A Famous Indian Fight.

By John Williamson Palmer, M. D.

Among the most conspicuous and notable of the rangers and Indian-fighters who "blazed their way" along a 100 trails between the Rio Grande and the Colorado 70 years ago were Rezin and James Bowie—to whom, jointly, belongs the questionable honor of the invention of the bowie-knife. These energetic and intrepid lads were the sons of Rezin Bowie, who had migrated from Maryland to Georgia, where the boys were born in Burke county. There were three other brothers—David, John, and Stephen. In 1802 the family removed to Catahoula parish, Louisiana. On the 19th of September, 1827, James Bowie was engaged on a bar of the Mississippi in one of the bloodiest affrays recorded in the fighting annals of the southwest, in which two men were killed and Bowie wounded. Soon after this affair James with his brother Rezin, made his way into Texas, where a career as dramatic as it was characteristically American awaited them—at first among the hostile tribes, and later in desultory encounters with predatory bands of Mexicans.

In 1831, on the 2d of November, James and Rezin Bowie with seven comrades and two boys as servants set out from San Antonio in search of the old Silver-mines of the San Saba mission. They made their way without notable adventure until the morning of the 19th, when they were overhauled by friendly Comanches, who warned them that they were followed by a war party of 124 Twowokanas and Wacos, as well as by 40 Caddos, making in all 164 well-armed braves, who had sworn to take the scalps of the white men then and there. The Comanche chief invited the Texans to join his party, and offered to make a stand with them, although he had but 16 men, badly armed and short of ammunition. But knowing that the "hostiles lay between," and being bent on reaching the old fort on the Saba before night, the Texans declined the generous offer and pushed boldly on. But they soon came upon rocky roads, their horses' feet were worn, and they were compelled to encamp for the night in a small grove of live-oaks of the girth of a man's body. To the north of these, and near by, was a thicket of young trees about 10 feet high; and on the west, 40 yards away, ran a stream of water. On every side was open prairie, interspersed with rocks and broken land, and here and there a clump of trees.

Here, having prepared for defense by cutting a road inside the thicket and clearing out the prickly pears, they hobbled their horses and posted sentries. That night they were not molested; in the morning, as they were preparing to start for the fort, they discovered Indians on their trial, with a footman 50 yards in advance of the party with his face to the ground, tracking. All hands efiw to arms; those who were already in the saddle dismounted, and the saddle and pack horses were tethered to the trees. The hostiles gave the war-whoop, halted, and began stripping for action. Some mounted bucks reconnoitered the ground, and among these were a few Caddos, known "by the cut of their hair," who until that day had been counted among the friendly tribes.

In consideration of the disproportion of numbers—164 to 11—it was agreed that Rezin Bowie should go out to parley with them, to avoid, if possible, a fight so unequal and so desperate. He took David Buchanan with him, walked to within 40 yards of the enemy's line, and invited them to send out their chief to talk with him. He addressed them in their own tongue, but they replied with a "How do! How do!" followed by a dozen shots, one of which broke Buchanan's leg. Bowie responded with the contents of a double-barreled gun and a pistol, took Buchanan on his back, and started for the camp. The Indians opened fire again. Buchanan was hit twice, but not mortally, and Bowie's hunting-shirt was pierced by several shots. Seeing that they failed to bring him down, eight of the Indians on foot pursued him with tomahawks, and were close upon him when his own own party charged them with rifles and killed four, putting the others to flight. "We then returned to our position," wrote Rezin Bowie, "and all was still for five minutes."

Then from a hill red with Indians, and so near that the voice of a mounted chief urging his men to the charge could be heard plainly, came yells and a vicious volley. "Who is loaded?" cried James Bowie. "I am," said Cephas Hamm. "Then shoot that chief!" And Hamm, firing, broke the Indian's leg and killed his pony.

