

A short
story by
Jack
Schaefer

Revenge By Fire

Five times snow fell that winter, even out on the lower levels, and each time the cold spell held and the snow lingered on the ground, melting in, with little runoff. In the spring the grasses freshened early and, as the season progressed, they thickened and topped out strong, keeping well ahead of the stock roaming the Slash Y range. The horses fleshed—developing grass bellies that would slim down soon with work—and were spunky under saddles. The cattle fattened fast, losing the gaunt-flanked look of winter, and the new calves stood sturdy by their mothers and frolicked in their sudden stiff-legged rocking spurts with the vitality of new life in a good year.

Then the summer sun beat down, and no rain fell, not even the usual rare but torrential thunderstorms of midsummer, and the grasses turned brown and gold, rippling in the dry winds, curing early on the stem, good feed still but no longer freshening, growing, renewing, and the men of the Slash Y riding the range were careful with matches and sparing with campfires and kicked dirt over even apparently dead ashes before moving on.

It was a good year turning bad. And worse was to come.

Two strange men came riding in to the ranch headquarters. They came out of the

great distances west and south, and their meager worn gear spoke of Arizona, of the hard lonely hiding country beyond the Mogollon Rim. They came on two lean wire-tough long-traveling horses, and they led two more of the same breed. One of the men was thickset, big-armed, with big features and undershot jaw, and a kind of insolence or a contempt or anger at the world in general showed in his quick nervous actions and his manner of jerking his head as he talked. The other was loose-limbed, slack-jawed, shambling in movement even in the saddle, tagging always a bit behind.

They left their horses by the small corral and walked over by the veranda of the old adobe house where range manager Cal Brennan sat in the mouse-chewed remnants of an ancient leather-covered armchair, soaking in afternoon sun, absurdly high-curved-heel boots on the floor beside him, old eyes missing nothing about his visitors and their gear and their horses.

They exchanged the usual amenities with him about the weather and the condition of the country, then the thickset man pushed his point. "Saw some mustangs down in them lower hills," he said. "Understand that's part of your range. Now they ain't much, but we ain't partic'lar these days. Mind if we camp there awhile an' try runnin' 'em?"

Cal rubbed a hand down one cheek and over around his chin. "Yes," he said. "Yes, I do. I reckon I do mind."

"What for?" said the thickset man, jerking his head. "They ain't doin' you no good."

"They ain't hurtin' me any," said Cal. "An' I happen to know there ain't enough broom-tails down that way to be worth your while. You get to chasin' an' find that out an' our own stock might get to lookin' kind of temptin' to you."

"You callin' anybody anythin'?" said the thickset man, jerking his head again.

"Not so as you'd notice," said Cal. "Just thinkin' of what could happen."

"Stingy," said the loose-limbed man.

"You can call it that if you've a mind to," said Cal. "I call it bein' sensible. Lookin' ahead an' avoidin' trouble. You two're welcome to stick aroun' for supper and bed down here. In 'he mornin' why'n't you head for the Domingo reservation? More wild ones over that way an' likely you could make a deal."

"We ain't needin' no advice from the likes of you," said the thickset man. "Nor nothin' else neither." He turned away and the loose-limbed man tagged him.

They rode off into the distances west and south, and they stopped by one of the Slash Y's low, round water tanks with windmill beside it and watered their horses and filled



ILLUSTRATION BY BARRY GELLER

their canteens. The thickset man scanned the territory around and took a small running iron from the blanket roll behind his saddle and hammered at the side of the tank, low down, until he had punched a hole, and the two of them stood for a moment watching water run out to soak into the dry ground.

They mounted and rode on, leading the two extra horses, and dusk took them just over the long ridge fronting the mountains to the west, and they made a quick dry camp in a small hollow screened by junipers and picketed the horses and ate sparingly of the meager supply of food in their saddlebags and lay down in blankets with saddles for pillows.

