

had been growing more hazy as we approached, and we now found out the cause. The forest was on fire in several places. At one part of the journey we had just room to pass between the blazing crackling trunks and the edge of the river. For easier passage we forded the stream, and proceeded down its left bank, but found that here and there the fire had crossed even to that side. Most of these forest fires result from the grossest carelessness. Jack was particularly cautious each morning to see that every ember of our camp fire was extinguished, and that by no chance could the dry grass around be kindled, for it might smoulder on and slowly spread for days, until it eventually set the nearest timber in a blaze. We used to soak the ground with water before resuming our march. These forest fires were of course an indication that human beings, either red or white, had been on the ground not long before us. But we did not come on their trail. One morning, however—it was the last day of this long march—we had been about a couple of hours in the saddle. The usual halt had been made to tighten the packs, and we were picking our way across a dreary plain of sage-brush on the edge of the great basalt flood of Idaho, when Jack, whose eyes were like a hawk's for quickness, detected a cloud of dust far to the south on the horizon. We halted, and in a few minutes Jack informed us that it was a party of horsemen, and that they must be Indians from their way of riding. As they came nearer we made out that there were four mounted Indians with four led horses. Jack dismounted and got his rifle ready. Andy, without saying a word, did the same. They covered with their pieces the foremost rider, who now spurred on rapidly in front of the rest, gesticulating to us with a rod or whip he carried in his hand. "They are friendly," remarked Jack, and