

reduced at a time when crop-failure, cattle-disease and pestilence had already beaten these unfortunate, once happy Indians to the ground. The result—a fanatical turning to a great religious revival, and its unnecessary suppression with a severity which caused the death of Sitting Bull and nearly 300 Sioux.

I wish that it might have been found possible to grant that last request for a Canadian reserve to Sitting Bull, whom even his bitterest foes now acknowledge to have been the last great leader of his people, and a fighter who had justice on his side. Of course, for many obvious reasons, this could not be done. All the same, it's interesting to speculate on what would have been the outcome, for Sitting Bull, the Sioux and North America, had he remained in Canada. —HARWOOD STEELE

ONE of you wrote to Raymond S. Spears about his books on the Mississippi and the material that went into them. The following brief excerpt from Mr. Spears' reply might have come from the pen of Mark Twain:

Inglewood, California

"... My fiction about the River is well within the scope of actual facts. I've killed the scamp who picked my pocket at Memphis about 30 or 40 times, according to River methods, in my fiction. He used to write me letters and post-cards after I killed him, for ten years or so. Last I heard, he had a still on a bayou across from Cairo, Ill. ..."

—RAYMOND S. SPEARS

INTENDED for the Camp-fire of the last issue, this note from Ernest Haycox arrived too late to accompany his story, "Wild Jack Rhett". His observations on old-time peace officers lose none of their interest for being held over till this meeting:

Portland, Oregon

There was a point in the yarn concerning *Wild Jack Rhett* I wished to emphasize because it is so truthful of the Old West. These towns strung along the Chisholm Trail were spawned by the herds driving northward, and in the beginning the only excuse they had for existence was the trade that came from the trail drivers. The history of most of these towns is quite uniform. A storekeeper or a saloonman set up a shack beside some stream where the trail crossed—and presently other tradesmen settled there, and the gamblers, and the women.

Inevitably there was a conflict. The townspeople, living by the Trail, had to treat the boys right. At the same time they had to keep some sort of pressure on the roughs. The clearest example of it, perhaps, is to be seen in the story

of Dodge City. Up along the dry and dusty leagues of Texas, sometimes all the way from the Gulf, came the cattle and the punchers. Beyond the Arkansas lay Dodge, like a lodestar to the thirsty and to the yearning. The procedure was almost always the same: When the cattle had crossed the Arkansas and the herd had been thrown off the Trail and left in charge of a few misanthropic, or very wise, hands who wished none of the fleshpots, the rest of the crew rode into town. What happened afterwards depended a great deal on chance, on the kind of marshal the town employed, on the reputation the town itself had.

But it was a problem for any town. There was a kind of invisible telegraph running up and down the Trail. The punchers knew what lay ahead. One town and another—they knew. If a certain town was overrun with rapacious gamblers, if it had a marshal of the brutal type, there was apt to be trouble. So was there apt to be trouble if the marshal was definitely weak. The men handling the herds hated the killer marshals and despised the weak ones.

The weak marshals had an exceedingly brief tenure, and there were left then two main types—the cold, unsentimental type that asked no favors and gave none. The legends of the West have a great deal to say about the sort of a marshal that shot first and inquired afterwards, the sort only one degree removed from the crooks he was supposed to subdue. In a way he was a representative of the survival theory, and the town that employed him did so out of necessity. *Wild Jack Rhett* was this kind of a marshal. The other type of man was the finest the West could produce and perhaps is exemplified by Tilghman, who never drew on a man when he could walk up to that man and reason with him. It was always the harder thing to do, the more dangerous thing to do. And Tilghman died—as so many of them died—in pursuance to this custom, not many years ago. Tilghman and his breed were the really great men of the West.

—ERNEST HAYCOX

RELATIVE to the recent mention in Camp-fire of the ultra-fast shooting of Mr. Ed. McGivern, we take the liberty of quoting from "Burning Powder", a pamphlet compiled by Major D. B. Wesson, of the Smith & Wesson Company:

"For several years interest in rapid-fire shooting has been growing rapidly, and it has remained for Mr. Ed. McGivern of Lewistown, Montana, to develop this form of marksmanship far beyond anything heretofore believed within the scope of human endeavor. With his electric-timing devices checked by experts, his shooting at both stationary and flying targets witnessed and attested by hundreds of disinterested onlookers, Mr. McGivern has time and time again made five hits with a speed that almost defies the ear to distinguish the separate shots."