At about the same time, farther to the west and on the other side of the mountains, Powder Kent, easy in saddle aboard a rough-built sturdy roan, coming back to the ranch after a three-day's jaunt to testify as a witness at a minor nuisance of a trial that had been transferred to Rio Abajo, worked his way up a trail twisting toward a pass through the upper peaks. In the deepening dusk he stopped where a small spring trickled out of rock and let the roan drink and unsaddled and picketed it and built a small fire. He took a can of beans from his saddlebag and, with the opener blade of his pocketknife, neatly removed the top. Carefully he set the can close in by the

fire and pushed it farther in with a small stick. Pulling out another blade of the knife, he went to work on the stick, whittling one end flat. Using two other sticks, he removed the can from the fire and sat down, ankles crossed out in front with the can between his legs and dipped the flattened end of the first stick into the can. Slowly, leisurely, he emptied the can. He rose and went to the spring and lay flat and drank. He came back by the fire and carefully pushed what remained of it in toward the center and unrolled his blanket and spread it out. He stood quietly, listening into the great clean silence all around him, broken only by the soft sigh of wind in the tops of the few pines nearby. Out of old habit his right hand moved, and his worn gun was in the hand, and he spun the cylinder, peering at it. Five shells. He set the cylinder so that the hammer bore on the

empty chamber and slipped the gun back into its worn holster at his side. He lay down on one half of the blanket and set his hat on the ground and pulled the other half of the blanket over him.

Morning, like any other morning of the lazy time of year, was clear and crisp and warming fast as the sun rose, and the men of the Slash Y were lingering in the cookhouse over a last round of coffee, in no hurry to start the day's work. It was Sugar Wyman who stepped out and along the path to the outhouse and came back, long-striding, to stand in the doorway.

"I kind of hate to go breakin' up this little party," he said, "but it might int'rest you all to have a look out here." His voice was quiet, almost matter of fact, but foreman Hat Henderson was up and striding toward the door before he had finished. Sugar stepped back out, leading past a corner of the cookhouse. He pointed into the great distances west and south.

Far out where rolling grassland set its own horizon against the background of the long ridge fronting the mountains, a light-gray cloud hugged the ground, sending streamers floating upward. Darker streaks showed in it, twisting, rising, and the whole reached out, stretching, blotting ever more of the low horizon.

Smoke. Smoke rising from a mile-wide front, advancing and spreading, spreading.

Activity swarmed in and about the long low barn and the corrals, and the voice of Hat Henderson boomed through it. "Monte. An' you, Chet. Grab a couple butcher knives an' a hatchet an' snap out there an' get a drag ready . . . Dally, harness the team . . . Sunfish, pile some barrels on the wagon an' fill 'em with water an' throw in all the bags an' shovels you can find . . . Dobe, rig a string of extra hosses an' take 'em on out . . . Sugar, you an' Joe take the buckboard an' swing around backside of it. Wind's blowing this way, so likely it ain't doing too much there."

Far out on the rolling grassland, cattle moved in frightened spurts, gathering into bunches, stopping to look back and moving away again. The small ground-dwelling life of the land scurried through the low growth. The fire crackled on a wider front now, consuming the dry grasses, feeding on its own draft, advancing under the whip of the wind eastward at an eight-mile pace. Smoke rolled ahead of it in gusts and coiled back, twisting, rising, dark and acrid where the flames took patches of small brush.

Well in front and back some from the near end of the lead line of fire, Monte Walsh and Chet Rollins, moving silently and swiftly, worked on the carcass of a yearling steer just dropped with a bullet in its brain. Slashing deep with knives and using a hatchet on the neck vertebrae, they cut off the head and heaved this aside. Slashing deep again, they ripped open the carcass, slicing it the long way almost in half, and heaved again to spread-eagle it out, flesh-and-gut side down. Striding to their horses thirty feet away, ground-reined, waiting, nervous but waiting, they grabbed ropes and tied these to saddle horns and payed them out back to the carcass.

"Take the outside," said Monte. "And don't try giving me no argument."

Bending low, they tied the ropes to a forefoot and a hindfoot. Striding again to the horses, they swung up and moved away, dragging the spread-out bloody carcass, heading straight for the lead line of fire.

A quarter mile behind them a big flatbed low-sided wagon swayed and came forward, husky young draft team digging hoofs deep and lunging into the harness, Cal Brennan on the seat with the reins, (*Continued on Page 60*)

Hardware Week Special!



Weller® Heavy Duty SOLDERING KIT

Everything you need for quick, easy soldering and household repairs. Features the same 250-watt gun that's used professionally the world over. Tip heats instantly, has long reach and long life. Twin spotlights illuminate work. Cutting tip, smoothing tip, tip interchange wrench, solder and instruction booklet included. Kit comes in a utility case of miracle plastic. Gun is guaranteed 1 year. Model 8250AK. WELER ELECTRIC CORP., EASTON, PA.

Why borrow?

