This Cowgirl will startle New York

Alberta Claire, of Wyoming, Drops Into Town on Her Pony "Bud," Completing the First 3,000 Miles of the Longest Horseback Journey in History

ON THE TRAIL — CASCADE MOUNTAINS

ALBERTA CLAIRE, WHO IS MAKING THE GREATEST HORSEBACK RIDE IN HISTORY

ON THE TRAIL — ROCKY MOUNTAINS

ALBERTA CLAIRE ON HER PONY "BUD" ACCOMPANIED BY HER FAITHFUL DOG "MICKIE"

RIDING horseback alone across the continent from Wyoming to San Francisco, thence to New Orleans, thence to Washington and New York, Alberta Claire, a cowgirl of Buffalo, Wyo., has covered 3,000 miles of the most unique journey ever undertaken by a woman. Accustomed to the hardships of the range the daring girl is making the trip with little inconvenience, and upon reaching San Francisco finds herself and her faithful pony in excellent condition, after being on the road since April 2.

The Wyoming cowgirl must make the journey to New York before April 2, 1912, and she must have with her the saddle pony, "Bud," on which she began the journey and the faithful dog, "Mickie," that had followed her day in and day out on the wide plains of Wyoming. This provision of the wager takes into account the possibility of death by natural causes only.

Alberta Claire is a girl of iron nerve. She weighs about 100 pounds, is a splendid horsewoman and an expert with firearms. With the revolver she can shoot out a bird's eye or kill an unruly steer with equal unconcern. Life on the range has given her that self-confidence born of being compelled to meet emergencies alone and unaided.

Beginning the journey of more than 10,000 miles with $2 in money and the clothes she wore, the cowgirl is compelled to earn her way and that of the pony and dog. By sewing, by domestic service, by acting as nursemaid, by driving cattle with cowboys, by doing advertising stunts with her horse and dog, by doing expert shooting and by giving the people exhibitions of her skill on the range the wandering cowgirl has made her expenses and more. She can not accept charity, she can neither borrow nor beg.

Alberta Claire is practically alone in the world. Her father and mother are dead and she had neither brother nor sister. Her life has been spent on the plains doing the work of a man. Strange as it may seem, she is well educated, has music enough for the average woman and is a good cook. Two years of her life were spent in an English college for women. The story she tells of the hazardous journey is entrancing. Here are snatches of it:

"I used to fly in a joking way that I knew I could make Buffalo, Wyo., famous. I could ride horseback and I thought I could show the world how a Wyoming girl could ride. The people never took me in earnest. Buffalo is 16 miles from a railroad and right at the foot of Bighorn mountains, with an elevation of 7,000 feet. Sheridan is the Burlington railroad center, 45 miles from Buffalo. I had been to Sheridan visiting for a week and I had to get home.

"The weather was awfully bad and the river was flooding everything out, and my friends said I had better wait. It is a hard trip from Sheridan to Buffalo anyway. A little more than half way there is a little river called Piney, so named because it is lined with pine trees. It is only a little river, but it is deep. It is hard to ford at the best. One of those wooden bridges swung across the stream. It had been condemned for quite a while. The day I started from Sheridan to Buffalo, when I left town people jeered at me. No one thought I could make the trip. When within five or six miles of Piney river I met a man who told me the bridge had gone down with a big freight team. Three horses were drowned, but the driver had been saved. 'You can't get across Piney,' the man said emphatically. When I reached the river I discovered that by going five miles down stream I would find a bridge over one half, and the other half I should have to ford. I got across. The water was running over the bridge. The pony was afraid of bridges for a month after that. The other half of the river the pony swam. I was from 7 o'clock in the morning until 8 o'clock at night making that trip of 45 miles, about 65 the way I had to go. I finally reached Buffalo and rode up right in front of the hotel and the pony fell over dead.

"I started to cry about my pony. The men talked so much about that ride that it developed the idea of this long ride. A cowboy brought his pony to me and begged me to ride him, assuring me that he would take me through all the way. He is a Wyoming cow pony.

"In less than a week I was off. I was among ranches where I was known for two weeks. From that on I got among strangers and it began to get hard. It was hard to earn the dollars and after I earned them it took every one to pay my way. I had to cross deserts and mountains and also had to hunt trails. There are not many trails through the deserts in Wyoming. I would ride all day and not meet a soul. Other days I would see thousands of sheep, but not a herder who could speak English. I met a herder one day and he said, 'What is the matter? You are the first person I have met that could speak United States. I want to talk to you a while.' I could not get away until I had lunch with him. He didn't know that the world was awake, he had been so many months out in the desert with the sheep.

