

# The Men Who Make The Argosy

MAX BRAND

Author of "The Untamed," "The Night Horseman," "The Longhorn Feud," etc.

MAX BRAND is a Californian who saw the West first in the central valley of the State, where the Coast Range ran low on one side and the Sierra Nevadas on clear days were green and brown over the foothills, and blue or glass-white above. He learned something of cattle and cattlemen among the great grasslands of the foothills, but he never was so deep in that Old West which is a golden legend to-day, as when he spent a few weeks with two old trappers near the Diablo Mountains, close to El Paso, in Texas.

Nick and Alec had fought Indians, ridden range, prospected for gold, made fortunes for others, and had never been able to spend all the wealth that had poured in upon their minds. Some of the glory of mountains and desert remained with them as a perpetual heritage. Nick, at seventy-eight, had a body bent and twisted by age; Alec at eighty was straight as a stick, with no visible sign of the passage of time about him. But Alec was apt to blame his inability to read upon a defect of his eyes.

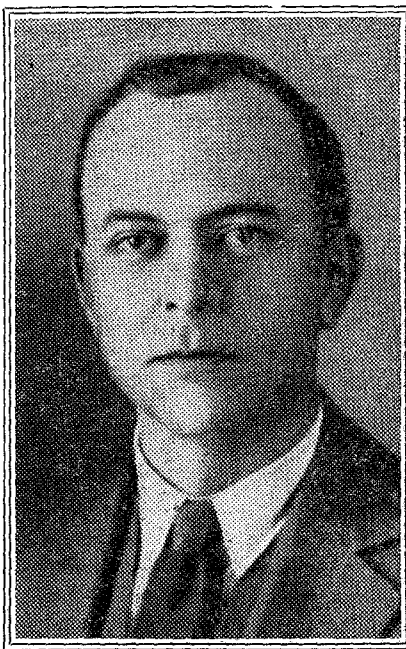
They quarreled constantly. To Max Brand, Nick reported that Alec was just a touchy old idiot—who could not even read! And what is a man capable of when he cannot read

print? Alec, with equal fervor, reported that poor Nick was not to be blamed for weakness of temper and mind, for, said Alec, when a man's body is bent his brain is sure to sag also! But in spite of their wrangling, the two loved one another with a perfect devotion.

And the long tales which they told in the evenings, making sixty years of Western history breathe and repainting mountains and deserts, have never been out of the mind of Max Brand. Nothing is more vivid to him than the memory of the little shanty near the "tank," the small stretchers on which the skins of coyotes and bobcats were drying, and the wrangling voices of old Nick and Alec.

Max Brand has been a traveler for a great many years, from the Pacific Islands to the deserts of northern Africa, but when he searches for stories, he most often goes back to

that shanty in Texas, and the voices of the two old men pour up in his mind. That is why Western themes generally have come off his typewriter during the last sixteen years. In fact, he has written more Western stories than any other author. He is forty years old, was born on the Coast, spent twenty-three years in California, and since that time has lived east and west in divers parts of the world.



# The Story of the ARGOSY

**F**IFTY years ago a young man from Maine came to New York with \$40, a grip full of manuscripts, and the undying determination to start a magazine. Frank A. Munsey had too much spirit and ability to be content as a clerk, a telegrapher, or even as manager of Augusta's Western Union office. He had no magazine experience and no backing—the backer who was to put up \$2,500 in cash backed out after Mr. Munsey reached New York. His chief assets were the ambition and hard-working energy of an Alger boy hero. So it was deeply fitting that his magazine, *The Golden Argosy*, opened with "Do and Dare, or a Brave Boy's Fight for Fortune," a serial by that greatest of boys' writers, Horatio Alger, Jr.

That first *Golden Argosy*, dated December 9, 1882, bore the subtitle, "Freighted with Treasures for Boys and Girls." The treasures included a second serial, "Nick and Nellie, or God Helps Them That Help Themselves," by Edward S. Ellis; "Brave Bessie, or the Queen's Ambassador," by Fred M. Harrison; "The Dogs of St. Bernard," by W. H. W. Campbell; a puzzle department, exchanges, a department devoted to Amateur Journalism, and brief fact items. It was an eight-page, newspaper-shaped weekly of the size and appearance of the late *Youth's Companion*.

## A Dauntless Struggle

From the start the *Argosy* sailed a stormy course. Difficulties piled on disappointments, while Mr. Munsey carried on his desperate fight to keep the magazine afloat,

by acting as editor, publisher, and even as a serial writer. In his own words:

"The *Argosy* was founded on a definite idea. It has carried straight through on that idea—the publication of decent fiction, good red-blooded fiction for the millions. The *Argosy* had its troubles and its struggles—enough of them to sink the *Leviathan*. Few publications have ever had so many and pulled through. The reason the *Argosy* kept on living was because it didn't know when it was licked, and so it wasn't licked. Just how the *Argosy* survived its first five years, without capital, without money in the bank, and without experience in its management, is beyond the comprehension of itself and the spirit back of it."

Among the writers of serials in ten and twenty weekly installments were Horatio Alger, Jr., Frank A. Munsey, Oliver Optic, G. A. Henty, R. H. Titherington, and

Matthew White, Jr., who became *Argosy's* editor and piloted the magazine for decades.

The magazine soon began appealing to older readers, and its name became *The Argosy*. In 1894 it was changed from newspaper shape to much the present magazine size. Profuse illustrations of famous men and events graced its pages, with informative articles, poems and departments being emphasized as much as fiction.

But a great step in magazine pioneering came in 1896, when *The Argosy* became the first all-fiction magazine. No articles or illustrations—just a rich cargo of entertaining fiction full of adventure and romance. It was printed on the present type of un-



Frank A. Munsey