Speedy Sprayer

now only \$34.95



New! Speedy Sprayer Outfit complete with motor, ready to plug in and spray! Pays for itself on your first big paint job. Does an hour's work in minutes—spray fences, screens, shutters, furniture, rough walls, floors, etc. Smooth, flawless finish. A real professional tool! Ask for "Compact" 404. Write for "How to Spray" and folder.

W. R. BROWN CORP.

Specialists in Portable Sprayers Since 1921

2663 North Normandy Avenue • Chicago 35, Illinois

fast, lasting repairs

Magic FIXES EVERYTHING!

Magic Plastic Aluminum • Epoxy Glue
Magic Rubber • Fix-All Porcelain
Tub 'N Tile Sealer • Magic Wood
Woodblend Putty Pencils

at all stores 29¢ to \$1

magic Iron Cement Co., Inc. Cleveland 28, Ohio

Every Home Needs This 'All-Purpose' Oil

Clean • Lubricate • Prevent Rust

3-IN-ONE® OIL

REGULAR — OIL SPRAY — ELECTRIC MOTOR

Revenge By Fire

continued from page 27

saddles and burlap bags and shovels and three big barrels bouncing on the bed. Hat Henderson, Dally Johnson and Sunfish Perkins scrambled for footing among them, to steady the barrels. A hundred yards behind, Dobe Chavez plugged along in saddle, cursing softly in Spanish, struggling to keep a dozen skittish cow ponies, neck roped together in a line, following him at a fair trot.

Miles to the west Powder Kent ambled along the trail leading down from the pass through the upper peaks. He rounded a huge shoulder of rock and pulled the roan to a sudden halt. Vast and seeming limitless the big land swept away from beneath him, distance merging into distance to be lost at last beyond the reach of vision toward Texas. Down and out from the lower ridge, northward and some to his left, small across the miles, he saw a great wedge-shaped scar of charred land where fire had fanned forward, widening, and smoke rising from the far front of it.

Down and to the right, miles away from the blunt-pointed beginning of the wedge-shaped scar, along the outer base of the long ridge below him, clear and distinct in distance through the clean air, he saw two men mounted, leading two horses, moving southward at a steady trot. He saw them stop and one swing down and bend low to the ground and rise and swing up and both ride on and, where the one had bent, a wisp of smoke rose and increased as wind caught it.

He stared down, and the muscles around his lean-lipped mouth tightened. Out of old habit, instinctively his right hand moved, and his worn gun was in the hand, and he spun the cylinder, looking down to check it. He slipped the gun back into its holster. He slapped spurs to the roan and turned off the trail, angling southward and down the rugged slopes in the direction of the two men.

The first fire raced on, crackling through the low growth, sending sparks dancing upward in the roiling smoke that swung and eddied in the wind, obscuring the sun in the immediate area, making a hazy dimness over all. The men of the Slash Y, silent mostly, grim-faced, fought for the good grasses that meant strong flesh to the cattle roaming the range that in turn meant money, a return on investment, to other men 2000 miles away.

Out in front Monte Walsh and Chet Rollins pulled the drag, about thirty feet apart, straddling between them the lead line of fire. Monte on the inside, in past the crackling flames, blood-smeared, smoke-grimed, all but lost in the back swirls of smoke, erect in saddle with bandanna up over mouth and nose, voice coming muffled through it in constant refrain, aimed at and steadying to the wincing, jumping, side-swinging horse under him. "Hot, boy, ain't it, hot on the feet. But I'm promising you a year's rest to grow out those hoofs again." Chet on the outside, blood-and-smoke-smeared the same, pushed steadily through the smoke clouds rolling at him, solid in saddle, holding down his frightened horse, intent on the tricky job of keeping his rope taut against the jerks from Monte's.

Back about seventy-five yards the wagon moved at a matching pace along the edge of the burned-out area. Cal Brennan was on the seat, with one foot braced and the other on the brake, hands clamped on

reins as the draft team snorted and plunged, trying to swing away. The extra horses, tied in a string to the tail gate, squealed and kicked and followed.

In between, Hat Henderson, Dally Johnson and Sunfish Perkins worked on foot with several thicknesses of wet bags in their hands—slapping, slapping, slapping the flickers of flame and the glowing sparks left by the drag. Running to vault into the moving wagon, they would dip the bags in the barrels and pull them out dripping, leap to the ground and resume their slapping, slapping, slapping. Dobe Chavez, with shovel in hand, tossed smoldering cow chips back from the line and threw dirt over them.