The chief went hopping round the horse, his body covered with his shield; four of the Texans who had reloaded fired and the man fell. Six or eight of his tribe advanced to bear away the body, and several of these were killed by the Texans. The [illegible] of Indians then retreated behind the hill with the exception of a few who dodged from tree to tree, out of gunshot.

Presently, however, they covered the hill again, bringing up their bowmen, for the first time in the fight. There was rapid shooting on both sides; another chief advanced on horseback, and James Bowie brought him down.

Meanwhile a score of Caddos who had succeeded in getting under the bank of the creek in the rear of the Texan party opened fire at 40 yards, and shot Matthew Doyle through the breast. Thomas McCaslin ran forward to avenge him, and was shot through the body. The firing became general from all quarters. The Texans, finding their position in the trees too much exposed, retreated to the thicket, where they dislodged the riflemen under cover of the creek, who were in point blank range, by shooting them through the head as often as they showed above the bank.

In the thicket, where they were well screened, they had clear views of the hostiles on the prairie. "We baffled their shots," wrote James Bowie, "by moving six or eight feet the moment we had fired, for their only mark was the smoke of our guns. They would put 20 balls within the space of a pocket-handkerchief in the spot where they saw that smoke."

In this fashion the fight was kept up for two hours, and James Correll was shot through the arm. Seeing that the Texans were not to be dislodged from the thicket, the savages resorted to fire—for the double purpose of routing the little party and of carrying away their own dead and wounded under cover of the smoke, for the rifles of the rangers had brought down half a dozen at every round. They set fire to the dry prairie grass to the windward of the thicket; the flames flared high and burned all the grass as far as the creek; but there they bore away to the right and to the left, leaving a clear space of five acres around the camp. Under cover of the smoke the hostiles carried away their dead; while the Texans scraped away the dry grass and leaves from their wounded comrades, and piled rocks and bushes to make a flimsy breastwork.

The Indians re-occupied the trees and rocks in the prairie and renewed their firing. Suddenly the wind shifted to the north and blew hard. The red men were quick to see the advantage and seize the chance. One of their braves crawled down the creek and set fire to the high grass. Robert Armstrong killed him—too late. Down came the flames, 10 feet high, straight for the camp! The shouts and yells of the Indians rent the air, and they fired 20 shots in a minute.

Behind the screen of smoke the Texans held a council of war. If the Indians should charge them under cover of the fire they could deliver but one effectual round. Even then the sparks were flying so thickly that no man could open his powder-horn but at the risk of being blown up. Bowie's men determined if the Indians charged "to deliver that one round, stand back to back, draw our knives, and fight as long as one was left alive." On the other hand, should the Indians not charge, and should the Texans still stand their ground, they might be burned alive. In that case each man would take care of himself as well as he could until the fire reached the ring of cleared ground around the wounded men and the baggage; then they would smother it with buffalo-robes, bearskins, deerskins, and blankets. And this they did, the hostiles not charging.

By this time the fire had left so little of the thicket that the small group of fighters took refuge in the ring they had made around the wounded and the baggage, and begun raising their breastwork higher with loose rocks and with earth that they dug with their knives. The Indians had succeeded in removing their killed and wounded under cover of the smoke. Night was approaching, and they had been fighting since sunrise. The Indians, seeing that the Texans were still alive and dangerous, drew off and encamped for the night with their dead and wounded. By 10 o'clock the Bowies has raised their clumsy rampart breast high; the men filled their vessels and skins with water, and waited for the attack which they supposed the morning would bring. All night they heard the red men wail ing over their dead; and at daylight they shot a mortally wounded chief, as the customs of the tribes prescribed. A little later they retired with their dead and wounded to a mountain about a mile away, where a cave served them for shelter and for tomb. At 8 o'clock two of the Texans ventured out from the little fort, and made their way to the encampment where the Indians had lain the night before, and there they counted 48 bloody spots on the grass where their braves had fallen before Texan rifles. "Finding ourselves much cut up," wrote the Bowies, "having one man killed and three wounded, five horses killed and three wounded, we resumed the strengthening of our little fort, and worked until 1 p. m., when 13 Indians appeared, but retired again as soon as they discovered that we were still there, well fortified and ready for action." The Texans held their ground eight days, and then retraced their march to San Antonio, where they arrived safely with their wounded and their horses in 12 days. Nine men and two boys and killed 82 Indians and routed a fighting force of 164.

