

mapped; but for over a decade after the close of the civil war the greater part of that vast region now forming the States of Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, the Dakotas, and western Nebraska, Kansas, and Texas, was Indian land or no-man's land, unmapped, and but partially explored. Every column of fighting men pushed in to do battle with the painted horsemen of the tribes was forced to find its own way, and to face the unknown dangers of waterless desert, of flood and quicksand and blizzard, no less than the powers of Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapahoe. Moreover, they warded against the most terrible of savage enemies. Neither Maori nor Zulu can compare as a warrior with the red Indian. His ferocity, cunning, and stealth, his marvellous endurance and patience, his thorough familiarity with the wilderness, and his understanding of all its signs, together with the wild-beast courage which he can display at need—all combine to render him an unmatched foe. Besides, the warriors are well trained in their own manner of warfare; and they are adepts at surprising a foe, and most difficult to surprise themselves, while in their desert wastes it is almost impossible to force them into battle except on their own terms. Such being the case, a successful Indian fighter is indeed a man of mark; and General Custer's winter march and victorious battle of the Washeta at once made him a name of terror to the Indians of the plains.

Many of his letters concerning this famous fight are in the volume now before us. Mrs. Custer also gives a very interesting description of the captured Indians, almost all of whom were squaws and papposes, and of the life they led in their comfortable prison stockade, and in particular affords us a glimpse of the unexpected in Indian life by her account of the pretty squaw whose pappoose was born almost at the moment of the battle. This squaw became much attached to her white captors, and was very docile and friendly with them; but she was evidently a lady of temper, and of decision of character as well, for she had previously inflicted summary vengeance on her husband by shooting him when he gave her cause to dislike him.

The archfoe of the Indian was the white hunter. The army, in its long campaigns against the hostile tribes, made liberal use of scouts, and for the purpose employed friendly Indians, Mexicans, and white plainsmen. Mrs. Custer describes two of the most famous of these—California Joe and Wild Bill. The former was a true "mountain man," a man of the wilds, whose life of sullen self-reliance was normally that of the solitary hunter and Indian fighter. Wild Bill properly belonged to another stage in the development of the rude semi-civilization of the frontier. He was a good scout, ranger, and hunter, and an expert Indian fighter, but, unlike California Joe, his exploits in these capacities did not make up the sum total of his ordinary life. On the contrary, he passed the chief part of his existence in the lawless little towns which grew up here and there along the frontier at the time when the transcontinental railroads were being pushed across to the Pacific, and while the cow-boy and miner were opening up the West. Mrs. Custer glances at some features of the life in one of the most notorious of these little towns—Hays City, of great and evil fame. Its turbulent citizens lived and died pistol in hand, and the little board-and-canvas town was a roaring hell of gambling, drinking, and dance saloons. Every desperado on the frontier flocked thither, and it was no place for quiet men who did not wish to look death in the face. The soldiers were camped not very far away, and the tough characters, who are always plentiful in the ranks, though moulded into outward propriety by the severity of the discipline, took special delight in going down to the town in large parties, and winding up a roaring carouse by a pitched battle with some faction among the citizens. Over all this seething caldron of turbulent murder and rapine Wild Bill reigned supreme.

Mrs. Custer describes at some length the ordinary life of camp and fort, with its manifold hardships and discomforts, which the resolute wives of the officers when with their husbands accepted as merely so many humorous incidents of a prolonged picnic. The account of the flood which nearly overwhelmed the camp on one occasion is worth special attention. It was a hard life, but a brave and merry life too; and scarcely both the stout-hearted men and the scarcely less stout-hearted women who led it deserve at least the grateful remembrance of those who sit at home for the sake of the quiet, uncomplaining, steadfast heroism they so often displayed.

Among the pleasantest chapters are those describing the camp amusements, and incidentally one of the features of the book is the description of the different bugle calls. The officers were fond of horse-races of every kind, and of mule-races too, on occasions. All kinds of wild animals, from a buffalo calf to a prairie-dog, were domesticated as pets. The real pets, however, the trusted and tried friends, were the horses and dogs; and in the closing chapter of the book there is an account well worth reading of General Custer's favorite horse, Dandy, and of the long, peaceful years he led on the home farm in Michigan, when his campaigning days were over, and death had darkened the eyes of his master.

General Custer was a mighty hunter, and he was especially fond of the chase with dogs.

His stag-hounds, greyhounds, and fox-hounds performed wonderful feats, especially the first, who throttled wolves, ran down deer, antelope, and jack-rabbit, and even held the shaggy buffaloes at bay. It is to be wished that we could have a fuller account of some of this coursing; now it is rather tantalizing reading for a lover of the sport. The great game of the plains, however, was the buffalo, and two or three chapters are given to descriptions of the huge wild cattle, and of the enthralling delight of hunting them on horse-back.

Altogether Mrs. Custer has written a book which is not only interesting, but which possesses real and lasting value as a faithful portrayal of a characteristically American phase of life which has now almost wholly passed away.

FOLLOWING THE GUIDON.

BY THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

WE take up a new book by Mrs. Custer with real pleasure, for it is sure to be one of the few new books which not only deserve to be read, but to be kept on the library shelves for future reading and re-reading. General Custer was one of the most gallant and picturesque figures with which our history—or, for the matter of that, any contemporary history—has had to deal. He did a man's work well and nobly, and his name will ever be associated with that stirring life of the frontier on which he succeeded in so indelibly impressing his own striking personality. It would have been a real mischance if he had lacked a biographer, and it was most fortunate that he should have found the best of all possible biographers in his wife.

But in her present volume* Mrs. Custer deals less with her husband's career than with the strange, wild, and characteristically American surroundings among which it was led. She describes in the simple vivid style which adds so much to the effect of her writings the life of a soldier's wife in the far West—the far West that has now vanished like the vast buffalo herds which formed one of its distinguishing features. In describing her life she of necessity gives a picture of the frontier—a picture of a state of things which has utterly passed away.

The frontier, when it reached the great plains beyond the Mississippi, was pushed steadily westward, partly by the restless and adventurous men of the border themselves, partly by the valiant little army which has ever so faithfully served Uncle Sam. As a people we do not half appreciate what our little army has done for us, not only in time of "malice domestic and foreign levy," but in periods of nominal peace, while guarding the frontier and holding in check the red tribes with weary resolution. The long campaigns across the barren desolation of the great plains were fraught with incredible toil, hardship, and danger. Mrs. Custer's first chapter deals with the march of the Seventh Regiment into the Indian country. There is now no Indian country left apart from the reservations, and no large tract of country of any kind which is not well

* *Following the Guidon.* By ELIZABETH B. CUSTER, Author of *Boots and Saddles*. Illustrated. pp. xx, 389. Post 8vo, Cloth, Ornamental, \$1.50. New York: Harper & Brothers. (Nearly ready.)