And several miles away Sugar Wyman and Jumping Joe Joslin, also slapping with bags, stamping with worn, blackened boots, kicking cow chips in, worked steadily along the flank of the great wedge-shaped scar where fire showed only in patches, creeping slowly against the wind.

Twenty miles to the north, three Triple Seven hands, jogging along in saddles, topped a rise and stopped and looked southward into distance. One of them whirled his horse and rode fast in the far direction of the Triple Seven buildings. The other two struck spurs to their horses and rode at a long swinging lope toward the distant signal in the sky.

Eighteen miles to the east, where the little town of Harmony drowsed in mid-morning sun, Sheriff MacKnight rose from his roll-top desk in his little cubicle in the little combination hotel and office building and stepped out into the hall and on out on the porch to stretch cramped muscles. In the act of stretching, he stopped, staring westward, turned to shout through the doorway behind him and turned again, striding fast, to leave the porch and head along the one main street, hammering on doors and shouting again.

Twenty-two miles to the south, Sonny Jacobs, wrench in hand atop a small windmill tower, stared north and west and dropped the wrench and climbed down fast. Men soon scurried about the buildings of the Diamond Six, and another big flat-bed wagon carrying barrels and bags and shovels and men hurried

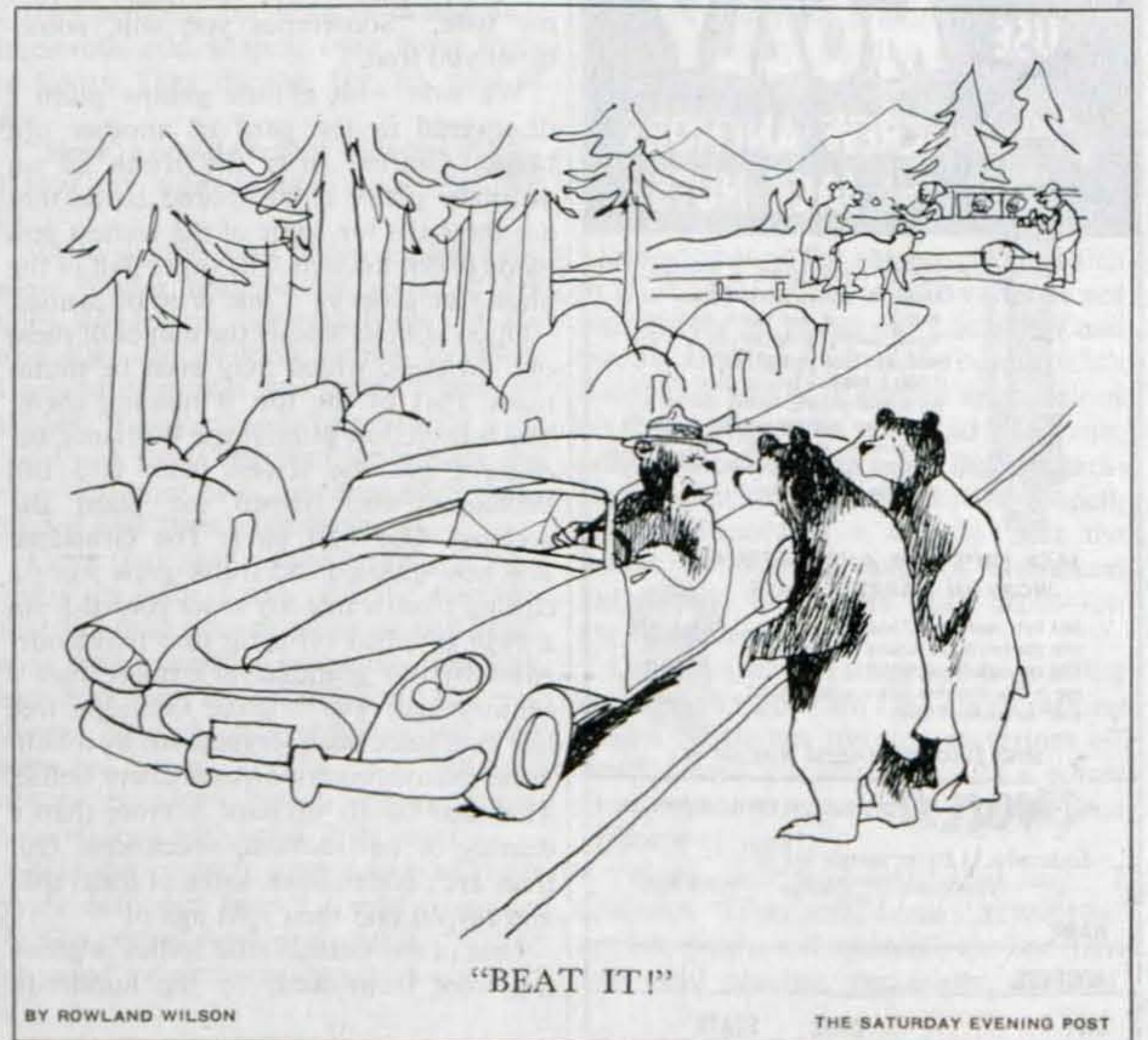
out onto the open grassland, angling toward the far smoke of the second fire. Sonny and another man followed in saddles, leading extra horses.