It was proper to the ghastly "fitness of things" that the man who directed this wonderful fight, and was the heart and eye and arm behind every rifle and every knife, should go to meet his death with Crockett and Travis in the Alamo. When, on March 3, Travis drew a line with his sword across the adobe floor, and called on all those of that desperate little garrison who would stay with him to the death to come over that line to him, Crockett sprang across merrily, waving his cap, and every man of "those about to die" followed him, saluting: "Te morituri salutamus!" James Bowie, fast bound in raging fever, tossing and muttering on his cot "in the little north room of the Alamo," heard the call, and cried for two of his comrades to lift the cot and carry him over that line. It was done, and then they bore him back again to the little room to die.

It is Madame Candelaria, the Mexican woman who nursed him there, and who alone of all that Spartan band survived, who tells the story. "It is not true," she says, "that Colonel Bowie was 'brained with an ax.' He died in wild delirium in the height of the awful carnage, several hours before the Mexican horde burst into the Alamo. . . . They broke in the door where I watched with Colonel Bowie. I cried out, in Spanish, that I was a Mexican woman, and that I had nursed a man who had just died. One knocked me down, and another stabbed me in the cheek with a bayonet. Here is the scar! . . . Colonel Bowie's cold body was dragged from the cot—dragged down the stairs by the howling mob of soldiers, and thrown upon a heap of bleeding dead."—The New Voice.

TORPEDO BOAT'S CREWS.

Recent Hard Experience of Men Aboard English Craft.

Rarely, if ever, have the crews of torpedo boats experienced a worse time than was undergone by those officers and men who were told off to man the four torpedo boats that were towed from Lamlash to Plymouth last week by the channel squadron. During the cruise just ended the squadron took with it these boats in order that experiments might be made in victualling and coaling the craft from the parent ships when at sea. The experiments were successful, in so far as they proved that a torpedo boat can be furnished with supplies from a battleship when the vessels are under steam. A boom was rigged out, and the boats towed along at 10 knots an hour by means of a hawser passed around the end of the boom. While the sea was calm it was found comparatively easy to put all necessary supplies aboard the boats without slackening speed. But on the voyage from Lambash rough weather was experienced and the crews of the torpedo boats suffered terribly. For the greater part of the way the sea broke continually over the tiny craft, and the officers and men had to lash themselves to the deck to avoid being washed overboard. One young stoker belonging to the boat that was in tow of the battleship Resolution did meet his fate. He was lying down, so worn out from seasickness and exhaustion that when the sea lifted him he was unable to make any effort himself. Being clad in heavy boots and oilskins he sank before the ships that tried to pick him up could reach him. The speed at which the boats were towed did much to make existence aboard them less endurable. Instead of riding the waves they were pulled through them. Sleep was impossible, and when a boat broke loose, as the Majestic's did, the crew were so tired out that they could barely manage to secure the hawser that was drifted back to them. To make matters worse, the Magnificent's boat stove in her bows and fore compartments became waterlogged. That these frail craft came through as well as they did is a splendid testimony to the courage and powers of endurance of their crews.—Pall Mall Gazette.

A Russian Millennium.

No newspaper has appeared at Borgi (in Finland) for some time past, owing to the official censor being away on a holiday. If all these Russian censors were given a holiday what a lovely time the empire of the czar would have.—Vossische Zeitung, Berlin.

Three hundred and twenty-five miles in a day is the record for a sailing ship, 560 for a steamer.

