

**THE SONG OF
HUGH GLASS**

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The Song of Hugh Glass by John G. Neihardt & Julius T. House

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JOHN G. NEIHARDT & JULIUS T. HOUSE

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THE SONG OF
HUGH GLASS

BY
JOHN G. NEIHARDT

WITH NOTES

BY
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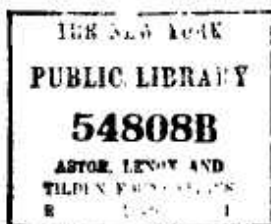
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TO SIGURD, SCARCELY THREE

When you are old enough to know
The joys of kite and boat and bow
And other suchlike splendid things
That boyhood's rounded decade brings,
I shall not give you tropes and rhymes ;
But, rising to those rousing times,
I shall ply well the craft I know
Of shaping kite and boat and bow,
For you shall teach me once again
The goodly art of being ten.

Meanwhile, as on a rainy day
When 'tis not possible to play,
The while you do your best to grow
I ply the other craft I know
And strive to build for you the mood
Of daring and of fortitude
With fitted word and shapen phrase,
Against those later wonder-days
When first you glimpse the world of men
Beyond the bleaker side of ten.

APR 19 FEB 26

NOTE

THE following narrative is based upon an episode taken from that much neglected portion of our history, the era of the American Fur Trade. My interest in that period may be said to have begun at the age of six when, clinging to the forefinger of my father, I discovered the Missouri River from a bluff top at Kansas City. It was flood time, and the impression I received was deep and lasting. Even now I cannot think of that stream without a thrill of awe and something of the reverence one feels for mighty things. It was for me what the sea must have been to the Greek boys of antiquity. And as those ancient boys must have been eager to hear of perils nobly encountered on the deep and in the lands adjacent, so was I eager to learn of the heroes who had travelled my river as an imperial road. Nor was I disappointed in what I learned of them ; for they seemed to me in every way equal to the heroes of old. I came to think of them with a sense of personal ownership, for any one of many of them might have been my grandfather — and so a little of their purple fell on me. As I grew older and came to possess more of my inheritance, I began to see that what had enthralled me was, in fact, of the stuff of sagas,

a genuine epic cycle in the rough. Furthermore, I realized that this raw material had been undergoing a process of digestion in my consciousness, corresponding in a way to the process of infinite repetition and fond elaboration which, as certain scholars tell us, foreran the heroic narratives of old time.

I decided that some day I would begin to tell these hero tales in verse; and in 1908, as a preparation for what I had in mind, I descended the Missouri in an open boat, and also ascended the Yellowstone for a considerable distance. On the upper river the country was practically unchanged; and for one familiar with what had taken place there, it was no difficult feat of the imagination to revive the details of that time—the men, the trails, the boats, the trading posts where veritable satraps once ruled under the sway of the American Fur Company.

The Hugh Glass episode is to be found in Chittenden's "History of the American Fur Trade" where it is quoted from its three printed sources: the *Missouri Intelligencer*, Sage's "Scenes in the Rocky Mountains," and Cooke's "Scenes in the United States Army." The present narrative begins after that military fiasco known as the Leavenworth Campaign against the Aricaras, which took place at the mouth of the Grand River in what is now South Dakota.

J. G. N.