And off to the west, Sugar Wyman and Jumping Joe Joslin, working now around the blunted point of the first wedge-shaped scar, looked up to see José Gonzales on a scraggly pinto and his ten-year-old boy on a burro coming toward them, carrying shovels.

Farther west and south, well down past the blunted point of a second wedge-shaped scar that increased eastward, widening under the whip of the wind, a rough-built sturdy roan, sweat-streaked, moved along the base of the long ridge, and Powder Kent leaned forward and down in the saddle, checking the prints of four horses that had passed there at a steady trot.

Near the top of a ridge he dismounted and left the roan ground-reined and moved on up, bending low, and lay flat, peering over. Nothing moved anywhere in view in the broken land dropping down and away to rise again into the steeper slopes of the mountains. He returned and took the reins and led the horse, scrambling fast, up and over and down a short distance. He mounted and headed on into the broken land, moving slowly, cautiously, following the prints.

A little before noon and far out on the rolling plain, the men of the big land fought for the good grasses. Southward, where the second fire raced forward, the crew of the Diamond Six, gathering recruits from the lower country, were leaping into action along its front. Three miles to the north, about midway now of the long angled front of the first fire, Monte Walsh on his third horse and Chet Rollins on his second pulled a fresh drag. They moved faster now, and behind them more men slapped with bags and swung with shovels. Not far away, Skimpy Eagens, who had somehow wrangled a pair of half-broken horses out of the big corral and into harness, bounced forward on the seat of the old Slash Y chuck wagon, game leg braced against the dashboard, bringing a supply of jerked beef and a bushel basket of biscuits and a huge pot of coffee and the makings for more.



BY ROWLAND WILSON

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

Revenge

Time passed, fast in movement and action, slow and heavy to the men in the smoke haze, and throats smarted from coughing and muscles ached from the constant slapping, slapping, slapping. Fighting fire was hard work. Dobe Chavez and Hat Henderson led now with another drag, and two other drags were working down along the jagged narrowing front of the two fires that had spread

inward toward each other and merged into the one.

Where Skimpy Eagens had set up a quick camp, Monte Walsh—caught ten minutes before in a backlash swirl of flame from a clump of burning brush—lay limp with shoulders and head against a saddle blanket and a wheel of the chuck wagon, hat lost somewhere, face curiously pale under its tan and coating of grime, eyebrows gone and hair singed, breath coming in short, quick gasps as the air rasped his scorched lungs. Chet Rollins

squatted beside him, holding a cup of coffee to his lips.

"You fool," muttered Chet. "You ain't fit to be let run loose. Whyn't you pull away? Whyn't you let me take it sometimes?"

Monte raised a limp hand and pushed the cup aside, and the hand moved on to slap Chet weakly on the thigh. "Got to . . . keep you . . . looking pretty," he gasped. "Seeing . . . as you ain't . . . got much . . . to start with." He hitched himself up higher against the blanket and the wheel.

"Ain't there . . . any whisky . . . around?"

Thirty feet away Cal Brennan sat on the ground, boots off, rubbing his bent old toes. The big bulk of Sheriff MacKnight hunkered down facing him.

"Plenty of help here now," said Sheriff MacKnight. "If the wind don't get to playing games, the whole thing's about licked." He plucked a grass stem and tucked it in one corner of his mouth and chewed slowly on it. "I'm wondering, Cal. You got any ideas?"

Cal Brennan rubbed a hand over his chin. "One," he said. "An' I'm kickin' myself about it. Should of thought. An' I'm only sayin' maybe. There's nobody livin' over that way but Gonzales, an' he ain't tricky nor careless. But a couple hard cases came in yesterday. Wanted to be runnin' broomtails. I said no, an' they didn't like it. They rode out that way."