"I struck a ranch where there were 14 men and was there three days in a blizzard, with every courtesy shown me by the crude plainsmen.

"I went into Utah with the intention of going through Salt Lake, but I found I couldn't do it without packing across the desert, and I had not enough money to get a pack horse. I went back into Wyoming and then it was I hit the Red desert and mining camps. I bought some woolen socks, bandana handkerchiefs and anything that would sell to the miners. With what little money I had I bought up all I could get to sell to the miners. In one little town there with about 150 people I gave a little entertainment in the dance hall. I recited and read to them. They took up a collection and gave me $26. That carried me and paid the pony's way for three weeks.

"Then I bought dress goods by mail order in New York and had it sent to Lander, Wyo. I sold it to all the ranch people and made it up into dresses for them. Then I came to Shoshone reservation and into the Wind river mountains. In making the pass I climbed 10,000 feet and dropped to 7,000 feet in a ride of 47 miles. I went into Jackson hole and stayed three days at Jackson lake at a ranch to rest up.

"One day I happened to pass a cow camp. The men were getting supper. I asked the boys how far it was to the next ranch. It was quite a long way, they said. 'If you can roll up in your saddle blanket and use your saddle for a pillow we can give you some supper and breakfast and feed your pony and dog,' they told me. They gave me a canvas sleeping bag and I slept in the open. From there I went over the Yellowstone park route in the direction of Wyoming. When within 18 miles of the park I forded Snake river and took in the grand Tetons, over what used to be a pack trail used only by cowboys and hunters.

"When I reached the top of the high point and started down, a sign, written on a board in blue chalk and nailed to a tree, greeted me: 'This hill is hell, but the prescription says, take it.' There in the mountains I lost my way. I missed the trail by a man telling me I could save a few miles by going another way. He told me to take the best traveled trail, but didn't say whether it went north, south, east or west. I stayed out all night in the forest. I found a clearing with grass and I picketed the pony and gathered up brush and built a big campfire, rolled up in my saddle blankets and went to sleep. I waited until daylight came, when I started out. During the day I found a hunter's cabin in the forest. There was no sign of anybody around, but I went in. There was plenty to eat in the way of canned goods, and plenty of feed for the pony. After I had been there quite a while a big man came in, and, looking at me in astonishment, said: 'Where the hell did you come from?' I said: 'I am not sure, but that wasn't the place.' He put me on the right trail.

"About two days after that I got into a forest fire on the border of Idaho. I had to leave the trail and go down through thick brush to get behind it. Pony went through the brush on the dead run and my clothes were torn from me. For a time we took refuge in a little creek. In the distance I could see a ranch. I was now behind the fire. At the ranch the woman helped me mend my clothes. I finally arrived in Ashton, Idaho, and from there I came to Idaho Falls, Twin Falls and Boise, then through the Payette valley. From there I went to Olds Ferry and crossed the Snake river into Oregon.

"In the Blue mountains I lost my way at night and stayed at a logging camp. I fired two shots as a signal and I got an answer. Two men came out of the woods toward me. At first they said they couldn't let me in. They finally agreed to keep me until morning. We went to the cabin, but it wasn't bad. In a little while we were talking about Wyoming ranches and I found that one of the men had worked for the X L outfit. After that, of course, it was all right, anything I wanted I could have around there.

"I was born in Gloucestershire, England. My mother was English and my father American. From my father I get my wild ways. My mother liked her home and society. My father's brother had one of the largest cattle ranches in Wyoming. I was four years old when I first came to America. I was about 10 years old when I went back to England and they sent me to an English boarding school. I nearly died. I sneaked a letter out to my father and he came and took me back. All the early education I got was from my father and from books. To get me to read and study he would tell me I could have such and such a pony to ride. I wasn't over 10 years old when I learned to ride.

"I was 15 years old when I put in a solid year of hard study to fit myself for two years of college. The three years I put into one. I had two years in an English college. My grandfather paid my expenses for the two years on condition that I work hard enough to get in. It never was a hardship to me, but once in a while I got a notion to get out.

"My greatest pleasure in life was to go fox hunting. It was the only place I could ride fast, for the policemen wouldn't let me ride fast around the parks. My aunt was a member of the hunt club and she had me taken in as an honorary member. Riding and the gymnasium I thoroughly enjoyed because it was boyish. My mother was still living in England when I quit college, but she died soon afterward. My father died while I was in college.

"I expect to win my wager by riding into New York on my pony before April 2, 1912."

THE STORY OF SCHEMING CECILIA

SOME girls can do almost anything and not suffer for it, while others can not even think wrong without paying the penalty. Cecilia is one of the unfortunate kind that has to settle for every little thing.