OUR REDMEN ASIATICS.

SUCH THE VERDICT OF SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION SCIENTISTS.

Government Expedition to the Pacific Slope Settles a Long Disputed Question —Finds Traces of Twenty Aboriginal Nations Scattered Over the Golden State.

"Unquestionably of Asiatic origin" is the verdict as to the California Indians rendered by a special commission sent to that part of the country by the Smithsonian Institution. Prof. W. H. Holmes, anthropologist-in-chief of the National Museum, voices the opinion, which practically settles a long disputed question, in a bulletin that is about to be published. He says that the aborigines now found in the Golden state came long ago from the far north, from Behring Sea and beyond, having crossed over from Asia by way of the "frigid arch" which affords a land passage interrupted only by a narrow water barrier a few miles in breadth.

Prof. Otis T. Mason, of the Smithsonian Institution, calls attention to the fact tha the shortest line between the Straits of Malacca and the continent of North America is a great circle passing northward along the east coast of Asia, across Behring Striat, and southward to the Columbia River, in Oregon. This was the route followed by the first comers to America. Not only was it the shortest, but it may be said that food grew in profusion all along it by the wayside. Early man was obliged to travel in those tracks which were marked out by nature and provisioned for his journeys. Water furnished the greatest quantity and variety of food for the least effort, and the same element afforded easiest transporation.

Travel was mainly in boats, of course. It is easy to imagine a company of the remots ancestors of California Indians setting out, thousands of years ago, from the Indian Ocean in an open boat for a voyage of 10,000 miles to the Columbia river. The route was nearly all the way by sea—an inside passage through landlocked seas and sounds. It led through the Indo-Malayan archipelago, the South China and Malay seas, and East China and Yellow seas, the Japanese and Tartary seas, the Okhotsk sea, and Behring sea and its bays, the Alaskan sea and inlets, the Tlinget-Haida sea, Vancouver sea and the Columbia basin.

All of these marine enclosures swarmed with animal life suitable for human food. The East China and Japan seas furnished inexhaustible supplies of fish, water fowl, crabs, oysters, etc. In Behring sea there was no limit to subsistence. No sooner was a latitude approached where the rigors of the climate demanded extra clothing and fuel for the body than marine mammals and land mammals were superabundant. These early travelers would naturally avoid the deep ocean, which is a desert to the voyager, offering no food supply. In the shallows the landmarks were their lighthouses and the inlets were their harbors innumerable.

In California at the present time, says Prof. Holmes, are found remnants of 20 distinct nations, speaking as many languages. These varied ethnic elements, embraced within a region only 800 miles in length by 300 miles in width, seem to have been attracted one after another to the lowland and coastal valleys by the bait of an unfailing food supply. So formidable are the barriers of mountain ranges on the east and so forbidding the deserts on the south that few communities once settled there would ever take the trouble to seek homes elsewhere. It would appear that the peoples were caught like fishes in a trap—the way in was easy, but the way out was hard.

The Indians, or rather their remote ancestors, came from Asia by way of Behring Strait, because that was the easiest as well as the shortest route. On an ordinary map it does not look the shortest, but it is such, nevertheless, and that this is true may easily be ascertained by a brief examination of any geographical globe. It is considered reasonably certain by many scientists that the earliest beings properly called human dwelt not far from the Straits of Malacca, and that from there their descendants spread over the world.

One can conceive of a stream of canoes flowing for many centuries from the Indian Ocean and peopling America steadily from Asia by way of its eastern shores and seas. For 3000 years or more this continent was receiving in this way continuously a population. A great highway was opened through which the stream of boats kept floating. In every favorable place along the route colonies were dropped, and the nations thus started assumed proprietorship over parts of the highway. At length they shut off the stream of migration by declaring that it should no longer pass through their premises, and the flow of immigration to America being thus cut off, the ancestors of the present copper colored aborigines were left to obtain, through centuries, traits of their own.