Sheriff MacKnight straightened up. "Reckon I'll be looking around some," he said. "Your boys must be about bushed." A few moments later he and two other men drifted quietly away, westward across the charred land, the hoofs of their horses sending up small spurts of soft fine ash.

On westward, west and south, up and over the long ridge, well into the broken land beyond, Powder Kent on a rough-built sturdy roan pushed along, following the prints of four horses. He moved slowly, studying carefully the ground ahead of him.

The roan raised its head high, as if to whinny, and Powder pulled reins and leaned down fast and clamped a hand over its nose. He waited a moment, listening. Cautiously he released the nose and nudged the roan forward. The prints led along a small, dry stream bed and between two high, sharply eroded shoulders of hardened clay. He stopped again and dismounted and tied his bandanna around the roan's nose and left it ground-reined and moved ahead on foot. The prints led on, between the high shoulders, and he could see them swerving to the right, climbing up the slow slope out of the stream bed, up and up and topping on out of sight.

He stepped back to the roan and mounted and moved forward, slowly, cautiously. He was turning to the right to follow the prints up a slope when small barely perceptible sounds, or the prickling of the hair on the back of his neck, gave warning, and he knew in the single poised instant that he had made a mistake. He reared the roan, pivoting on hind legs back around to the left, and saw the two men stepping out from behind a big rock forty feet away and their guns rising.

He heard the double blast of their guns, and the roan shuddered under him. He felt a sudden tearing shock along his left side, and he rocked back in the saddle under the impact and fell toward the ground and, as he fell, instinctively, out of old habit, his right hand moved, and his gun was in the hand. He hit hard and rolled over with the momentum of the fall, hitching around toward the two men, and their guns were blasting again, and bullets thudded into the ground around him and one full into him, smashing a hipbone, and all of his ebbing vitality was concentrated on the one terrible effort of getting his right arm forward and the gun up, elbow braced on the ground, and the worn old gun roared and bucked.

Time passed and eastward, out of the broken land, up and over the long ridge, along its outer base, Sheriff MacKnight

it's nice to have help on May 13th,

it's nice to have a Dormeyer
on May 14th, 15th, 16th,
17th, 18th, 19th, 20th,
21st, 22nd, 23rd, 24th,
25th, 26th, 27th,
28th,
29th, 30th,
31st, June 1st,
2nd, etc. . . .

After Mother's Day, Mom's most versatile helper in the kitchen will be her Dormeyer Silver Star food mixer. The Silver Star is the mixer that comes complete with meat grinder attachment and two lifetime stainless steel bowls at no extra cost! Its

10 speeds handle mixing, beating, mashing and grinding—fast and efficiently. What's more, the pop-out beaters and permanent chrome finish are a dream to clean. Mom will love the Silver Star—and any of the other Dormeyer Mother's Helpers at

your favorite dealer's. Give her one on Mother's Day, May 13th!

DORMEYER

DIVISION OF WEBCOR INC., CHICAGO, ILLINOIS.
DORMEYER APPLIANCES, POWER AND GARDEN TOOLS,
WEBCOR TAPE RECORDERS, FONOGRAPHS AND RADIOS.

and two other men moved at a slow lope, following the prints of five horses. "Two of them ain't carrying anybody," murmured Sheriff MacKnight. "But who in hell's the other one?" The prints swung away, leading up the ridge slope, and Sheriff MacKnight and the two other men turned, following them.

And on eastward, mile after mile, over the scarred land, on where the good grasses rolled rippling in the lessened wind to the far horizon, the smoke haze was lifting, and the last drag moved over the last short stretch of fire and was left where it lay. A few men, with no urgency, slapped wearily at the last remaining flickers. Already other men, tired and soot-stained, were drifting off into the distances out of which they had come.

Cal Brennan, boots in hand, stood by the seat of the big flat-bed wagon. Hat Henderson looked down at him from the back of a tired horse.

"Quite a gatherin'," said Cal. "Surprised me, some that showed. We got more'n a few good neighbors. I expect we'll be plenty busy for a while huntin' more range an' shiftin' stock. But when we get straightened out, maybe we ought to be throwin' some kind of a party."

"Yeah," said Hat. A wry grin broke his darkened face. "Maybe a barbecue'd be about the thing."

Twenty feet away the smeared, crusted, barely recognizable figure that was Monte Walsh stood by a patient, bridled horse, breath wheezing some in his throat, and he winced slightly as he breathed. He bent down to take hold of his stained, charred saddle and heaved, staggering a bit, to get it up and into place.

