposed to slavery. It is an institution that not only degrades the slave, but brutalizes the slave-holder, and I pledge you my word that I shall use my best endeavors—yes, that I shall lay down my life, if need be—to keep this curse from finding lodgment upon Kansas soil. It is enough that the fairest portions of our land are already infected with this blight. May it spread no farther. All my energy and my ability shall swell the effort to bring in Kansas as a Free Soil state."

Up to this point the crowd had been so dumfounded by his temerity that they kept an astonished silence. Now the storm broke. The rumble of angry voices swelled into a roar of fury. An angry mob surrounded the speaker. Several desperadoes leaped forward with deadly intent, and one, Charles Dunn by name, drove his knife to the hilt into the body of the brave man who dared thus openly to avow his principles.

As father fell, Will sprang to him, and turning to the murderous assailant, cried out in boyhood's fury:

"You have killed my father! When I'm a man I'll kill you!"

The crowd slunk away, believing father dead. The deed appalled them; they were not yet hardened to the lawlessness that was so soon to put the state to blush.

Mr. Hathaway and Will then carried father to a hiding-place in the long grass by the wayside. The crowd dispersed so slowly that dusk came on before the coast was clear. At length, supported by Will, father dragged his way homeward, marking his tortured progress with a trail of blood.

This path was afterward referred to in the early history of Kansas as "The Cody Bloody Trail."

It was such wild scenes as these that left their impress on the youth and fashioned the Cody of later years—cool in emergency, fertile in resource, swift in decision, dashing and intrepid when the time for action came.

Our troubles were but begun. Father's convalescence was long and tedious; he never recovered fully. His enemies believed him dead, and for a while we kept the secret

guarded; but as soon as he was able to be about persecution began.

About a month after the tragedy at Rively's, Will ran in one evening with the warning that a band of horsemen were approaching. Suspecting trouble, mother put some of her own clothes about father, gave him a pail, and bade him hide in the cornfield. He walked boldly from the house, and sheltered by the gathering dusk, succeeded in passing the horsemen unchallenged. The latter rode up to the house and dismounted.

"Where's Cody?" asked the leader. He was informed that father was not at home.

"Lucky for him!" was the frankly brutal rejoinder. "We'll make sure work of the killing next time."

Disappointed in their main intention, the marauders revenged themselves in their own peculiar way by looting the house of every article that took their fancy; then they sat down with the announced purpose of waiting the return of their prospective victim.

Fearing the effect of the night air upon father, though it was yet summer, mother made a sign to Will, who slipped from the room, and guided by Turk, carried blankets to the cornfield, returning before his absence had been remarked. The ruffians soon tired of waiting, and rode away, after warning mother of the brave deed they purposed to perform. Father came in for the night, returning to his covert with the dawn.

In expectation of some such raid, we had secreted a good stock of provisions; but as soon as the day was up Will was dispatched to Rively's store to reconnoiter, under

pretext of buying groceries. Keeping eyes and ears open, he learned that father's enemies were on the watch for him; so the cornfield must remain his screen. After several days, the exposure and anxiety told on his strength. He decided to leave home and go to Fort Leavenworth, four miles distant. When night fell he returned to the house, packed a few needed articles, and bade us farewell. Will urged that he ride Prince, but he regarded his journey as safer afoot. It was a sad parting. None of us knew whether we should ever again see our father.

"I hope," he said to mother, "that these clouds will soon pass away, and that we may have a happy home once more." Then, placing his hands on Will's head, "You will have to be the man of the house until my return," he said. "But I know I can trust my boy to watch over his mother and sisters."

With such responsibilities placed upon his shoulders, such confidence reposed in him, small wonder that Will should grow a man in thought and feeling before he grew to be one in years.

Father reached Fort Leavenworth in safety, but the quarrel between the pro-slavery party and the Free Soilers waxed more bitter, and he decided that security lay farther on; so he took passage on an up-river boat to Doniphan, twenty miles distant. This was then a mere landing-place, but he found a small band of men in camp cooking supper. They were part of Colonel Jim Lane's command, some three hundred strong, on their way West from Indiana.

Colonel Lane was an interesting character. He had been a friend to Elijah Lovejoy, who was killed, in 1836, for