Just take, for example, the price she paid for that small transgression on the way up to the Watsons' last Saturday afternoon. Hers was a little sin and the provocation was extreme, yet the punishment was severe. It was not her fault, either. Charley Lemon was really to blame. He had promised to meet her at the ferry at 2 o'clock, but he did not come.

And Cecilia, being independent and level headed and a good comrade generally, agreed. It annoyed her to find him a laggard. At 15 minutes past 2 indignation deepened into chagrin; at half past 2 she was downright angry.

"He's a villain," stormed Cecilia, "and I am a fool. If he didn't want to come why didn't he say so, or if something happened to prevent, why didn't he let me know? But I'll show him that I can't be played fast and loose with. I'll go anyhow."

Then suddenly she stopped planning. She had felt in her handbag and found she had no money.

"A fool again," sighed Cecilia. "It is never safe to depend upon a man for anything, not even carfare. But I'm not downed yet. I'll borrow it."

Cecilia perceived at a glance that her choice of banker was limited, a messenger boy and the ticket chopper, the porter and the agent. The porter had on a new hat with a gold band around it. That splendor, augmented by the perpetual smile that he wore, distinguished him as the most affluent and most accommodating of the lot; therefore, Cecilia approached him first.

"Excuse me," she said, "will you kindly"—

Her courage failed, her tongue seemed paralyzed. The man looked around curiously.

"Huh?" he said.

"Will—you—kindly— tell— me— what time it is?" gasped Cecilia.

The porter pointed to the clock at which she had been looking steadily for the last half hour. "It's half past two," he said.

"Thank you," said Cecilia weakly. She sat down again. "It's no use," she said. "I never asked anybody for money in my life, and I can't begin now. I'll have to wait for something to turn up or else go back home."

And then the other girl came along. She had passed through the station while Cecilia was talking with the porter. She, too, appeared to have something on her mind. She walked hurriedly down to the end of the platform, then back again at a higher rate of speed. Presently she approached the ticket chopper.

"I dropped a ticket in there a moment ago," she said. "I find that I have forgotten something. I have to go back. I shan't be gone more than 10 minutes. When I come back I will mention this incident. Will you let me pass through without another ticket?"

The man considered the proposition. "It's against the rules," he said, "but I guess it will be all right."

The other girl came back through the station. Cecilia's head reeled before the brilliancy of the scheme evoked by the incident on the platform.

"If that girl doesn't get back inside of 10 minutes," she said, "I am going to rob her of a dime."

The 10 minutes passed. The other girl did not appear and Cecilia braced herself for the execution of her desperate plan. A group of students and their young women friends came clattering into the station. Cecilia joined them and was carried through the door in the midst of the noisy, jostling crowd.

"You have my ticket. Don't you remember? I had to go back for something? You said it would be all right."

The man nodded and Cecilia went on. Fortunately she did not have to wait for a train. An express pulled in just as she passed through the door.

Cecilia did not know half of the persons she saw at the Watsons'. After moving across the bay it was their pleasure to invite friends out to spend the afternoon and evening. Usually it was a congenial party that assembled there, but that day every laugh, so it seemed to Cecilia, rang out of tune. An extra note of depression was added when, at 4 o'clock, Charley Lemon appeared. That was because he did not come alone. He was accompanied by the Other Girl. Presently he detached himself from the group of girls and joined Cecilia.

"Where were you this afternoon?" he asked.

"That's a nice question for you to ask," she retorted. "Where were you?"

"I was detained at the office. I got up to the station at a quarter to 3. I didn't see anything of you, so I concluded you had either gone home or had gone on ahead. You'd better believe I was hopping mad about it too. You might have waited."

"Yes," said Cecilia, "I suppose I might, but—I didn't. So you came to the station—and then?"

"And then I met Mildred Joyce. She had been invited to the Watsons' for the evening too. The poor girl was in an awful stew. She had to go back for something after dropping her ticket into the box, and while she was gone some other woman with unbounded gall pushed through and rode on her ticket. At any rate, that was the way the chopper explained things. Lord, what nerve some women have got, anyhow."

"Yes," said Cecilia, "and then?"

"Why, then," said Charley, "we came out together. She's a mighty nice girl, Mildred is. I'd like you to meet her."

"Thank you," said Cecilia.

When Charley had gone away Mrs. Watson came and sat beside Cecilia.

"Did Charlie tell you?" she asked.

"What?" said Cecilia.

"About him and Mildred. They're engaged. It happened on the way up this afternoon. You know they came out together."

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