"Hey, quit that," said Chet Rollins, moving in. "Get over there in the wagon."

"The hell . . . with you," gasped Monte, reaching under for the cinch. "I ain't . . . dead yet. When I . . . can't ride, I will be."

In the cool, clean dark of night over the big land, the door of the empty Slash Y bunkhouse stood open. Across trodden dust the light from two lamps shone through the front window and the open doorway of the old adobe ranch house. Close by the veranda two horses drooped in tired dejection, dim figures on the edge of the patch of light through the doorway. Inside, in the big front room, the men of the Slash Y, in clothes hurriedly pulled on, stood or sat about, silent, grim-faced. On the floor a blanket covered a still, stiffened figure. Beside it, worn and weary and dust-stained, stood Sheriff MacKnight.

"Yes," he said. "We unraveled it all right from the tracks. He spotted them somehow, and he took out after them. All by his lonesome. Likely he knew you all were mighty busy. Back down in those badlands below Black Horse Spring they jumped him and knocked him out of the saddle. He didn't move much from where he fell. But he had his gun out. Three shells fired. We found one man right there, done for, drilled neat through the chest and the shoulder. Found the other one wobbling on his horse about two miles away. He couldn't do much traveling. Had lost too much blood. A bullet hole in one leg, up high where he had trouble stopping the bleeding."

Sheriff MacKnight took off his hat and rubbed a hand across his forehead where the band had made a red mark. "We patched that one up," he said, "and rounded up the rest of their hosses. Were heading here, bringing everything. Then I got to thinking how you boys might get the itch to use a rope on the one that's

living. Seeing as I can't let that happen, much as I might feel inclined to, I sent the others on into town and came in here myself. Bringing him. I figured you might want that."

"Yes," said Cal Brennan, "we do."

"You want me to leave him here?" the sheriff asked.

"Yes," said Cal Brennan. "I don't know as he's ever really had any folks, except maybe the rest of us right here. He used to be all Texas. But he ain't talked that way for a long time now. I reckon if he had the sayin' of it, he'd want to stay."

Days passed, slipping into weeks, and the men of the Slash Y spent long hours in the saddle, riding out into the mountains, finding upland valley pockets of good grass there and moving cattle in small bunches to them, to be left until late November when the snows of winter would come.

Monte Walsh sat in the mouse-chewed remnant of armchair on the veranda of the old adobe house, soaking in sun, and watched them go. Slowly at first, then rapidly, the lean rawhide vitality crept back through him, sealing off portions of his lungs with scar tissue, sending down his legs the tingle for the feel of a stout horse under him. One morning he walked down to the corrals with the others and saddled a leggy dun and rode out part way with them. The next day and thereafter he rode the full way, and all that remained from the scorching was now and again a small spell of coughing, and once in a long while a bad spell, sending a sudden sharp pain through his chest that hurt more than anyone but himself would ever know.

Over in the little town of Harmony, when the circuit judge came along, a quick trial was held. A lawyer, assigned to the defense, argued that no one could prove whose bullet did what and that his client had simply been led astray by a companion, and the judge agreed that intent and participation were all that were certain and sentenced a loose-limbed slack-jawed man who limped some to fifteen years in the territorial penitentiary.

Then the long-delayed rains came, a few sudden swift thunderstorms, and out where the wind had been playing with fine loose ash over charred ground, sheets of water swept, soaking the ash into the earth, erasing much of the great jagged scar defacing the land. Moisture seeped down where the roots of the good southwestern grasses waited, and a faint flush of new green showed—not much this late in the year, but strong with the promise of the next spring.

And there where the Slash Y buildings seemed to grow out of the ground, a part of the big land, a small rectangular piece of it, incredibly small in the vastness, was enclosed with a sturdy picket fence made and bolted to deep-set posts by Sunfish Perkins and Sugar Wyman. Within the fence a rectangular mound of earth settled slowly, inevitably, under the lash of rain and the warm blessing of sun and the cool, clean dark of night. At one end of the mound, set solid into the land, stood a small cross of weathered oak, the legend on it carved by Dobe Chavez from pencil markings laid out by Hat Henderson.