Though the present aborigines of California represent so many distinct nations as proved by their languages, which are as far apart from one another as English is from Chinese, the character of the food supply and other local conditions applying to all have made all of them a good deal alike in respect to habits and customs. Generally speaking, the culture of the tribes of the Golden State may be said, as Prof. Holmes remarks, to revolve about the oak tree. They are eaters of acorns, which endless forests of oak furnish in unlimited quantities. They have almost no earthenware, few of them understand anything of the potters' art, but are the most wonderful basket makers in the world, their products in this line displaying remarkably varied phases of form, technique and embellishment.

Prof. Holmes examined several of their milling places, and describes one of them (a typical example) as a mass of granite rock, with many conical holes, some shallow and some deep. All about were stones for grinding and pounding, adapted in shape to the hollows, in which acorns were put for the purpose of reducing them to meal. This place of industry was covered with a rude shelter of poles and brush to protect the women, who are obliged to spend much of their time at such work, from sun and rain.

The acorn cracking outfit ordinarily consists of a round stone with a shallow pit on the upper surface, and another stone for striking, the nut being set on end to receive the blow. In the absence of such contrivanc the teeth are used for breaking the shells. The kernals, after being dried, are pounded in a hole, the resulting meal being winnowed in a flat basket. A basin is then formed in the sand, and in this the meal is put, the water being poured upon it repeatedly and allowed to drain away until all of the tannin is filtered out. It is the tannin that renders the acorn unfit for food in its ordinary condition, but, after going through the process described, the flour, scooped out of the sand-basin with the hands, is sweet and wholesome. The Indians, who call it "byota," vastly prefer it to our wheat flour.

Mortars carved out of stone are sometimes employed for grinding the acorns, with the help of a pestle. Prof. Holmes found two ancient ones, of a globular shape, in the possession of an old miner named John Cannon. They were so highly valued by Mrs. Cannon as receptacles for watering the chickens that one of them was secured only with the greatest difficulty. They had been discovered originally in a mine, together with a number of sketetons, buried six feet deep in gold bearing gravel.

Near a place called Murphys the expedition visited a cave carved out of the limestone by water, which was entered by an opening descending almos vertically and expanding below. Skulls and other portions of human skeletons had been found there, and Pro. Holmes secured from the interior of the cavern parts of the remains of a huge animal, which, being taken to Washington, proved to have belonged to a giant sloth, one of those huge mammals, long ago extinct, which were plentiful over the greater part of this continent during the tertiary epoch.—New York Herald.

Is the Genius of Ireland Irish?

The genius of Ireland is a curiously paradoxical subject, and requires a study to itself. Though so many great men have been associated with Ireland, when we analyze them according to race we find that a remarkably large proportion of them are of English or Scotch descent. Bishop Berkeley, for instance, is often called an Irishman, though his father was English (his mother's origin is unknown), and his thought he always considered himself an Englishman. The great Irish patriots have usually had English blood in their veins, and have sometimes even been proud of the fact. And yet, while this is so, Ireland has somehow had the art of imparting some of her subtlest qualities to those happy Englishmen who have had the good fortune to possess some slight strain of her blood, or to be born in her land, or even to have lived there in youth. The greatest English humorists and wits—Swift and Sterne and Congreve—had this good fortune. In the same way, while Ireland has scattered her saints over England and the continent, her own patron saint in a Scotchman, who was never canonized. The contribution of Ireland to our national genius cannot well be stated in numerical values. —The Monthly Review.

Stonehenge Fenced In.

Stonehenge is now shut off from the public by a wire fence, which Sir Edmund Antrobus, the owner of the portion of Salisbury Plain on which the monument stands, is having erected around the stone. A charge of one shilling is made to visitors who may desire to pass this barrier and get a near view of the monument.

Arnica hails from Europe and Asia the medicine is made from artificial plants grown for that purpose in Germany and France.