

CHAPTER XIII.

A NORTHER.

"Jim, did yeh eveh git ketched out in a Texas norther?" asked Sandy, as they were one day discussing Texas weather.

"No," said Jim.

"Well now, Jim, yeh'll neveh know jest what freezin' means ontill yeh hev one tussel with them northers. Yeh may be out on the range some hot day, when yeh are in yehr shirt-sleeves an' the rays uv the sun are comin' down the neah way, an' yeh are prayin' fur a shade an' lookin' fur a drink uv wateh, an' wishin' yeh wuz up in Alaska, when yeh'll see that hit is jest a little hazy ur smoky in the northwest, ur mebbly hit will be due north, an' befoah yeh hev time to make a break fur shelter the blizzard will hit yeh. The fust blast will go clean through yeh. Yehr teeth will begin t' chatter an' yeh'll git a bigger hustle on yehrsel than yeh eveh did in all yehr life befoah. The longer hit blows the colder hit gets, an' yeh'll shoahly think yehr freezing t' death. Hit may not last more'n half an hour, but yeh'll suffer more with the cold than yeh would in a whole winter in Greenland. Take my advice, Jim, an' always hev a flask

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uv whisky with yeh; when yeh see the hazy smoke in the north, drink all the whisky at one time; take yehr saddle-blanket from yehr pony's back, wrap up in hit an' lay down somewhar so the wind kaint strike yeh much, an' stay thar 'till the norther is gone.

"'Bout the worst norther that eveh struck me wuz out on the Little Wichita riveh, two yeahs ago. I got lost from the rest uv the boys an' couldn't fin' the camp, an' I had rid 'til dark, thinkin' I would fin' the trail. I wuz right out in a country whar thar was not a bush ur stick uv wood in a hundred mile, an' the land wuz as flat an' level as a pancake, without any wind-breaks to check the force uv a wind-storm. I fust noticed the storm comin' befoah I hed concluded t' go into camp, an' when I fust heard the wind whistle, I got off uv my hawse an' tried t' make a wind-break uv hit, but the broncho would'nt stan' fur nothin' uv that kin', an' when the wind begin t' blow good an' strong an' colder 'n blazes, hit took all my strength t' hole my hawse an' keep hit from breakin' away from me.

"Roun' an' roun' went me an' the pony, the wind blowin' harder and colder all the time, and the pony gettin' wus an' wus. My hands and fingers wuz so numb that I could'nt hole my lariat, an' so I hed t' wrap hit aroun' my arms t' keep that cussed pony from gettin' away from me, 'cause I knowed that ef I lost that pony, hit wuz a ten-t'-one shot I would

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neveh git away alive. My teeth wuz chatterin' like a Greaser with the ager, an' all night long that cole wind kep' blowin', an' all night long my wild broncho kep' rearin', an' plungin', an' tryin' t' git away, but I hung t' the lariat, an' I believe that the exercise the pony give me wuz what saved me from freezin' that night, an' I'm powe'ful shoah that I neveh suffered with the cold in my whole life as much as I did that time."