On the upright, above the crosspiece, the Slash Y brand. Below, on the wide crosspiece itself:

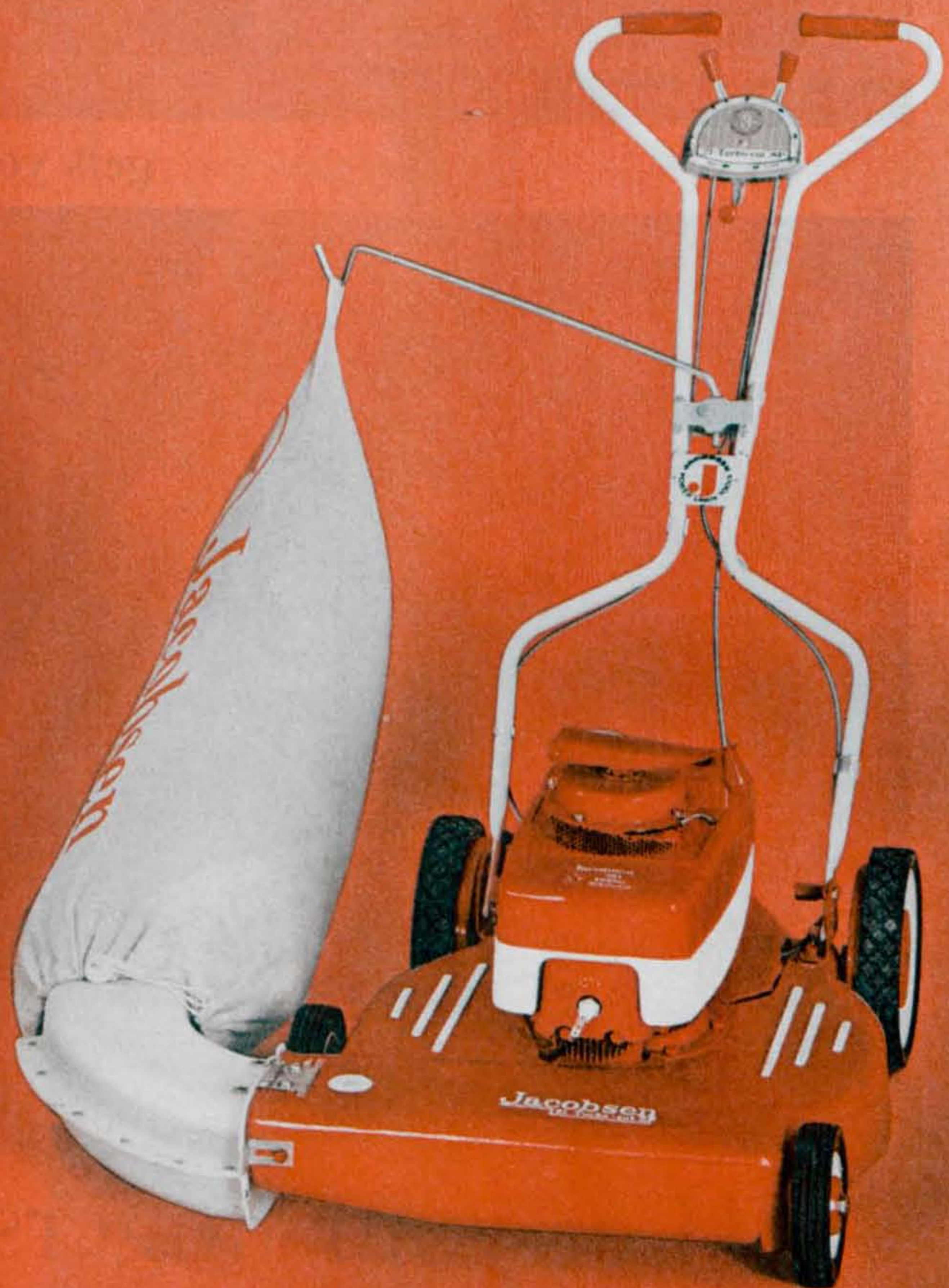
WILLIAM (POWDER) KENT
185?—1892

A GOOD MAN WITH A GUN

THE END

Jacobsen

The more you mow, the more you'll know that your pride in owning a Jacobsen is honestly based on value . . . the priceless value of sure precision performance no other mower ever gave you.



Shown above is one of 9 new Jacobsen Rotary Mowers with the revolutionary 4-Blade Turbocone disc that produces twice the number of cuts per revolution for the smoothest, cleanest rotary cut. Higher velocity air suction provides vacuum-like grass catching. There are 37 Jacobsen Power Lawn Tools—Rotary Mowers, Reel Mowers, Tractors and Tillers—now featured by Jacobsen Dealers coast-to-coast. See the Yellow Pages. Jacobsen Manufacturing Company, Racine, Wisconsin.

